Summary of Public Meeting on
Data and Technology in the New Era of Smarter Food Safety
April 24, 2024

On April 24, 2024, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) invited the public to attend a one-day virtual public meeting titled "Data and Technology in the New Era of Smarter Food Safety." The purpose of the public meeting was for FDA and stakeholders to share information and thoughts on ways to leverage data and technology and exponentially advance food safety under the New Era of Smarter Food Safety.

The feedback received from this public meeting, along with comments submitted to the accompanying docket, will help FDA identify activities that should be prioritized under the New Era of Smarter Food Safety and help shape further stakeholder engagement opportunities. The docket remains open for comments until June 24, 2024. Electronic comments should be submitted to www.regulations.gov to docket number FDA-2024-N-1744. Written comments should be submitted to the Dockets Management Staff (HFA-305), Food and Drug Administration, 5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061, Rockville, MD 20852. All written comments should identify the docket number FDA-2024-N-1744.

Summary of comments from the public meeting:
The key themes and ideas raised by public comments during the public meeting indicates continued support for work FDA is doing under the New Era of Smarter Food Safety and a strong desire to work together to advance public health outcomes by finding ways to better monitor, gather, and share data as well as finding ways to leverage innovation and technology to support the work we are all currently doing. The themes and ideas listed below do not necessarily represent FDA viewpoints.

Tech-Enabled Traceability
- Possible solutions and considerations for industry to capture traceability data, including consideration of ways to leverage current industry data standards
- Promoting data interoperability between trading partners can help companies improve data sharing between disparate IT systems
- Tech-enabled traceability has additional benefits beyond food safety, such as sustainability, reducing food waste and preventing food fraud

Data Sharing
- Importance of monitoring, gathering, sharing and exchanging data in real time amongst all interested stakeholders.
  - Possible ways to incentive and encourage voluntary sharing of data. Examples of potential incentives raised included fewer inspections for industry or subsidizing data collection methodologies for smaller firms.
  - Interoperability and data connectivity between systems is important for data exchange

- o For data to be useful, the quality of the data collected is important
- Standardization and harmonization of data is essential for a global approach to food safety.
- Ensuring the security and confidentiality of data that is shared is necessary to build trust amongst stakeholders

Whole Genome Sequencing
- Integration of GenomeTrakr's genomic information with other digital food system databases
- Importance of the expansion of whole genome sequencing for pathogen surveillance

Recall Modernization
- Incorporating technological innovations to improve communications across the supply-chain to modernize the recall process could lead to more targeted recalls and faster communications to stakeholders (e.g., real-time recall notifications to consumers)

Retail Food Safety
- Importance of continued collaboration and partnerships between public health regulatory partners to leverage strengths of individual groups and coordinate focus on shared objectives to advance retail food safety
- Importance of widespread adoption of FDA's Model Food Code
- Need for a comprehensive review of the national retail food safety program
- Importance of hand hygiene and reducing the incidence of norovirus for retail food safety

Partnerships and collaboration
- Importance of FDA's role in encouraging industry innovation and organizing opportunities for continued stakeholder engagement
- Creation of additional public-private partnerships with FDA to further strengthen the food safety system
- Importance of the inspectional regulatory program management system for States called SAFHER (System for Agriculture, Food, Health, E-Inspections, and Registration), understanding the available data and how to use it to improve regulatory programs
- Importance of promoting transparency throughout the food supply chain through continued partnerships