



## **USDA's New R&D Agenda Identifies Key Targets for Food-Safety Research (11/20/03)**

USDA Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced a unified research agenda with the goal of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of food-safety programs. The newly compiled agenda is one of several key initiatives USDA is implementing to enhance food safety and improve food inspection systems, according to a news release.

<http://www.usda.gov/news/releases/2003/11/0391.htm>

"Assuring the safety of our food supply is a priority for the Bush administration," said Veneman. "Through a unified research effort we will continue to make progress to sustain and increase food safety."

USDA also released a list of additional research needs specific to meat, poultry and egg products that the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) will encourage non-governmental organizations to address. The government research agenda will complement these efforts by industry and academia.

The unified agenda, which aims to prioritize research needs and maximize available resources, targets research projects that would:

- Investigate the ecology, epidemiology, virulence and genetic characteristics of E. coli O157:H7, Salmonella, Listeria monocytogenes and other food borne pathogens to better identify targeted control measures.
- Develop effective on-farm, feedlot, transportation, handling and other pre-processing intervention strategies to reduce the incidence and levels of antibiotic-resistant microorganisms and key food borne pathogens in meat, poultry, eggs and fresh produce.
- Develop, validate and transfer the technology offering new and improved processing methods to reduce or eliminate key food borne pathogens in meat, poultry, fresh produce, seafood and ready-to-eat foods.
- Develop rapid, sensitive detection methods for abnormal prions to prevent the possible spread of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies.

In addition to the research agenda, FSIS's July 2003 food-safety vision document identified improved workforce training, streamlined technology implementation, best management practices and risk-analysis coordination as key strategies to improve food safety and protect public health.

The complete USDA unified food safety research agenda is accessible by logging onto [http://www.reeusda.gov/ree/pdf/foodsaf\\_research.pdf](http://www.reeusda.gov/ree/pdf/foodsaf_research.pdf)