

**Statement of Nancy Donley, President of Safe Tables Our Priority (S.T.O.P.),
on USDA's "New" Food Safety Vision:
"Shame on USDA For Caving Into Industry Pressure"**

"We are disappointed and outraged by the USDA's decision to cave in to industry pressure by backing off on their earlier inclination to seek stronger powers such as mandatory recall authority, the power to levy civil penalties on companies that repeatedly violate food safety regulations, and stronger federal meat and poultry pathogen reduction standards. With 14 people dying every day from contaminated food, the safety of America's families deserves more than a 'wait-and-see' response from the agency we count on to keep meat safe.

"Earlier this year, on behalf of thousands of parents of children crippled and killed by dirty meat, S.T.O.P. sat with Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman and commended her for signaling that this administration would have the courage to stand up to industry and ask Congress for the authority to protect America's families. She has broken the hearts of many American victims this week by backing off on her commitment to step up USDA oversight. Industry continues to erode USDA's power through legal maneuvering, and the USDA essentially is doing nothing about it.

"The latest CDC report shows that Salmonella illnesses have been on the rise since 2000, and there has been no decline in E. coli O157:H7 illnesses in the last seven years. Millions of American families will be hurt by this latest failure of the USDA to take strong action in the face of foodborne disease.

"This is not the type of leadership America's families need from this administration."