



Should There be a Single Food Safety Agency? (The Consumer Perspective)

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Consumer Interest in Reform

Consequences of foodborne illness

- Sickens 76 million, hospitalizes 325,000, and kills 5,000 annually
- Strikes hardest at very old, very young, and those with weakened immune systems
- Can lead to chronic medical conditions
- May affect healthy food choices
- Imposes \$44 billion in economic loss

History Behind the Consequences

Antiquated Laws

- Federal Food and Drug Act-1906
- Federal Meat Inspection Act-1906
- Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act-1938
- Public Health Service Act-1944
- Poultry Products Inspection Act-1957
- Egg Products Inspection Act-1970

History Behind the Consequences

Two Major Agencies

➤ Food Safety Inspection Service (USDA)

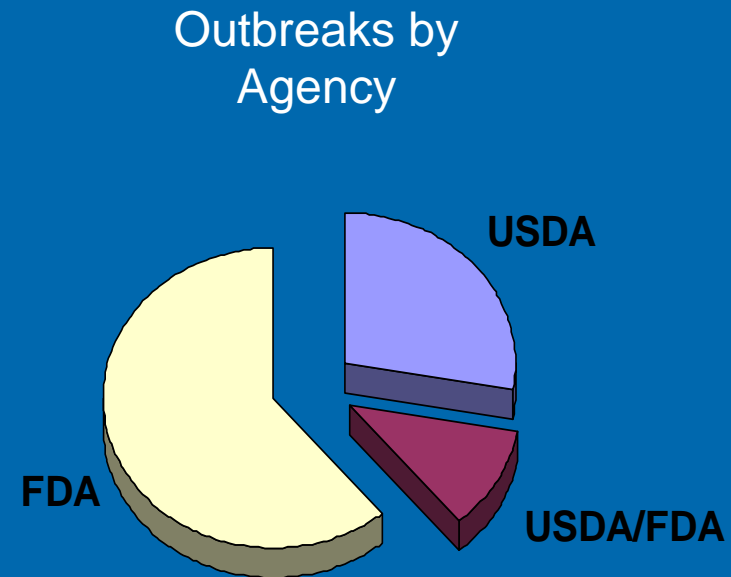
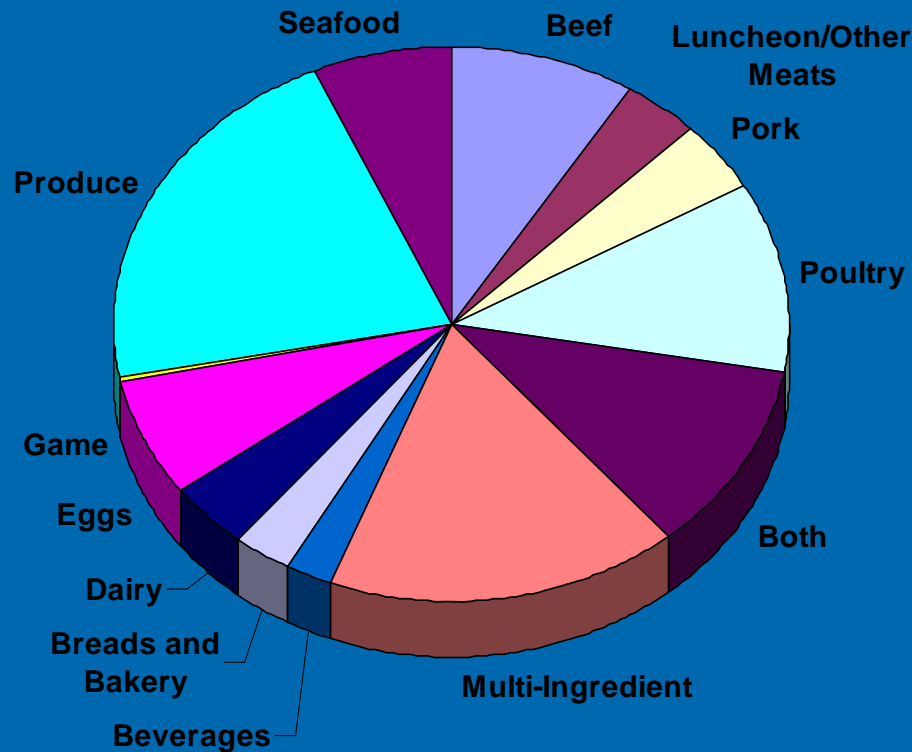
- Responsible for 20% of food supply (Meat, Poultry Eggs)
- More than 7,300 inspectors
- 6,200 federally inspected establishments
- Daily and continuous inspections

➤ Food and Drug Administration (HHS)

- Responsible for 80% of food supply (fruit, vegetables, processed foods, seafood, etc.)
- Fewer than 2,000 inspectors
- More than 136,000 domestic establishments
- Random inspections (frequency as little as once every 10 years)

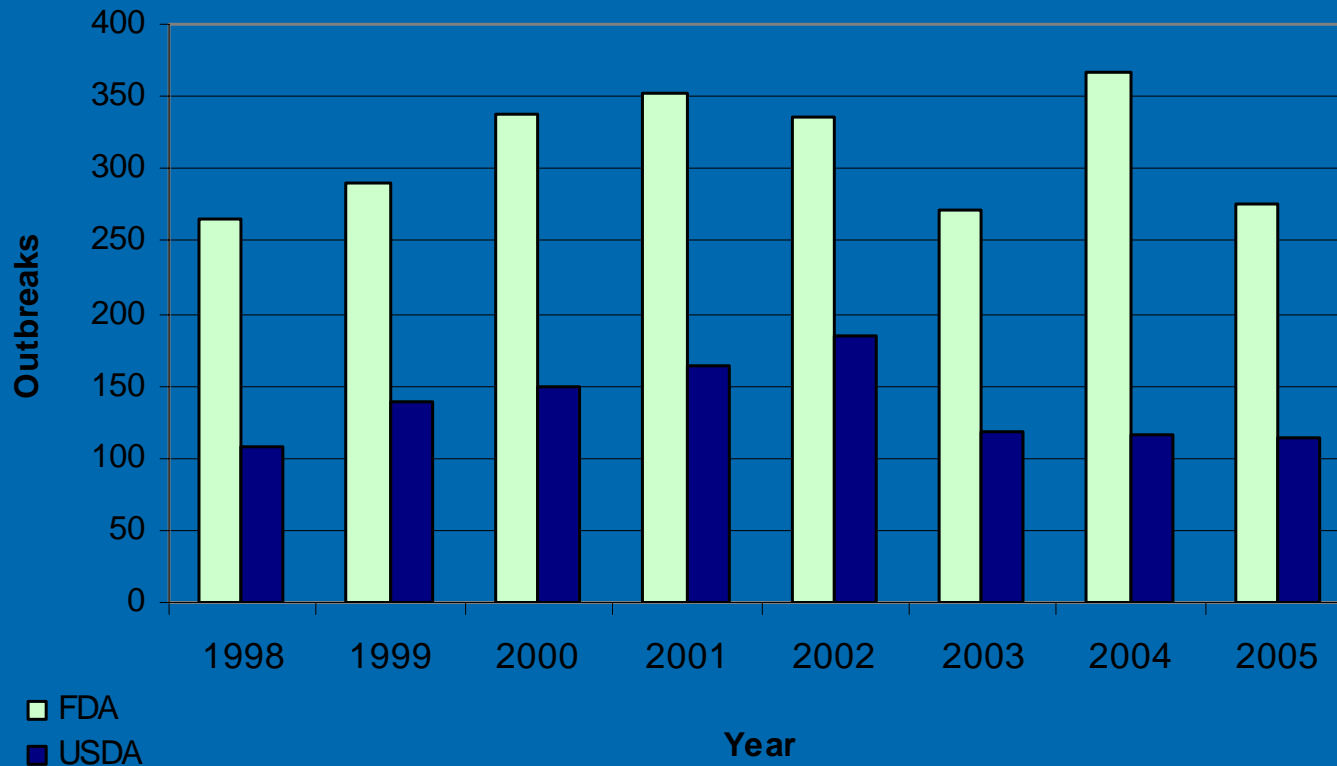
FDA vs. USDA

Outbreaks by Food Type and Agency



FDA vs. USDA

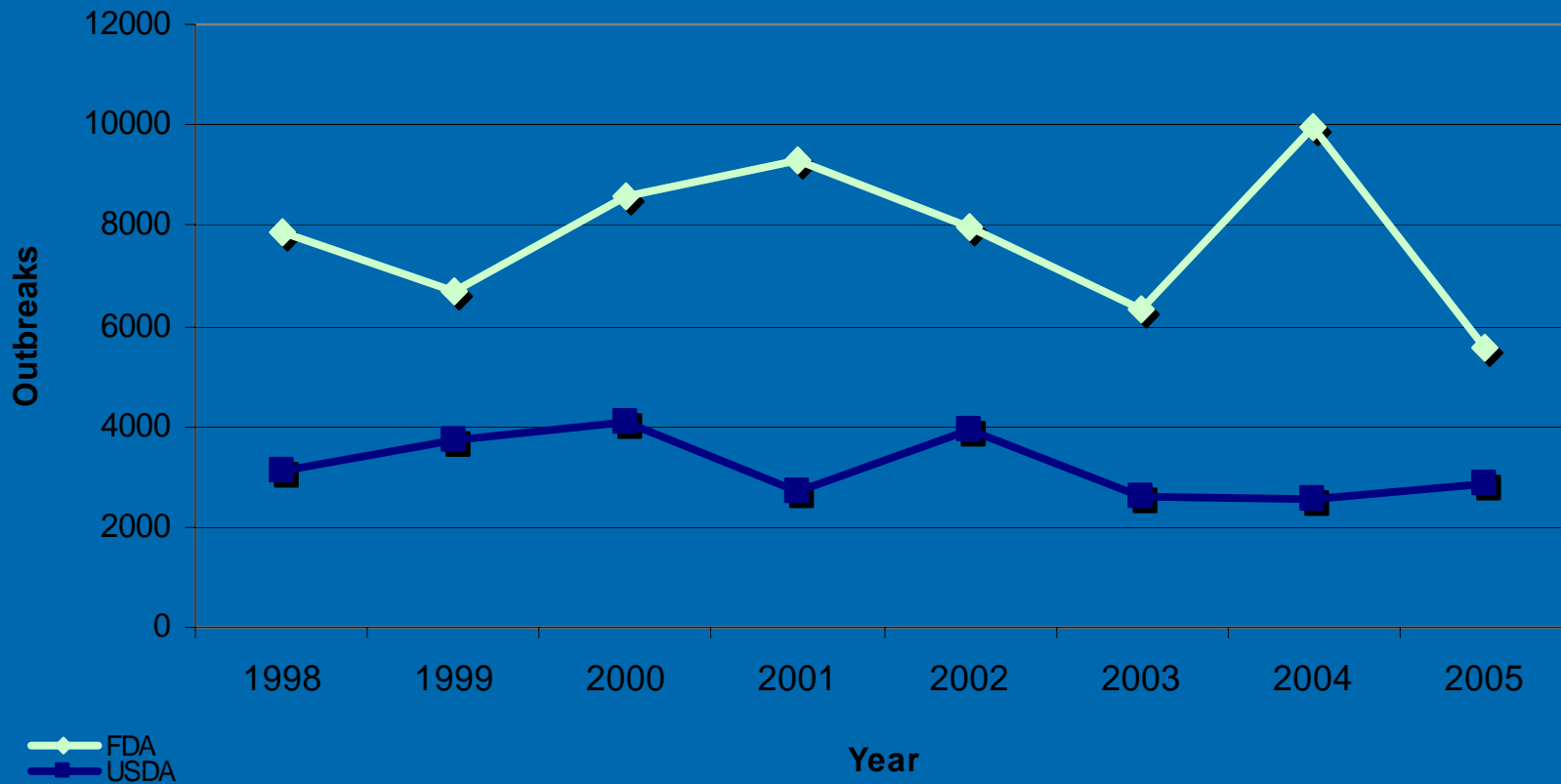
Rate of Outbreaks by Agency



Source: *Outbreak Alert!* Center for Science in the Public Interest, 2006

FDA vs. USDA

Cases of Outbreak-Associated Illness

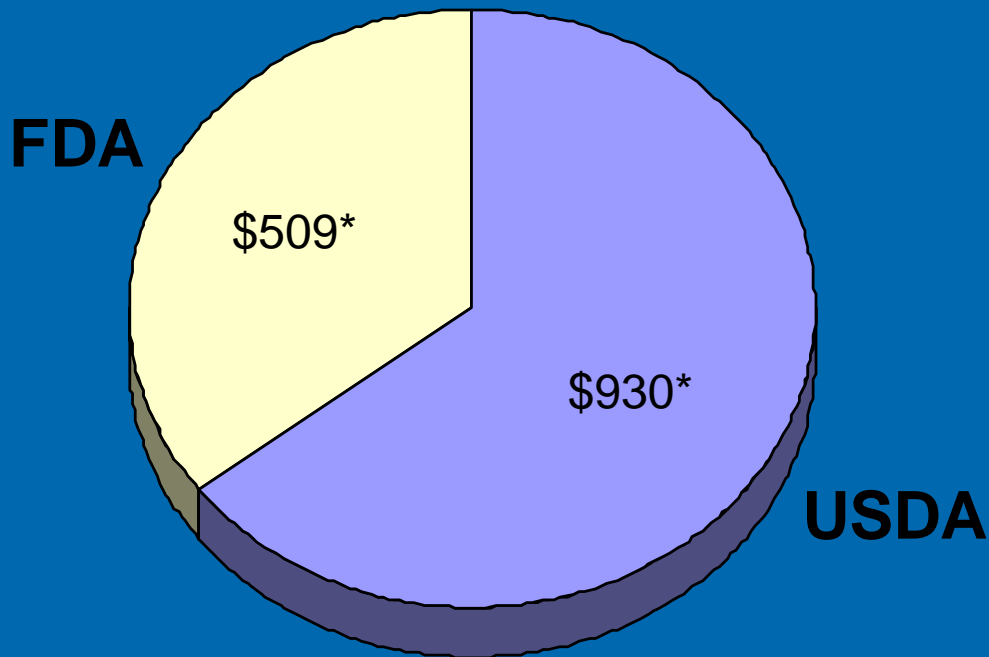


Source: *Outbreak Alert!* Center for Science in the Public Interest, 2006

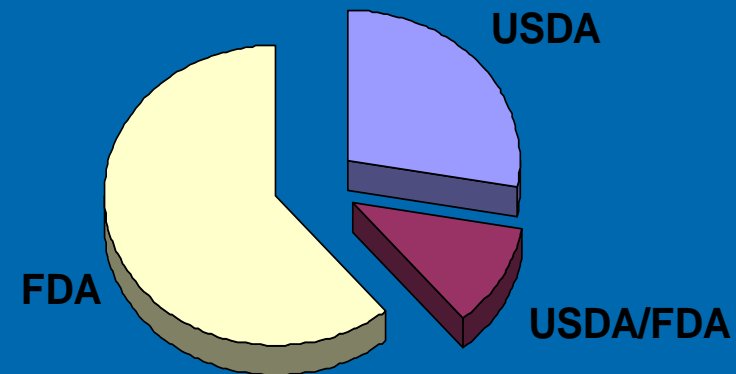
FDA vs. USDA

Mismatched Resource Allocation

Food Safety Funding



Outbreaks by Agency



* Appropriations in Millions of \$

What's Wrong?

Reactive Posture, Misallocated Resources

“As this system has evolved piecemeal over almost a full century, it has become primarily reactive rather than being designed to anticipate and prevent problems before they become critical.”

“[R]esources tend to become dedicated to solving yesterday's problems and only with great difficulty can they be redirected to meet tomorrow's challenges.”

Food Mktg. Inst., *It's Time To Designate A Single Food Safety Agency*, May 6, 2000

Inconsistency; Overlapping Duties

Who's in Charge?

	USDA	FDA	EPA	NMFS
Inspection of Domestic Food Facilities	✓	✓		✓
Inspection of Foreign Food Facilities	✓	✓		✓
Inspection at Ports	✓	✓		
Laboratory Analysis for Contamination	✓	✓		✓
Research on Pathogen Reduction	✓	✓		✓
Research on Foodborne Contaminants	✓	✓	✓	✓
Risk Assessments of Contaminants	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public Education and Outreach	✓	✓	✓	✓
Development of Guidance for Industry	✓	✓	✓	✓
International Harmonization	✓	✓	✓	✓
Surveillance/Monitoring	✓	✓		
Rule Development & Promulgation	✓	✓		✓

Why A Single Agency?

The Record for Consolidation

➤ Objective Evaluations

- Government Accountability Office – 1992 to 2007
- The National Research Council – 1998

➤ Industry Support

- Food Marketing Institute – 2000

➤ Congressional Activity

- 15 House and Senate hearings in 110th Congress
- *Safe Food Act* introduced in House and Senate

➤ Globalization Pressures

- Who else is doing it?

Globalization Trends/Experiences

Countries that Have Adopted a Single Agency

- Canada – 1997
- Denmark – 1997
- Ireland – 1998
- Great Britain – 1999
- European Union – 2002
 - Germany – 2002
 - Netherlands – 2002
- New Zealand – 2002
- India – 2008

“...officials and food industry and consumer stakeholders cited significant qualitative improvements ... These improvements include less overlap in inspections, greater clarity in responsibilities, and more consistent or timely enforcement of food safety laws and regulations.”

GAO, *Experiences of Seven Countries in Consolidating Their Food Safety Systems*, 2005

The Safe Food Act

A Modern Solution

- Consolidates profusion of agencies under focused leadership
- Better allocates resources across all risks
- Reduces “Promotion vs. Regulation” conflicts
- Eliminates waste
- Adds needed authorities

State Agencies Benefit from a Single Food Agency

- Single point of contact at Federal level
- Mandate for Federal/State cooperation
- Better allocation of Federal resources in support of State activities
- Improved coordination of food inspections and outbreak response

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