

**STATEMENT  
OF  
THE HONORABLE BART STUPAK  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS  
HEARING ENTITLED "DIMINISHED CAPACITY: CAN THE FDA ASSURE THE SAFETY  
AND SECURITY OF THE NATION'S FOOD SUPPLY –Part III"**

**October 11, 2007**

Today, we hold the third hearing by the Subcommittee dealing with the safety and security of our Nation's food supply. This hearing will focus on the safety of food imported into the United States and the adequacy of the efforts of both the FDA and the USDA to protect Americans from unsafe, imported food. We will also examine what food safety and quality control systems other countries use to protect their food imports.

Due to the globalization of the American economy, there has been a dramatic increase in the amount of imported food in recent years. In the last decade alone, USDA-regulated meat and poultry imports have increased by 87%. In the same time period, overall imports to the United States have tripled to almost \$2 trillion per year.

At a time when food imports are sharply increasing, FDA inspections of imported food have decreased by 90% from 50,000 inspections in 1972 to just 5,000 in 2006. The FDA now inspects less than 1 percent of all imports and only a fraction of that number are even tested. This is simply unacceptable.

We need a food safety system capable of combating dangerous food imports. Unfortunately, The Food and Drug Administration (FDA)'s current system is woefully inadequate.

Approximately 150 countries import food into the United States. Because of recent high profile events like melamine contaminated wheat gluten and seafood laced with unapproved antibiotics, imports from China have received the most attention. As with other countries, Chinese imports into the United States have steadily increased. However, Chinese imports have increased more rapidly than the global average. Between 1996 and 2006, the volume of imports of Chinese agricultural and seafood products increased by 346%. China is now the third largest exporter of agricultural and seafood products to the United States.

Because of the concerns regarding the safety of Chinese food imports, on August 17<sup>th</sup>, Chairman Dingell and I dispatched Committee staff to China to ascertain whether food from that country could be imported safely into the United States and to determine whether China has taken - or is taking - the necessary steps to assure the safety of its food exports.

While in China, Committee Staff met with government officials from China, Hong Kong, and the United States. They met with American and other multinational executives, and news reporters that cover food issues for their media outlets. In our first panel today, we'll hear from directly from the Committee staff about their findings.

Testifying today on the second panel will be Dr. Michael Martin from the Congressional Research Service. Dr. Martin is an expert in Asian trade practices and has familiarity with Japan and Hong Kong's quality control systems for dealing with imported food. He will testify regarding the methods employed by Japan and Hong Kong to ensure the safety of food imports

from China. The Committee would like to extend a special thank you to the Congressional Research Service for its valuable work in detailing food import issues. The work of Geoffrey Becker is especially appreciated.

Also testifying on the second panel will be Mr. James Rice, Vice President and Country Manager for Tyson Foods in China. He is an executive with over 20 years of experience in China. He will testify about quality control issues in China including steps that the Japanese take to ensure the safety of imports coming from China and the quality control measures that Tyson's employs in China to ensure the safety of the food that it produces there.

Finally, the third panel will be comprised of officials from both the USDA and the FDA. Dr. Richard Raymond of USDA will testify regarding the policies that his agency pursues to assure the safety of beef, pork, poultry, and egg imports. Dr. David Acheson and Ms. Margaret Glavin of the FDA will testify about the process that the FDA employs to assure the safety of FDA-regulated food imports. We also expect them to address specific issues of imported food safety.

Recently, Chairman Dingell and I introduced a bill that will address many of FDA's deficiencies. The bill would give the FDA a credible start in obtaining the resources it needs to deal with the flood of imported food. This hearing will also explore whether the FDA has the system or the will to use any new resources wisely. This Subcommittee has already uncovered evidence of the FDA's ability to squander resources through giving excessive bonuses to personnel at headquarters, attempting to consolidate decision making at headquarters instead of deploying urgently needed resources in the field, and in the fraudulent abuse of religious leave. Simply put, the FDA must use its resources more wisely to accomplish its mandate of protecting this Nation's food supply.

American consumption of imported food will continue to rise in the future. So now more than ever, our country's federal food safety system needs to be strong enough to protect the public health, our national security, and our economy. Today's hearing will discuss what must be done to make this necessity a reality.