

Food Safety Alert – 3/08/07

City on a Hill Press is reporting that Sam Farr (D-Carmel) was not satisfied with recent responses he received from Dr. Andrew von Eschenbach, FDA commissioner in regard to food safety. He is surprised they have not determined how the E. coli outbreak in spinach was transmitted from nearby cattle operations to a farm in San Benito County. “What bothered me was that [Dr. Andrew von Eschenbach, FDA commissioner] was not able to respond,” Rep. Farr said, referring to a February meeting to discuss the FDA’s 2008 fiscal budget. “The report on this incident was due. The warning was put out Sept. 14. I have no problem with them taking time, but this is too much time.”

The USDA has asked for \$2.4 billion for research to “increase detection and response capabilities.” Unfortunately, the FDA has requested only \$10.8 million.

<http://www.cityonahillpress.com/article.php?id=439>

Newsday.com has posted an editorial calling for the passage of the Safe Food Act. The writer acknowledges that our food supply is safe, yet claims that the frequency of outbreaks only demonstrates the need for an overhaul of the federal government’s oversight of the food industry. Ironically, the Bush Administration continues to cut safety inspections and Congress continues to mull the idea of enacting the Food Safety Act. The act would streamline and update regulation of food production, produce and livestock. The author also says that increased funds for inspections are needed, but should not be thrown at a bureaucracy that comprises over a dozen agencies responsible for enforcement of 30 laws governing food safety.

<http://www.newsday.com/news/opinion/ny-vpmid085121724mar08,0,1880934.story>