



Chairman Robert Aderholt

*Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food
and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations*

**FY 2015 Budget Hearing
Food Safety and Inspection Service
April 3, 2014
*Opening Statement As Prepared***

I want to welcome to the Subcommittee today's witnesses Mr. Brian Ronholm, Acting Under Secretary for Food Safety; Mr. Phil Derfler, the Deputy Administrator for the Food Safety and Inspection Service; and Mr. Mike Young, USDA's Budget Director.

Today we will focus on the fiscal year 2015 budget request of the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), which totals approximately \$1 billion. USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service works to ensure that our nation's supply of meat, poultry and processed eggs are safe, wholesome, and correctly packaged and labeled. FSIS is comprised of more than 9,400 employees and regulates more than 6,400 establishments across the United States. Approximately 80 percent of the FSIS budget is for personnel salaries and benefits.

While there will be questions related to your budget request, I expect that Members will have plenty of oversight questions as well. One of my goals here today is to ensure the proper use of funds through our oversight responsibility.

Without a doubt there is likely to be lively debate about your agency's poultry modernization rule, which leads to another goal of ensuring the appropriate level of regulation is in place to protect the public health. The Administration has assured us that this particular regulation will demonstrate positive health results and cost less to implement. As we discuss various FSIS rules and regulations, let's be clear about one thing: America is blessed with the safest food supply in the world. When false accusations and misinformation enters the media and public domain, it is a disservice to America's farmers, ranchers and consumers. Sound science should always guide food safety decisions.

My third goal is to ensure taxpayer funds are targeted to the most vital programs. Unquestionably, the work performed by the men and women at FSIS on a daily basis on behalf of consumers and taxpayers is some of the most important work that the Federal government conducts. I appreciate the work of all FSIS employees who strive to keep safe meat, poultry, and egg products available for all consumers.

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