

FDA Holds Listening Session on FSMA Section 204(d)

On June 15, 2026, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) conducted a “Listening Session” to provide the industry an opportunity to describe challenges with implementing the food traceability regulations under Section 204(d) of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and discuss possible flexible solutions to comply with the regulation.

Thirty-six speakers provided testimony during the Listening Session, including CDA distributor members Sean Murphy, Doyles Sheehan, and Rene Atayan, AMCON Distributing Company, along with CDA Government Affairs Policy Advisor Tom Briant.

The main points made by these CDA members and Briant focused on the importance of food manufacturers taking on the primary responsibility for food traceability and imprinting the lot code, plus a code for the manufacturing plant and the expiration date on the master case label, inner packs and individual packages of food products subject to Section 204(d). The imprinting of these key data elements on labels, inner packs and individual packages would expedite the removal of contaminated food products from warehouse inventory because a visual inspection of these data elements on case labels, inner packs and individual packages would be all that is needed to identify the suspect product.

Other speakers, including representatives from the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) and the National Grocers Association (NGA), spoke about concerns that small, family-owned convenience store and grocery store businesses have not been considered in possible feasible solutions that minimize the financial impact on their stores.

Additionally, several speakers urged the FDA to consider a standardized labeling format to prevent dissimilar formats now used by hundreds of food manufacturers from inhibiting the ability of distributors, retailers and restaurants from complying with the regulation. CDA has also informed the FDA of the need for standardized labeling.

The FDA plans to conduct two more Listening Sessions this year to obtain more input and feedback on the Section 204(d) food tracing regulation.