

Food Safety Talking Points for Post-Tsunami Safety Communications – 3/22/2011



- The U.S. enjoys one of the world's safest food supplies. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), working with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, have systems in place to assure that our food supply, both domestic and imported, is safe to eat.
 - If the government has any reason to believe that food coming into or produced in the U.S. has been tainted, we will keep it from entering into the stream of commerce.
 - FDA has jurisdiction over 80 percent of the food supply, including seafood, dairy and produce. USDA regulates meat, poultry and processed egg products, while FDA regulates all other food products.
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FDA's Core Messages

- FDA has a team of more than 900 investigators and 450 analysts in the Foods program who conduct inspections and collect and analyze product samples.
- Altogether, FDA screens all import entries and performs multiple analyses on about 31,000 import product samples annually. During Fiscal Year (FY) 2010, the Agency performed more than 175,000 food and feed field exams and conducted more than 350 foreign food and feed inspections.
- FDA works to inspect imports that may pose a significant public health threat by carrying out targeted risk-based analyses of imports at the points of entry.
- If unsafe products reach our ports, FDA's imports entry reviews, inspections, and sampling at the border help prevent these products from entering our food supply.
- Although FDA doesn't physically inspect every product, the Agency screens shipments of imported foods products before they reach our borders. Based on Agency risk criteria, an automated system alerts FDA to any concerns. Then inspectors investigate further and, if warranted, do a physical examination of the product.
- FDA also works cooperatively with U.S. Customs and Border Protection and other agencies to help identify shipments that may pose a threat.

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NOAA's Core Messages

- Less than 2% of the seafood consumed in the United States is imported from Japan.
- Federal seafood safety experts, including FDA and NOAA, are working together to closely monitor the situation in Japan. These experts will continue to ensure that imported seafood remains safe.
- In the unlikely scenario that airborne pollutants could affect U.S. fishermen or fish landed in the U.S., NOAA will work with the FDA to ensure frequent testing of seafood caught in those areas, and inspection of facilities that process and sell seafood from those areas.

USDA's Core Messages

- USDA ensures the safety of meat, poultry and processed egg products both domestically and from countries approved to export product to the United States.
- Since April 21, 2010, Japan has not been eligible to export raw beef products, which have been the only USDA-regulated products they had exported to the U.S. prior to April 2010.
 - USDA issued an import alert that banned importation of commodities from Japan that could harbor Foot and Mouth Disease virus.
 - Japan has not exported any beef products to the U.S. for nearly a year.
- Japan is not eligible to export any poultry products or processed egg products to the U.S. since USDA has not determined Japan to be equivalent in these two commodities.