

**Testimony of Dr. Craig Henry  
Senior Vice President for Science and Regulatory Affairs  
Grocery Manufacturers Association**

**Before the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration and Related Agencies**

**Of the House Committee on Appropriations**

**On “Food Safety Oversight”**

**March 26, 2009**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Craig Henry and I am the Senior Vice President for Science and Regulatory Affairs for the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA). I have over 30 years experience in manufacturing operations and related food safety programs such as traceability.

Americans enjoy one of the safest food supplies in the world, but food and beverage companies recognize that steps must be taken to make our food supply even safer. Ensuring the safety of our products – and maintaining the confidence of consumers – is the single most important goal of the food and beverage industry. Product safety is the foundation of consumer trust, and our industry devotes enormous resources to ensure that our products are safe.

Our industry strongly supports efforts to continually improve the safety of America’s food supplies and urges the Subcommittee to continue to make the prevention of contamination the foundation of our nation’s food safety strategies.

**Recommendations:**

- **Increase FDA food-related spending.** GMA strongly supports proposals to increase FDA food-related spending to rebuild FDA’s scientific and regulatory capacity. We applaud the Subcommittee for providing FDA with critical new resources in the FY

2009 omnibus appropriations bill and urge you to provide a comparable increase for food-related activities in FY 2010.

- **Require Food Safety Plans.** GMA strongly supports proposals in House and Senate legislation to require every food company manufacturing food for the US market to conduct an evaluation of food safety risks that identifies potential sources of contamination, identifies appropriate food safety controls, and documents those controls in a food safety plan.
- **Require Foreign Supplier Safety Plans and Build Foreign Capacity.** GMA strongly supports proposals in House and Senate legislation to build the capacity of foreign governments to regulate food safety and to require every food importer to police their foreign suppliers. In particular, we support proposals to require that food importers document the food safety measures and controls being implemented by their foreign suppliers, and to require food importers to make a foreign supplier food safety plan available to FDA.
- **Regulate Fruits and Vegetables.** GMA strongly supports proposals to give FDA the power to establish federal safety standards for certain fruits and vegetables – when risk and science demonstrate that standards are needed. FDA should be permitted to work with states to tailor standards to meet local growing conditions and to ensure that standards are being met.
- **Adopt a Risk-Based Approach to Inspections.** GMA strongly supports proposals in House and Senate legislation to focus domestic and foreign inspections on facilities that pose the greatest risk of contamination that could result in foodborne illness or injury. To focus scarce resources, FDA should permit expedited entry for imports that pose no meaningful risk.
- **Improve Traceability Systems.** Government and industry should work collaboratively to identify and address gaps in our current traceability system,

including measures that will ensure that responsibility for traceability is shared throughout the supply chain, measures that will improve the interoperability of current and future traceability systems, and that which build upon and encourage industry innovation. In particular, GMA strongly supports House and Senate proposals to develop and test promising new traceability systems through pilot programs in the produce sector.

- **Authorize Mandatory Recalls.** GMA strongly supports proposals in House and Senate legislation to give FDA the authority to order a mandatory recall when a company producing FDA-regulated products has refused to conduct a voluntary recall and there is a significant risk to public health. Specifically, where the responsible party refuses to voluntarily recall a product for which there is a reasonable probability that the food will cause serious adverse health consequences or death, the Secretary of Health and Human Services should be permitted to order an FDA-regulated company to conduct a recall.

GMA applauds your efforts to seek swift and lasting improvements to our food safety system and look forward to working with you to continually improve the safety of America's food supplies.