



NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



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NOAA and FDA to Combine Resources on Seafood Inspection *Arrangement to share information will improve food safety*

NOAA and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration unveiled an interagency agreement today to strengthen seafood inspection and improve seafood safety and quality.

The agreement formalizes the working arrangements between NOAA's Fisheries Service Seafood Inspection Program and the FDA to reinforce each agency's efforts through cooperation and information sharing in the inspection of fish, fishery products, and establishments. Inspection agents from both agencies will work together when appropriate, and NOAA will share inspection results with FDA.

"Americans are eating an average of 16 pounds of seafood a year--that's a lot of fish," said Jim Balsiger, acting NOAA assistant administrator for NOAA's Fisheries Service. "This partnership will help ensure that seafood consumers—who spent nearly \$70 billion on seafood last year—continue to get safe, healthy seafood through combining our resources with FDA."

This new agreement strengthens the two agencies' partnership and satisfies a Government Accountability Office recommendation that calls for FDA to consider the results of NOAA inspections when determining the frequency of seafood inspections and the use of limited inspection resources. The agreement formally outlines the procedures for working together at both the headquarters and the field levels, and enhances the credibility of NOAA inspections.

The FDA issues regulations concerning the safety and security of the nation's food supply, including seafood. The NOAA Seafood Inspection Program works with the seafood industry domestically and overseas to help it comply with FDA food regulations and meet industry specifications. More than 30 percent of seafood sold in the U.S. is inspected under NOAA's voluntary program.

NOAA seafood inspectors inspect edible products, ranging from whole fish to formulated products, as well as fish meal products used for animal foods. NOAA inspectors can be stationed on vessels and at processing plants and retail facilities.

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. Visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.

On the Web:

NOAA's Fisheries Service seafood inspection program: <http://www.seafood.nmfs.noaa.gov/>