April 10, 2012

Oscar Garrison
President
Association of Food and Drug Officials
2550 Kingston Road, Suite 311
York, PA 17402

Dear Mr. Garrison:

Thank you for your letter, including Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) Resolution Numbers 1, 2, and 3, as adopted at your 115th Annual Education Conference held on June 19-22, 2011 in Plano, Texas. Because these three resolutions are closely related, we are providing a single response.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is working with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to update guidance most recently issued in 2004 to protect the neurological development of fetuses and young children. Minimizing the affects of methylmercury is of the utmost importance.

Since the original publication of the FDA-EPA advice, science has evolved. There is now a considerable amount of evidence that fish consumption can benefit neurological development. Through our collaborative effort, FDA and EPA plan to issue an update to this advice which will enable pregnant women to provide this benefit to their unborn children while still protecting them from harm from methylmercury.

This advice will represent a significant advance over that issued in 2004. Once FDA and EPA have completed drafting the updated advice, they are planning to hold public meetings and other outreach efforts to solicit public input. These meetings and outreach efforts will include AFDO and other critical stakeholders. We expect to have a final draft of this updated advice available in 2012. At this point, FDA will also seek input from states and other key stakeholder on educational materials that states can use to convey the new guidance. Once finalized, the guidance will be shared with all states, with other stakeholders and the public.

FDA welcomes the support of AFDO to complete this update. We believe that AFDO plays a vital role in the development of an integrated food safety system which, in time, will create a safer environment for all.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Taylor
Deputy Commissioner for Foods
April 10, 2012

Oscar Garrison  
President  
Association of Food and Drug Officials  
2550 Kingston Road, Suite 311  
York, PA 17402

Dear Mr. Garrison:

Thank you for your letter, including Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) Resolution Number 4, as adopted at your 115th Annual Education Conference held June 19-22, 2011 in Plano, Texas.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is working closely with the International Food Protection Training Institute (IFPTI) under a cooperative agreement established to assist FDA in providing training to federal, state, local, tribal, territorial and industry officials.

Under this cooperative agreement, FDA Division of Human Resource Development (DHRD) and IFPTI will collaborate in key areas such as course delivery, developing an Instructor Development process and ensuring that the courses in the IFPTI curriculum are aligned with the Job Task Analysis recently completed by DHRD. IFPTI will also assist FDA by serving as an administrative hub for a Learning Management registration system as well as developing and maintaining a food protection instructor/subject matter registry. IFPTI will also work towards pursuing ANSI accreditation for the IFPTI Fellowship program. In addition, FDA and IFPTI will review the training provisions of FSMA to ensure alignment with the current IFPTI curriculum map.

FDA recognizes the importance of training in accomplishing our food safety goals and that AFDO plays a vital role in the development of an integrated food safety system which will ultimately result in a safer environment for all.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Taylor  
Deputy Commissioner for Foods
April 10, 2012

Oscar Garrison
President
Association of Food and Drug Officials
2550 Kingston Road, Suite 311
York, PA 17402

Dear Mr. Garrison:

Thank you for your letter, including Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) Resolution Number 5, as adopted at your 115th Annual Education Conference held June 19-22, 2011 in Plano, Texas.

FDA recognizes that the Seafood HACCP Alliance (SHA) provides a valuable educational and training resource for regulatory agencies and industry in FDA’s requirements and policies. They have recently devoted, in cooperation with FDA, time and resources developing training materials to provide users of the new Fish and Fishery Products Hazards and Controls Guidance (released April 26, 2011) with information on the current changes to FDA safety recommendations and on how to use that Guidance. The Train-the-Trainer courses provided by SHA are utilized by outside agencies, industry, and FDA to develop competent instructors who understand FDA’s requirements.

FDA fully supports the hard work and educational activities taken on by the SHA. The agency will continue to participate in the training courses and offer guidance as resources allow.

FDA welcomes the support of AFDO and believes that AFDO plays a vital role in the development of an integrated food safety system which will ultimately result in a safer environment for all.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Taylor
Deputy Commissioner for Foods
April 10, 2012

Oscar Garrison  
President  
Association of Food and Drug Officials  
2550 Kingston Road, Suite 311  
York, PA 17402

Dear Mr. Garrison:

Thank you for your letter, including Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) Resolution Number 6, as adopted at your 115th Annual Education Conference held June 19-22, 2011 in Plano, Texas.

FDA recognizes that the participation of state and local regulatory agencies in multijurisdictional food related incidents is critical to the success of an integrated food safety system. Equally important to participation in the event is the sharing of post event information in the form of hot washes and After Action Reports. FDA has initiated a process to include state and local agencies in post event hot washes and After Action Reports in response to recommendations developed following the 2011 ORA Senior Staff meeting. The further development of this process has since been incorporated into the work of the Emergency Response working group of the Partnership for Food Protection.

In 2011, FDA established the Coordinated Outbreak Response and Evaluation (CORE) Network to enhance the ways FDA handles both response and post-response activities related to incidents of illness linked to human and animal food. The CORE network, under the leadership of Chief Medical Officer/Outbreak Director Dr. Kathleen Gensheimer, includes state and local agencies in responses to incidents involving multiple illnesses linked to FDA-regulated human and animal food products. FDA CORE and ORA held a first ever national hot wash via conference call in December 2011 to allow for state, local and FDA participants to review findings, accomplishments and lessons learned following an outbreak investigation.

FDA welcomes the support of AFDO and believes that AFDO plays a vital role in the development of an integrated food safety system which will ultimately result in a safer environment for all.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Taylor  
Deputy Commissioner for Foods