

Support H.R. 4167, The National Uniformity for Food Act of 2005

March 1, 2006

Dear Colleague:

As Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Agriculture, we are writing to urge you to support H.R. 4167, The National Uniformity for Food Act of 2005. This bill provides for uniform food safety standards and warning requirements by amending the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act to create a single national system for foods and food products regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The bill also ensures that states have the opportunity to provide their best, science-based food safety information to consumers in all 50 states in conjunction with the FDA.

The Committee on Agriculture oversees a significant portion of America's food safety system. The federal food safety functions over which this committee has jurisdiction have long employed uniform standards to protect public health, facilitate the marketing of agricultural commodities, and make more efficient the interstate trading of producers' goods.

The adoption of uniform standards is common practice - and indeed the general rule - when it comes to the federal food safety efforts. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service is responsible for the safety of the majority of domestic and imported meat in the United States. It enforces uniform standards through the authority granted to USDA by the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, The Egg Products Inspection Act and other authorities. Under the Food Quality Protection Act, a state may not set tolerance levels for pesticide residues that differ from national levels unless the state petitions the Environmental Protection Agency for an exception, based on a state-specific situation.

Moreover, uniformity is not limited to these areas of food safety. Congress has repeatedly recognized the importance of uniformity in food regulation in other sectors. For example, the FDA, as authorized by The Nutrition Labeling and Education Act, implements uniform standards for nutrition labeling, health claims and standards of identity.

With the world's safest food supply, every American benefits from this system of national food safety standards. H.R. 4167 builds on this record of success by extending the same approach to food safety standards used by USDA and other agencies to FDA food safety programs, and should therefore be supported.

Sincerely,
Bob Goodlatte,
Chairman

Collin Peterson,
Ranking Member