# Good us food regulation research paper example

Business, Management

Every year stories hit the national media about foodborne illnesses breaking out in different sects of the US population with its origins traced back to contaminated foods in the US supply chain. Within these stories journalists tend to ask a several of the same question, “ Is the US government doing enough to fight such outbreaks?” In order to answer this question is becomes necessary to delve into the history of the Food and Drug Administration, it’s history, an understanding of what is currently being done, and then an assessment of whether or not it’s feasible to increase the checks that they are doing or alter their approach to food safety.

This history of food regulation in the United States dates back to before the US was recognized as an independent country. The colonies in the United States were technically held to food regulation laws that were currently being enforced in England. The first recorded law of this type happened in the 13th century with the Bread Assizes Documents. This four-page paper regulates the purity of bread and breaks it down a regulation of prices and also prohibits bakers from mixing ground beans and peas into the bakers and then pass it off to consumers. (Weingarten, 1).

The first step towards food regulation and the FDA as it exist today came when Lincoln signed legislation into law, which launched the US Department of Agriculture and what would later become the Food and Drug Administration, The Bureau or Chemistry. Food regulation and rules as to the quality of a venders content were still more or less operating under a buyer-beware model until in 1906 when the Food and Drugs act became law, prohibiting altered foods and misleadingly branded foods, drinks and drugs from entering interstate commerce.

That same year, it was a fictional novel based on fact called “ The Jungle” by Sinclair Lewis that made waves in depicting the lives of how immigrants lived and the horrendous conditions of some meat packing plants. This led to the Meat Inspection Act, which was the first time that inspectors actively sought to examine some meat before it hit the US market (Brinkley, 43).

With the legislative branch of the US government establishing the legal precedence, in 1924 the Supreme Court ruled that the Drugs Act must condemn every “ statement, design or device” on a label that deceive, even if technically through covert rhetorical devices true (Weingarten, 1).

The reach and power of the FDA increased in 1938 when a revised Federal Food, Drug, and Domestic Act was signed into law. This set standards on certain poisonous substance, and maximum levels, as well the authorization to inspect factories and set standards of acceptability. In 1949 a guideline for the food industry to adhere to in order to avoid penalties was published by the FDA, this was known as the black book and it gave businesses dealing in the food industry and outline of what was legally expected of them.

Though many moderate reforms were passed in the years in between, the next big labeling came in 1990 with the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act which made sure that all products contain labels with health benefit claims using the same jargon as established by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. This was followed by the 1991 nutrition facts, which required produces to use the same easy to follow format as was standard.

The 2000s were a time of debate and legislation on new consumer terms such as what constituted organic food, what was acceptable with genetically modified foods and a host of other issues (Weingarten, 1).

This was deemed what the producers and distributors needed to do in far of informing their consumers. When outbreaks occur within the food supply, the question of what government was doing to assure that producers and distributors were doing everything in their power to prevent tainted goods from entering the US market. That the government is even monitoring the US food system at all is generally not thought of unless something goes wrong and then there is an outbreak. The US is not just one of the largest countries by population on earth, it consumes some of the most food per capita, meaning the food system is enormous. More than 300, 000 million people daily are fed one way or another by the system. The system of monitoring must administer and enforce thirty federal laws which are governed by by fifteen government agencies (Longley, 1).

The major responsibly that citizens think of when they are thinking of oversight of the food system are administered and monitored by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration. When an outbreak occurs, it is the United State Centers for Disease Control that partners with these organizations in order to ascertain the cause of the outbreak and how it was allowed to slip by their regulations and controls (USDA. gov).

The Department of Agriculture moniters the source products of meat, poultry and dairy. Their authority is bolstered from the Eggs Products Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and the Federal Meat Inspection Act. All meat the makes it to the US market and is sold in interstate commerce is inspected, and imported meat is also inspective once it arrives. Because of problems being able to reduce incidences in this area, on December 4th,

2013 the USDA just released a “ Strategic Performance Working Group” about their plan to reduce the amount of the infectious bacteria Salmonella. A number of high profile outbreaks in reent years has led to them releasing this document and implementing this plan. (USDA. gov)

Within the document the authors write that they have chosen this particular pathogen because most of the incidents they have dealt with were because of this food contaminant. They write that the Food Safety and Inspection Service has decided to focus on Salmonella because it is “ the pathogen that contributes the most to the FSIS’s ‘ All-Illness’ performance measure” and because “ the All Illness Measure was created, Salmonella illness estimates have continued at a steady high or slightly increased rate despite FSIS interventions” (USDA, 2013). This demonstrates the organizations ability to react to an issue without the need for legislation. To put it another way, the USDA has an agility to retool its focus in response to a crisis. Whether or not they are successful in reducing incidence of Salmonella in the US food supply because of that will be demonstrated in the years to come since this plan is not set to go into place until the 2014 fiscal year.

Alongside the USDA the role of the FDA is to monitor the products that the USDA it not mandated to monitor. This includes a wide range or products that vary from cosmetics, to animal feed, and medical devices (Longley, 2). Only recently in 201 did new regulation grant this administration the ability to inspect large commercial egg farms where many salmonella outbreaks were reported to be happening. Within a month of that expansion of authority, a half a billion eggs were recalled because salmonella was discovered.”

The final piece to the trinity monitoring the US food supply is The Center for Disease Control. The primary role of the CDC is one of data gathering on all illnesses and outbreaks, food outbreaks included, in order to offer qualitative data to help inform lawmakers.

It is difficult to tell from media stories weather or not food contamination is on the rise. Stories are usually hyped, and with 24 hour cable TV news, there is less of a news cycle to fill and so stories that might night have made national media in the past are often stories that views tune into and as a result they receive a lot of play time by the media. Compared to other countries, the US puts a lot or resources into protecting the US food supply. Whether that is enough is a matter of opinion. It is not feasible to assume that contaminated food will ever enter the market, so the first question is what amount is allowable and whether or not we are exceeding those level of acceptability.

Maggie Fox, a senior writer for NBC news cites a CDC study, which did seem to indicate that it is not media hype or people’s imaginations that food borne illness is indeed slightly increasing. According to the CDC 48 million Americans, one in six, become sick because of contaminated food and three thousand die annually. These numbers show two things. The first is that the US is doing a lot to regulate food. That one in six people will get sick once a year and not suffer more than a day or two of discomfort means that most of the food on the market is safe for consumption. However, with better technologies, the trend should be that food contamination should be decreasing, not rising as it is, this makes the case for not enough being done.

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