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April 24, 2009

Docket Clerk
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 2534, South Agriculture Building
Washington, DC 20250-3700

Re: Docket No. FSIS-2007-0038 Notice of Request for a New Information Collection (Consumer Focus Groups)

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please accept this letter concerning the above-mentioned request for a new information collection on behalf of the National Turkey Federation. The National Turkey Federation is the national advocate for all segments of the turkey industry, providing services and conducting activities which increase demand for its members' products by protecting and enhancing their ability to profitably provide wholesome, high-quality, nutritious products.

The turkey industry supports the agency's pursuit of information about the content of public health messages, and the means by which they are delivered, in order to promote safe food handling and preparation practices among consumers. As the public health agency responsible for overseeing and ensuring the safety of the nation's commercial supply of meat, poultry, and egg products, the agency has a responsibility to educate and protect the public. The agency provides vital services that help consumers stay informed and educated about food safety issues.

We recognize that the consumer is an important part of the food safety paradigm, and support efforts that improves the effectiveness of guidance and education provided for their use. It is our opinion that the use of the focus groups for conducting qualitative research concerning consumers' understanding of safe food handling instructions is necessary to the proper function of the agency. Awareness of consumers' understanding of, or confusion over, various subjects (for example, proper handling of raw meat or the correct preparation of not-ready-to-eat products) will help inform the development of the agency's labeling policy.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Rybolt".

Michael Rybolt, Ph.D.
Director, Scientific and Regulatory Affairs