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RANKING MEMBER

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115  
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December 21, 2016

Mr. Steve Otwell  
Seafood Safety and Technology Emeritus  
UF Food Science and Human Nutrition  
Aquatic Food Products Lab  
P.O. Box 110375  
Gainesville, FL 32611-0375

Dear Mr. Otwell:

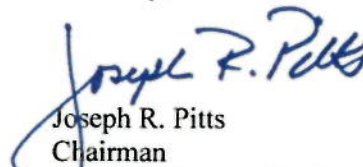
Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee on Health on December 7, 2016 to testify at the hearing entitled "Waste and Duplication in the USDA Catfish Inspection Program."

Pursuant to the Rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the hearing record remains open for ten business days to permit Members to submit additional questions for the record, which are attached. The format of your responses to these questions should be as follows: (1) the name of the Member whose question you are addressing, (2) the complete text of the question you are addressing in bold, and (3) your answer to that question in plain text.

To facilitate the printing of the hearing record, please respond to these questions with a transmittal letter by the close of business on January 8, 2017. Your responses should be mailed to Jay Gulshen, Legislative Clerk, Committee on Energy and Commerce, 2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 and e-mailed in Word format to [jay.gulshen@mail.house.gov](mailto:jay.gulshen@mail.house.gov).

Thank you again for your time and effort preparing and delivering testimony before the Subcommittee.

Sincerely,

  
Joseph R. Pitts  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Health

cc: The Honorable Gene Green, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Health

Attachment

## Attachment — Additional Questions for the Record

### The Honorable Joseph R. Pitts

1. In your experience, is catfish (siluriformes) a low-risk food?
2. Does domestic or imported catfish (siluriformes) present any unique food safety issues that would warrant a separate government program from all other seafood?
3. Did FDA, USDA or any other U.S. government agency produce a scientific assessment of the risk domestic or imported catfish (siluriformes) poses to human health before the enactment of the 2008 Farm Bill (P.L. 110-246)?
4. What will happen if this program continues? Will domestic catfish farmers benefit economically?

### The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.

As we've heard in testimony from various witnesses at the hearing, catfish is a low risk fish — with Salmonella as the primary food safety hazard associated with catfish. We also heard that the volume of seafood imports has increased substantially and that catfish accounts for about 4 percent of seafood imports.

We all agree that the safety of our food supply is a top priority. However CDC reports that, despite the increase of imported seafood, the U.S. experienced a decrease in outbreaks of foodborne illnesses related to fish consumption.

1. Dr. Otwell, at the hearing you stated that FDA's longstanding risk-based program played an important role in this decrease. As the USDA catfish program has only been in existence since April 2016, does this new program account for any of the reported decreases?
2. Dr. Otwell, are you concerned there are cases of catfish contamination that FDA's program would not detect? Why or why not?