Overview of the IFSS Curriculum Framework

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Professional Level Certificate or Certification</td><td rowspan="11">Spanning Multiple Levels i.e.
• Emerging Issues
• Instructor Development Skills</td></tr>
<tr><td>Leadership
Level 4</td><td>Supervisors and Upper-Level Administrators
The same Blended Learning Program for all Professional tracks</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Professional Level Certificate or Certification</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Technical Specialist
Level 3</td><td>Blended Learning for each Professional track</td></tr>
<tr><td>Technical Specialist Level Gen Eds - Blended</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Professional Level Certificate or Certification</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Advanced
Level 2</td><td>Blended Learning for each Professional track
(seafood, LACF, medicated feed, advanced milk processing)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Advanced Level Gen Eds for all Regulators - Blended</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Assessment to Conduct Independent Inspections - Certificate</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Entry
Level 1</td><td>Blended Learning for each Professional track
(manufactured food, retail, milk, shellfish, feed and produce)</td></tr>
<tr><td>25 Base Knowledge & Comprehension Domains for all Regulators - online</td></tr>
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The Purpose and Drivers:
The goal of the Integrated Food Safety System (IFSS) is to develop a seamless partnership and operation among federal, state, and local agencies to achieve the public health mission of a safer food supply. This is driven by the 2010 Vision Document with FDA's commitment to have a competent workforce doing comparable work across strategic partners. The Partnership for Food Protection Training and Certification Workgroup was charged to develop standard curricula (and certification programs) that will promote consistency and competency among the IFSS workforce.

The result of this charge is the National Curriculum Standard (NCS), which will establish standards for national training programs and identify career paths that are pertinent to IFSS regulators. This initiative will help assure that consistent training approaches and related public health activities are being conducted to the same standards of proficiency and quality required.

The NCS is also a good business practice. It will reduce the number of ineffective and/or inefficient trainings and duplication of effort (such as redundant course content across multiple courses and providers). In addition, it will better assure that FDA's partner's (associations, academia, industry, etc.) can develop equivalent training based on the standard or deliver NCS courses already developed.

National Curriculum Standard:
The NCS identifies the knowledge, skills, abilities and other attitudes or attributes (KSAO) with expected levels of performance to be able to conduct specific job activities or tasks. It is the "backbone" in identifying what the training content needs to address, accomplish and the conditions necessary for Food Protection Professionals (FPPs) to be successful in their job. The IFSS NCS has been designed with four levels to align and sequence a training "path" from regulator onboarding through to the leadership of a regulatory program.

> **Entry Level:** Newly hired or inexperienced local, state or federal FPPS (investigators and inspectors) who will be conducting regulatory inspections in retail food, manufactured food, animal food, milk, shellfish and/or produce operations. Upon completion of entry level training, it is expected that an individual would be able to conduct independent inspections within their program area.
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> **Journey Level:** FPPs who have completed their entry level training and are in the process of gaining their inspection and sampling experience, are provided with additional training for more advanced inspections (LACF, seafood HACCP or medicated feed inspections), investigations (foodborne illness, produce) and other activities (plan reviews, trace backs, recalls). These professionals would comprise the majority of the inspection workforce and perform most of the core food protection activities for their agency.

Technical Specialist: FPPSs with knowledge in a specific technical area, and who may or may not much field experience. These professionals are able to conduct complex, high-risk inspections and investigations, coordinate or convene key stakeholders in process development/improvement activities and engage in problem solving to remediate regulatory findings. These professionals are depended upon to provide assistance and specialized support to FPPs at the entry and journey levels.

Leadership Level: Food protection professionals who are seeking to be a supervisor, a current supervisor or upper-level administrators, and have a proven track record of excellence in all aspects of food protection. These professionals must be able to accurately design, improve, and prioritize food program functions and roles, and effectively communicate the role and value of food protection program activities to all levels within the organization as well as to external stakeholders. These professionals are often involved in strategic work planning and policy making for their department or agency and serve as mentors and role models for inspectors in their agencies.

Competency Modeling:
The NCS expresses the knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and other attributes (KSAO) expected for the job and various tasks as "competency statements". A competency statement explains what someone should be able "to do" or "know" in order to do the job or perform a task and to an identified proficiency level. They also:

1. identify a desired outcome, performance or behavioral expectation to which training should be developed to achieve
2. must be observable and measureable
3. involve a process that begins by drafting high level or broad competencies for a domain area and later drill down for more specific details
    a. Broad example: Explain the recall process
    b. Narrower example: Describe the factors used to make recall decisions
4. provide an outline for the course(s), as competency statements often evolve into course objectives

Competency modeling is a recognized method to identify the KSAOs necessary for the job that can be used to develop training (It is noteworthy that these competency statements could also be used for other purposes including developing or updating position descriptions or performance management). Through the utilization of validated methods for developing adult learning, the training content will be valid and defensible to prepare regulators to do their job.

Job Task Analysis (JTA):
It is a method to "deconstruct" the job and identify the duties, tasks and steps performed on a job as well as the knowledge, skills, and abilities that make up a job.

The JTA method is useful when a job or task has many steps to complete it. The competency modeling process can be advantageous to task analysis for jobs that require mostly cognitive functions to complete.

The competency statements and JTA are then utilized to draft the course design document (CDD) to then develop course content, story boards and then formatted for the delivery mode, participant and instructor manuals, and/or job aids.

In Conclusion:
Simply put, we need to be able to answer the question: "*How do you know if your training is any good?*"

The NCS provides a solid foundation and validated approach to not only say our training is good, but also that it addresses the training needs of Food Protection Professionals to ensure that the workforce is competent and performing comparable work across the nation.