



June 19, 2007

United States
Department of
Agriculture

NOTICE TO THE TRADE

Marketing and
Regulatory
Programs

Agricultural
Marketing
Service

Washington, DC
20250

Fruit and Vegetable Vendor Food Defense Audit for Dry Beans and Corn Syrup

This notice is to inform vendors of USDA's Fruit and Vegetable Commodity Procurement Program of the intent to require annual food defense audits for dry bean and corn syrup products beginning July 1, 2008. This measure is in keeping with the Department's emphasis to add a level of safety to food going to the Federal feeding and nutrition programs. It is our understanding that some vendors have already added food defense plans to their operation to meet the requests of their other customers. However, we are aware that there are vendors who have only considered implementing a plan, as well as some vendors who have not begun to consider it.

To assist vendors in preparing and implementing a plan for the audit, the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) will be conducting audits on an **advisory basis** for the fruit and vegetable vendors currently doing business with USDA beginning July 1, 2007 through the end of the year. No contract action will be taken as a result of the audits performed during that period. The advisory results should assist vendors in identifying vulnerable areas that need corrective actions prior to the mandatory audits beginning July 1, 2008. The food defense audit will be conducted by the FGIS in conjunction with the annual plant sanitation inspection.

The audit tool is based on the Food and Drug Administration's Guidance for Industry, Food Processors, Processors, and Transporters: Food Security Preventative Measures Guidance. The guidance is available at <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/secguid6.html>.

Attached are copies of the Food Defense System Survey, Appendix C, Guidelines for Evaluation Elements of the Food Defense System Survey, and Rating Elements of the Food Defense System Survey.

Sincerely,


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