

FDA Announces a New Cooperative Agreement Program to Advance Building an Integrated Food Safety System

Constituent Update

July 27, 2021

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is pleased to announce the award of the *Alliance to Support Integrated Food Safety System (IFSS) Activities* cooperative agreement to the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO). This cooperative agreement will facilitate long-term improvements to the national food safety system by strengthening interagency collaboration, improving state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) regulatory and surveillance protection programs, and promoting the implementation of the Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Standards (MFRPS). The total funding for the cooperative agreement program will be up to \$9 million over three years.

The cooperative agreement directly supports the FDA's mandate to protect the nation's manufactured human food and animal food under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). Congress recognized that, with more than 3,000 SLTT food safety agencies, the FDA must work synergistically with other federal and SLTT partners, as part of a fully integrated food safety system, to protect the nation's food supply.

This cooperative agreement will help the FDA to continue leveraging AFDO's strengths to assist SLTT manufactured food programs in their efforts to reduce the occurrence of foodborne illness risk factors, implement and maintain conformance with the MFRPS, and fully leverage SLTT food programs' strengths to advance the regulation of the manufactured food industry.

As part of the three-year cooperative agreement program, AFDO will work collaboratively with the FDA to achieve the following objectives:

- Support the efforts of federal and SLTT government agencies to build an IFSS.
- Establish systems for sharing, promoting, and collaborating on best practices, guidance documents, sampling plans, procedures, partnership agreements, and other tools to foster mutual reliance between federal and SLTT regulatory programs and public health agencies.
- Assist the FDA in the identification, development, delivery, promotion, and attendance of food safety and defense training and career development programs to support conformance with the MFRPS and implementation of FSMA.
- Support the advancement of MFRPS and the Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Alliance (MFRPA).

According to AFDO Executive Director Steven Mandernach, "This cooperative agreement provides important resources to support programs and systems designed to help SLTT

manufactured food programs as they work to enhance their regulatory programs and improve the consistency and quality of their work through conformance with the FDA's Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Standards (MFRPS). These foundational efforts are critical as we continue to work together to achieve a nationally integrated food safety system."

In addition, Erik Mettler, Assistant Commissioner for Partnerships and Policy within FDA's Office of Regulatory Affairs offered the following comments on the announcement of the new award, "Protection of the nation's food supply is a responsibility that is shared across all levels of the government. This cooperative agreement supports building a nationally integrated, risk-based, food safety system focused on protecting public health. The FDA looks forward to continuing our partnership with AFDO to advance the MFRPS and reduce foodborne illness in the U.S."

The burden associated with foodborne illness is considerable. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that, each year, 48 million people get sick from a foodborne illness, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die. The FDA and AFDO are dedicated to the prevention and mitigation of foodborne illnesses, and the award of this cooperative agreement is another step towards achieving that goal.

For additional information, please visit the [Alliance to Support IFSS Activities webpage](#) or email the Office of Partnerships in FDA's Office of Regulatory Affairs at OP.Feedback@fda.hhs.gov.