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Key Issues in Food Safety and Recommendations for FSA

Bob Lake, TAPRII Consultant (retired FDA)

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Presentation Objectives

- Summarize global food safety matters now being considered by Codex
- Review the new FDA Food Protection Plan
- Examine challenges facing the new Food Safety Agency (FSA)
- Consider priorities for your new FSA as it begins

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)

- The main international standard setting body for food--Codex safety standards are recognized by the World Trade Organization (WTO)
- Created by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations
- Annual meeting begins June 30, 2008 in Geneva

Food Safety Standards For CAC Adoption

- Limits on contaminants in food
- Matters involving food hygiene
- Foods for special dietary use
- Other draft food safety standards for CAC adoption

Limits On Contaminants In Food

- A maximum level for Ochratoxin A in raw wheat, barley and rye
- Maximum levels for aflatoxins in almonds, hazelnuts and pistachios
- A code of practice for the prevention and reduction of aflatoxin contamination in dried figs

Matters Involving Food Hygiene

- A code of practice for powdered formulae for infants and young children
- A guideline for the validation of food safety control measures
- An annex on microbiological Risk management metrics relating to the conduct of microbiological risk management

Foods for Special Dietary Use

- A revised standard on foods for special dietary use for persons intolerant to gluten
- Advisory lists of nutrient compounds for use in foods for special dietary uses for infants and young children

Other Safety Standards For CAC Adoption

- Amendments to the General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA)
- Maximum residue limits for pesticides
- Maximum residues limits (MRLs) for veterinary drugs
- A guideline for assessing the safety of foods derived from recombinant-DNA animals

Proposed New Food Safety Work For Codex

- Veterinary drug residue matters
- Antimicrobial resistant microorganism issues
- Matters related to Food hygiene
- Import/export issues

Veterinary Drug Residue Matters

- Priority listing of veterinary drugs for evaluation or by the Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)
- Risk management guidance for veterinary drugs for which no ADI has been recommended by JECFA

Antimicrobial Resistant Microorganism Issues

- Develop science-based guidance regarding food-borne antimicrobial resistant microorganisms
- Guidance on setting risk assessment and management priorities for antimicrobial resistant food-borne microorganisms

Matters Related To Food Hygiene

- Draft annexes about hygienic practices for fresh fruits and vegetables
- Draft hygienic practices concerning *Vibrio* species in seafood

Import/Export Issues

- Draft principles and guidelines for the conduct of foreign on-site audits and inspections
- Draft annex involving the design, production, issuance and use of generic model health certificates

A New Food Protection Plan In The U. S. A.

- Changes in circumstances led the U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to develop its new Food Protection Plan
- FDA's new Food Protection Plan (Nov. 2007) emphasizes prevention and fast responses to food safety problems

Reasons For New FDA Food Protection Plan

- Shifting demographics
- Convenience trends
- Consumption patterns
- Global food supply
- New threats

Shifting Demographics

- Much of the population is in a high-risk category (young, older, pregnant, immune-compromised)
- By 2025, 25 percent of the U. S. population will be 60 or older
- Four percent are immune-compromised (people receiving chemotherapy, etc.)

Convenience Trends

- Ready-to-eat foods are increasing in popularity
- More people are eating out or bringing prepared foods home
- Nearly half of U.S. food spending is on food service items such as supermarket deli foods

Consumption Patterns

- Consumers are encouraged to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables
- Grocery stores have tripled the number of different produce items they carry to 558 since the 1980s
- Produce items that were once seasonal are now available year-round

Global Food Supply

- The United States trades with over 150 countries with products coming into over 300 U.S. ports
- The number of food import entries has tripled in the last decade
- About 60 percent of fresh fruits and vegetables are imported

New Threats

- Fourteen new food-borne pathogens have been identified since the mid-1970s
- FDA also considers food a potential vehicle for intentional contamination

Emphasis Of New FDA Food Protection Plan

- Prevent contamination of food
- Intervene at critical points in food chain
- Respond fast to minimize consumer harm

Prevent Contamination Of Food

- Promote increased corporate responsibility to prevent food-borne illnesses
- Address both unintentional and deliberate contamination
- Identify food vulnerabilities and assess risks
- Expand the use of effective mitigation measures

Intervene In Food Chain

- Target resources to achieve maximum risk reduction
- Emphasize inspections and sampling based on risk
- Enhance risk-based surveillance
- Improve data systems that indicate food safety problems

Respond Fast To Minimize Consumer Harm

- Improve quick response to food hazards, including better tracing of contaminated foods
- Increase collaboration with food safety partners and improve risk communications to the public, industry, and other stakeholders

Challenges For Egypt And Its New FSA

- Determining and sticking to priorities
- Establishing food safety standards
- Building and maintaining FSA credibility

Determining And Sticking To Priorities

- Prepare a strategic plan for identifying and addressing the beginning priorities
- Develop needed guidance, regulations, and legislation
- Give priority to actions that will significantly improve food safety in Egypt
- Remain focused on priorities except when dealing with a food safety emergencies

Establishing Food Safety Standards

- Establish scientifically sound food safety guidance and regulations based on priorities
- Communicate food safety guidance and regulations (including effective dates) clearly to all affected parties
- Involve all stakeholders before issuing final regulations and keep everyone informed of what you are doing

Building And Maintaining FSA Credibility

- Credible food safety agencies are made up of people who see themselves as professionals
- Food safety requirements need to be based on sound science and implemented fairly
- FSA credibility is essential to your effectiveness, public support in Egypt, and the respect of other countries

Recommended Priorities For FSA

- Benefit from experience of other countries
- Take full advantage of Codex
- Specific priority recommendations for FSA

Benefit From Experience Of Other Countries

- Food safety depends on everyone in the food chain from the farm and fishery to the consumer
- Reducing contamination of food by pathogens will immediately reduce food-borne illnesses
- Setting standards for chemical contaminants will reduce long term public health risks

Take Full Advantage Of Codex

- Utilizing Codex food safety standards, codes of practice, etc. saves time and effort, protects consumers, and facilitates food trade
- Relying on Codex approvals of food additives, pesticides, and animal drugs identifies substances that can be safely used in food production and that are accepted by other governments

Specific Priority Recommendations For FSA

- Good sanitation from all who handle food from farms and fisheries to forks is a good foundation
- Implementation of HACCP plans by all food processors would reduce the risk of hazards
- Safer practices in restaurants and grocery outlets would reduce food-borne illnesses
- Educating consumers about safe food handling practices would reduce illnesses

Specific FSA Priorities--Continued

- Procedures for managing food safety emergencies (including recall procedures) would protect consumers
- A food tracing system would help determine which products to remove from the market
- A new comprehensive food safety law would further improve food safety in Egypt

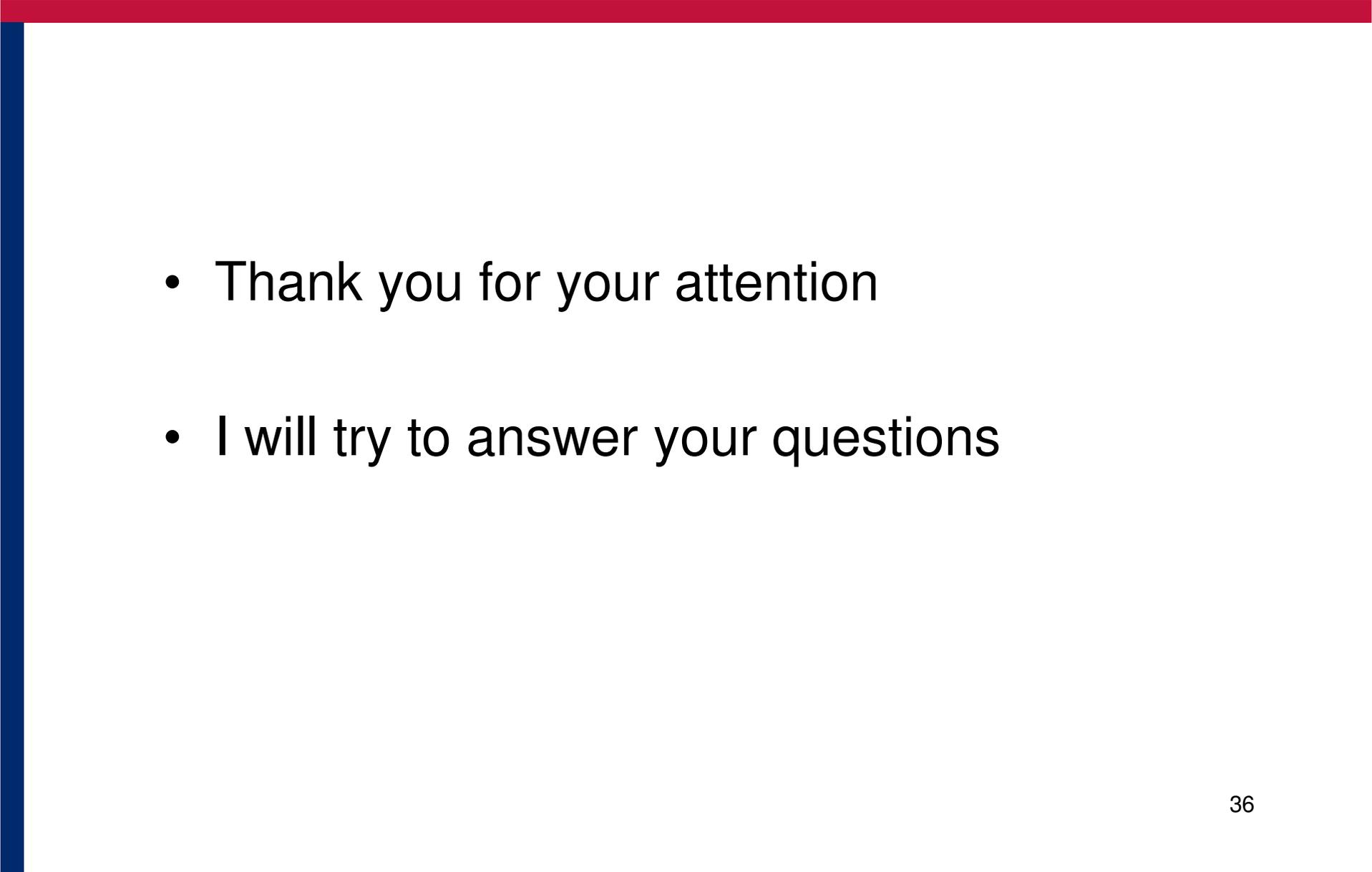
Food Safety Points To Remember

- Food safety in Egypt will require effective leadership from the new FSA
- Effective FSA leadership depends on a good understanding of the regulated industries
- Safe food comes only from those in the food industries who fulfill their responsibilities to food consumers

Food Safety Points To Remember--Continued

- Early issuance of food safety guidance to food industries (especially smaller operations) would have immediate benefits
- An FSA identification and assessment of food safety problems in Egypt would likely identify other food safety priorities
- Working with other parts of the government of Egypt and with other governments will improve your chances of success

The End



- Thank you for your attention
- I will try to answer your questions