



March 4, 2013

Dear International Colleague,

I am writing to inform you that on March 4, 2013 FDA is releasing a report on product tracing pilots carried out by the Institute of Technologists (IFT) at the direction of FDA and simultaneously issuing a Federal Register (FR) notice requesting comments on the findings and recommendations in the study. The pilots are required by section 204 of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) which requires FDA to publish a notice of proposed rulemaking to establish recordkeeping requirements for facilities that FDA designates as producing “high-risk” foods. In September 2011, we asked IFT to carry out the pilot projects under an existing contract.

Product tracing systems enable government agencies and those who produce and sell food to take action more quickly when an outbreak of food-borne illness occurs or a contaminated product is identified, thus preventing illnesses. Actions include removing a product from the marketplace and alerting the public if a product has already been distributed.

Release of the IFT report will be of great interest to many stakeholders, including the food industry, technology providers, and consumer groups. IFT involved nearly 1,000 stakeholders throughout the process, including the processed food and produce industry sectors and consult with USDA, state agencies and consumer groups on proposed food and/or ingredients and product tracing technologies.

We invite interested persons to submit comments within 30 days after the date of publication in the Federal Register. To submit comments electronically (starting March 5, 2013), please go to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) and enter docket number FDA-2012-N-1153. For more information on submitting comments to the docket, please see: <http://www.fda.gov/RegulatoryInformation/Dockets/Comments/default.htm>.

For more information:

- [Federal Register Notice: Implementation of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act Provision Requiring FDA to Establish Pilot Projects and Submit a Report to Congress for the Improvement of Tracking and Tracing of Food; Request for Comments and Information](#)
- [IFT Final Report: Pilot Projects for Improving Product Tracing along the Food Supply System](#)
- [Section 204 of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act](#)

This particularly significant effort of outreach by the IFT demonstrates the level of value placed on feedback and collaborative efforts between all parties directly affected. We look forward to sharing ideas and new information with our international counterparts and other interested stakeholders, leveraging resources that will help us improve rapid and effective tracking and tracing of food.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Lou Valdez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Lou Valdez, MSM  
Associate Commissioner for International Programs  
U.S. Food and Drug Administration