

REPLY TO:

- ☐ 135 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1501  
(202) 224-3744  
e-mail: grassley.senate.gov/contact.cfm
- ☐ 721 FEDERAL BUILDING  
210 WALNUT STREET  
DES MOINES, IA 50309-2140  
(515) 288-1145
- ☐ 150 1ST AVENUE NE  
SUITE 325  
CEDAR RAPIDS, IA 52401  
(319) 363-6832

# United States Senate

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1501

September 7, 2010

REPLY TO:

- ☐ 103 FEDERAL COURTHOUSE BUILDING  
320 6TH STREET  
SIOUX CITY, IA 51101-1244  
(712) 233-1860
- ☐ 210 WATERLOO BUILDING  
531 COMMERCIAL STREET  
WATERLOO, IA 50701-5497  
(319) 232-6657
- ☐ 131 WEST 3RD STREET  
SUITE 180  
DAVENPORT, IA 52801-1419  
(563) 322-4331
- ☐ 307 FEDERAL BUILDING  
8 SOUTH 6TH STREET  
COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA 51501-4204  
(712) 322-7103

Secretary Tom Vilsack  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

The recent egg recalls due to a *Salmonella* outbreak at Wright County Egg and Hillandale Farms in Iowa have troubled consumers and weakened confidence in our nation's food supply. When Americans visit their local grocery stores, they should be able to trust that the food they are purchasing to feed their family is safe to consume.

Recent media reports indicate that former company employees reported food safety problems they had observed while working at Wright County Egg. While I understand that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authority over shell eggs, has issued the egg recall and is involved in the investigation of the *Salmonella* outbreak, USDA does have primary jurisdiction over egg product safety and has non-food safety employees located at farms including Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) graders.

In light of the complaints raised by these individuals, please answer following the questions:

- 1) Did USDA receive complaints from company employees and if so, what was done to investigate these concerns?
- 2) What were the Food Safety Inspection Service's (FSIS) responsibilities in relation to these two farms? When was the last FSIS inspection conducted?
- 3) Is there an established process so that USDA employees (such as AMS graders) or company employees and other individuals can report possible food safety violations to FSIS?
- 4) Is there an established process for USDA employees to report food safety concerns to the FDA when they fall outside of USDA's jurisdiction?
- 5) What is USDA doing to counter deficiencies in food safety communication within the USDA and between the two agencies? How are USDA and FDA coordinating to best

RANKING MEMBER,  
FINANCE

Committee Assignments:

BUDGET  
JUDICIARY  
AGRICULTURE

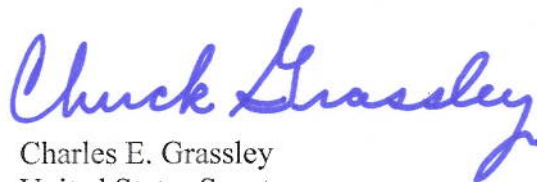
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1  
CO-CHAIRMAN,  
INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS  
CONTROL CAUCUS

address food safety concerns and ensure that food safety problems do not fall through the cracks?

Thank you for your prompt response to this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Grassley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

Charles E. Grassley  
United States Senator