

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES****Proposed Joint Institute for Food Safety Research; Public Meeting**

AGENCIES: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

ACTION: Notice; public meeting; establishment of public docket.

SUMMARY: On July 4, 1998, President Clinton directed the Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services to report back to him within 90 days on the creation of the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research, which would: (1) develop a strategic plan for conducting food safety research activities consistent with the President's Food Safety Initiative; and (2) efficiently coordinate all Federal food safety research, including research conducted with the private sector and academia. The report to the President articulates the concept of the Institute and provides a proposed structure, operating principles, goals and outcomes, and an implementation schedule for the Institute. This report can be obtained from Ms. Sarah Poythress, (202) 720-4423 or by email at spoythress@reeusda.gov.

The USDA and DHHS are announcing a public meeting to solicit input from individuals regarding the role of the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research. Agency personnel will use the input as they begin to develop a detailed

proposal for the Institute. The ultimate goal of the Institute's research agenda is to reduce the incidence of adverse human health effects associated with the consumption of food. The objective of creating the Institute—and all other Administration food safety activities—is to reduce the incidence of foodborne illness to the greatest extent feasible. Scientific information about prevention of foodborne illness and detection of organisms that may cause it is critical to reduce further the incidence of foodborne illness.

The meeting is open to the public. Written comments and suggestions on issues that may be considered in the meeting may be submitted to the CSREES Docket Clerk at the address below.

DATES: The meeting will be held on December 1, 1998, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in Room 107A, Jamie L. Whitten Building, United States Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Sarah Poythress, (202) 720-4423 or by email at spoythress@reeusda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Persons wishing to present comments orally at this meeting are requested to pre-register by contacting Ms. Sarah Poythress at (202) 720-4423, by fax at (202) 720-8987 or by e-mail to spoythress@reeusda.gov. Participants may reserve a 5-minute comment period when they register. More time may be

available, depending on the number of people wishing to make a presentation and the time needed for questions, following the presentations. Reservations will be confirmed on a first-come, first-served basis. All other attendees may register at the meeting. Written comments may also be submitted for the record at the meeting or may be mailed to Ms. Sarah Poythress, USDA/CSREES, Room 305A, Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-2201. *Please provide five copies of the comments.* Written comments must be postmarked by December 18, 1998, to be considered. All comments and the official transcript of the meeting, when it becomes available, will be available for review for six months at the address listed above from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Participants who require a sign language interpreter or other special accommodations should contact Ms. Poythress by Friday, November 20, 1998 as directed above.

Done in Washington, DC, on this 29th day of October, 1998.

Eileen Kennedy,

Deputy Under Secretary, Research, Education, and Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

William Raub,

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Science Policy, Department of Health and Human Services.

[FR Doc. 98-30336 Filed 11-12-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-22-P