



For Immediate Release

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ENZI: REPORT ON IMPORT SAFETY A GOOD START TO IMPROVE, ENHANCE SAFETY OF IMPORTED FOODS, PRODUCTS

Washington D.C. – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, R-WY, Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today commended members of President Bush’s panel on import safety for issuing their report on improving the safety of imported food and other products, and reaffirmed his commitment to develop a comprehensive response to improve the safety of all food in the United States.

“Foods from abroad and foods grown at home have risks. We need to ensure that FDA and other agencies responsible for ensuring food safety have the tools they need to protect the public health,” Enzi said. “Food safety has been making news lately. From Salmonella in peanut butter, to Chinese seafood with banned antibiotics, to contaminated pet food, we hear a constant drumbeat of food safety problems that we must address.”

The President’s Interagency Working Group on Import Safety today laid out a strategic approach to improve the safety of imported products, particularly food. Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt chairs the panel.

“When Americans purchase a snack, eat at a restaurant, or sit down to dinner with their families, they should be able to expect that the food they eat will nourish them, not make them ill. We need to restore that faith, and I am working with my colleagues to develop a comprehensive, effective strategy to enhance food safety.”

Enzi and Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) amended the Food and Drug Administration Revitalization Act, S. 1082, to address food safety. The amendment would establish standards for pet food and set up early warning systems for any problems with pet foods. It improves communication systems about all food recalls, and coordinates state and federal activities on fresh and processed produce. Finally, the amendment creates a database of instances of adulterated food so that FDA can better track patterns of problems and target its limited resources to where they are most needed. The Senate approved S. 1082 by a 93-1 vote in May.

“This bill includes the first steps to address the critical issue of food safety,” Enzi said. “I look forward to reviewing the report from the import safety panel as I work on a comprehensive approach to improve the safety of the food we eat.”

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