

From: [A Message from the Commissioner](#)
To: [FDA-Wide](#)
Subject: CFSAN Personnel News
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From the Desk of the Commissioner



Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to let you know that Dr. Susan Mayne, the FDA's long-standing Director of the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN), has elected to retire, effective May 31.

Since joining the FDA in January of 2015, Susan has provided skillful leadership to CFSAN's over 1,100 dedicated employees and managed its budget of more than \$400 million, helping to ensure the U.S. food supply is safe, healthy and properly labeled for consumers, and using the FDA's authorities to help ensure the safety and proper labeling of dietary supplements and cosmetics sold in the U.S.

Susan came to the FDA after nearly three decades of teaching and research focused on the health consequences of diet and nutrition at Yale University, where she established a reputation as an internationally-recognized public health leader and scientist. At Yale she held an endowed chair as the C.-E.A. Winslow Professor of Epidemiology and her career there included two distinguished leadership positions: Chair of the Department of Chronic Disease Epidemiology and Associate Director of the Yale Cancer Center, where her work spanned from the molecular to the population level. Her research publications have been cited more than 17,000 times.

As CFSAN Director, Susan has overseen, led, and played a key role in implementing numerous critical public health policies relating to food safety and nutrition. These include the issuance of nine foundational rules and nearly 70 guidances to implement the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act, the landmark law that has established a prevention-oriented framework to modernize our approach to food safety to keep pace with an ever-changing global food system.

Also under her leadership, CFSAN released updated nutrition facts labeling, including added sugars for the first time; determined that industrially produced *trans* fats are not generally recognized as safe and thus cannot be added to foods; implemented menu labeling requirements; and issued sodium reduction targets for industry to improve the healthfulness of the U.S. food supply. She also worked to ensure that CFSAN has supported innovation in the food supply while assuring products are safe and properly labeled; for example in 2022, CFSAN completed the first pre-market consultation of a human food made from cultured animal cells. In addition, Susan played a critical role in the FDA's Closer to Zero Action Plan to reduce exposure to toxic elements in foods commonly eaten by babies and young children to the lowest possible levels, as well as earlier work to reduce inorganic arsenic in infant rice cereal, the leading source of arsenic exposure in infants.

Her leadership as part of the FDA's response to the COVID-19 pandemic helped us successfully address the unprecedented challenges we have faced with the public health emergency, including issuing labeling flexibility guidances that were enormously important to support the food supply. More recently she contributed critical scientific insights and nutrition expertise helping to assure continuity in the availability of infant formula products, including medically necessary specialty, amino acid-based and metabolic infant formula products.

To each of these efforts, Susan brought expertise in areas including nutritional sciences, chemistry, toxicology, microbiology, epidemiology and genomics. Her scientific acumen has helped ensure that the FDA's vital work to address microbial and chemical safety of food products is based on sound science and rigorous data review. Under her leadership, CFSAN has advanced cutting edge scientific research, such as the use of whole genome sequencing of foodborne pathogens. In this way, Susan has led efforts to assure that the safety of foods, cosmetics and dietary supplements is based on rigorous scientific evidence, informing regulatory decisions that protect and advance public health.

Her work has involved close coordination with HHS and the White House, with leadership at numerous other federal agencies including CDC, NIH, USDA, and others, as well as with international governments and partners. She also regularly engaged with leadership of major food companies on food safety and nutrition initiatives, and with consumer, health professional, academic and diverse stakeholder groups.

Before and during her tenure at the FDA, Susan has received numerous honors in recognition of her scientific and public health work, as well as her leadership ability and skill at collaboration. For example, she is a Lifetime National Associate, National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences, and the recipient of Commissioner's Special Citation Awards, and the FDA Outstanding Service Award.

I've been fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with Susan on a number of the important public health achievements the FDA has had under her leadership, and in each case have valued the collaborative spirit, scientific thoroughness, and good sense she brings to the table. I especially want to thank her for her recent work and thoughtfulness in helping develop the vision for a unified Human Foods Program. By building what I believe will be a transformative system that ensures seamless coordination across the FDA and with our many partners and stakeholders, we will continue to ensure that our nation has a safe, nutritious, and plentiful food supply. And this will stand as yet another of Susan's many significant contributions to the advancement of public health and the strengthening of the FDA.

While the entire agency will miss Susan's expertise and leadership, I know the staff at CFSAN will miss her dearly, as she has been a leader who is both extraordinarily capable and accessible. I will also miss her integrity, sense of duty and ability to do the hard work in the face of adversity. But we will all take solace in her attention to attending to the ongoing work while also planning for the new Human Foods Program in a way that will leave the agency in good stead.

I hope you will join me in wishing Susan a wonderful and well-deserved retirement full of enjoyment and continued contributions to the field, and in thanking her for her vigorous commitment to public health, safe food, and good nutrition.

Sincerely,
Rob

Robert M. Califf, M.D. (he/him/his)
Commissioner of Food and Drugs

