



For Immediate Release

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***ENZI CALLS FOR COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO IMPROVE
FOOD SAFETY, STRENGTHEN PUBLIC FAITH IN FOOD SUPPLY***

Washington D.C. – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, R-WY, Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today said strengthening public faith in the safety of food is crucial to public health as well as the economy, and reaffirmed his commitment to develop a bipartisan, comprehensive response to improve the safety of all food in the United States that will better protect consumers and their families.

“There’s too much at stake here to keep relying on a policy of panic and retreat,” Enzi said. “Hysteria and massive recalls based on incomplete information cost small producers hard-earned profits. That’s not the answer. We must improve coordination among all the agencies and businesses responsible for producing, testing and inspecting food before it arrives at the kitchen table. We have the tools, the expert knowledge and the innovative spirit to find better and more reliable systems to protect the public health from contaminated food. Let’s get moving on a comprehensive, bipartisan solution.”

During today’s hearing, “Developing a Comprehensive Approach to Food Safety,” the HELP Committee began its evaluations of the recommendations made by the President’s Interagency Working Group on Import Safety, chaired by Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt, and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Protection Plan.

“There is a lot to like in Secretary Leavitt’s report and the FDA Food Protection Plan,” Enzi said. “However, we need to carefully review the recommendations in these reports before we rush to action. Food safety is critical to every American, and it’s up to us to make sure we take the time to get it right.”

Enzi added: “We must also improve our testing and inspection capabilities. For far too long, the number of inspectors at FDA has been decreasing, even as imports have been rising dramatically, and new food safety problems arose. Finally, we must consider whether new authorities are needed to respond to those problems that are not detected and corrected.”

Enzi said he will continue to champion the innovation and creativity of small business as part of his work with his colleagues to develop new food safety legislation.

“Every day, American innovators, particularly in small businesses, work to advance up-and-coming technologies to improve the safety of our food supply,” Enzi said. “These innovations and new technologies will likely be the key to enhancing food safety.”

“We still have a ways to go. New programs, tools, technologies and authority are important and needed, but they mean nothing if they don’t strengthen consumer confidence in the safety of our food supply.”

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