

CASTLE EXAMINES EFFECTIVENESS OF FOOD SAFETY IN SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM -- MARCH 05, 2008

CASTLE EXAMINES EFFECTIVENESS OF FOOD SAFETY IN SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM

March 05, 2008

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Delaware Representative Mike Castle, along with Members of the House Committee on Education and Labor, examined child nutrition in elementary and secondary public schools as well as current food safety issues impacting schools, including those in Delaware, in light of the allegations of abuse at the Westland/Hallmark Meat Company, at a hearing on the challenges and opportunities for improving school nutrition.

"Like so many people around the country, I was disturbed to see the shocking footage captured at the California meat processing plant," said Rep. Castle. "It was even more disconcerting that this tainted meat had been sent across the country to be used in our nation's schools, including schools in Delaware.

"I was pleased to have the opportunity to raise this issue with the panel of expert witnesses testifying before the Committee, including Kate Houston who serves as Deputy Undersecretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Sciences at the United States Department of Agriculture, and evaluate how an issue such as this may be prevented in the future to ensure the United States continues to maintain one of the safest food chains in the world.

"It was also valuable to learn more about the attention to child nutrition in local school districts and what we need to focus on during the upcoming reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act," said Rep. Castle.

The Child Nutrition and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Acts of 2004 were enacted into law on June 30, 2004 to reauthorize and improve all the child nutrition programs included in the Child Nutrition and the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Acts. The Law is up for reauthorization next year.

Additionally, last month the Humane Society of the United States launched disturbing videos of employees at the Westland/Hallmark Meat Packing Company moving sickly, or downed, cows to slaughter for human consumption.

Last month in Delaware, the News Journal reported that an elementary school in the Brandywine School District had received 600 beef patties from the Westland/Hallmark Meat Packing Company, but the school has discarded the recalled meat.

The United States Department of Agriculture immediately suspended this company as a supplier to the National School Lunch Program.

###