

a U.S. port. With emergency contact information and product categories, FDA can quickly call or e-mail the emergency contact at both domestic and foreign facilities that may be targeted by a specific food threat. If FDA suspects a particular product is at risk, we can quickly identify which facilities to contact. This quick communication will allow facilities to respond quickly to a threat and possibly limit the effect of a deliberate strike on the food supply, as well as public health emergencies due to accidental contamination of food. In the past, FDA field personnel (Ref. 19) have had difficulty notifying facilities of recalls and other enforcement actions due to incomplete information in existing agency records. In the past, for foreign facilities, FDA has attempted to disseminate recall information through foreign embassies. Contacting foreign facilities through their U.S. agent (or their designated emergency contact) will be more efficient and increase the probability that the facility will receive the information in a timely fashion and act on it.

A complete list of facilities in the food supply chain will also aid FDA in scheduling inspections and undertaking compliance activities. FDA currently uses an OEI that we developed by obtaining lists from State governments and adding firms to the OEI through surveillance activities, such as reviewing phone books. The OEI is incomplete and frequently out of date (Ref. 20). FDA has even less information about foreign facilities that manufacture/process, pack, or hold food

for consumption in the United States. A complete list of domestic facilities with correct contact information and food product categories would aid inspectors in contacting facilities, and with product information available, would help the agency to identify facilities for inspections. Because of the turnover in the food industry and the ratio of inspectors to food facilities, FDA never has had a complete list of foreign or domestic facilities that provide food for consumption in the United States. Also, a complete list of facilities will aid FDA in understanding which facilities will be affected by a future regulation, which will increase the agency's effectiveness in targeting communication and outreach to these facilities.

In conjunction with the prior notice requirements in part 1, subpart I, this rule will make it possible for FDA to better identify imported food shipments that require inspection prior to admission. The registration will confirm the identity of the country of production, which may not be the same as the country from which the product has been shipped. This information will assist FDA in identifying specific shipments to inspect, if, for example, we have information that a particular type of food or shipments from a particular country may be adulterated. Additionally, the database of registrants and products also will aid FDA in verifying that a product is correctly identified by where and by whom it was produced. For example, if the registration information identifies a facility as producing only dairy

products and FDA receives a prior notice purportedly from the facility for a shipment identified as nuts, FDA can decide whether to target that shipment for verification based on the discrepancy.

FDA has conducted its own evaluation of the vulnerability of the U.S. food supply and has also commissioned two threat assessments, one through the Batelle Memorial Institute and a second through the Institute of Food Technologists. These assessments determined the most serious risks of intentional contamination during various stages of food production and distribution. The results of these assessments are classified. We have also received intelligence information regarding threats to the food supply that are guiding our food security efforts. However, to understand possible costs of an intentional strike on the U.S. food supply, FDA presents in table 15 outbreaks resulting from accidental and deliberate contamination, involving both domestic and imported foods. These outbreaks do not represent all possible forms that a terrorist attack might take, but merely illustrate the public health costs of foodborne emergencies. It is likely that an intentional attack on the food supply that sought to disrupt the food supply and sicken many U.S. citizens would be more costly. However, the probability of an attack occurring and the exact reduction in risk resulting from registration is unknown.