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**Food Safety Working Group's Report Praised**  
*Statement of CSPI Food Safety Director Caroline Smith DeWaal*

The litany of new acronyms for the task forces and interagency consultations that are described in the Obama Administration's new Progress Report on Food Safety is worthy of a good spy novel: from SIP to CORE; from ICAT to CalciNet. It shows both the high level of attention that the Administration has paid to addressing food safety and the challenge when numerous federal and state agencies must work together during outbreaks and other critical food events. The report documents important improvements that have been made in the food safety system, especially with the adoption and implementation of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act. However, with so many agencies involved, lapses can easily occur in the absence of strong leadership. It is promising to see the continuation of the [Food Safety Working Group](#), which was established by President Obama early in his administration.

Future progress will require additional commitments in several key areas:

First, funding of the food safety programs at FSIS, FDA and CDC must be protected from across-the-board cuts. This funding is vital to further reduce the impact that major food safety problems pose for consumers and industry alike.

Second, effective communication can save lives during outbreaks and other food crises. The administration should set timelines for better integrating IT systems to ensure that agencies can share information effectively.

Finally, last summer's major food outbreak in Europe from a new *E. coli* strain and several recent U.S. outbreaks posed by [antibiotic-resistant strains](#) of *Salmonella* in ground meat, underscore the problem that such emerging pathogens pose. The agencies should develop a unified system for identifying and addressing emerging pathogens in the food supply.

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