



STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & MARKETS
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Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor

Richard A. Ball
Acting Commissioner

April 30, 2014

Mr. John Buyce
Audit Director
Office of the State Comptroller
Division of State Government Accountability
110 State Street, 11th floor
Albany, NY 12236-0001

Re: 90 Day Response to Audit Report 2013-S-27
Food Safety Monitoring

Dear Mr. Buyce:

Pursuant to Section 170 of the Executive Law, the following are the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets comments on actions taken to implement the recommendations contained in the above referenced audit report.

Recommendation 1: *Establish performance measures for food inspection activities, including Department-wide policy governing such things as work scheduling and time allowances for local travel.*

Comment: Enhancements were made to the Division's Food Inspection Activity Program. This program provides managers and supervisors with metrics to measure individual inspectors' performance within their respective zone (15 geographical regions) and in comparison to statewide averages. We are currently identifying the causes for significant variances and corrective actions are being pursued.

Recommendation 2: *Establish procedures to further prioritize and ensure timely completion of inspections of new establishments.*

Comment: Since the OSC audit, the Division now provides managers and supervisors with weekly analytics to monitor the status of inspections for new businesses. Last month, the Department conducted a review of both its licensing unit and inspection process as part of the administration's *Lean Management Initiative*. As a result, the licensing unit has reduced the amount of time it now

takes to process licenses. In addition, several technological improvements were identified that will provide our inspectors with the capability to access critical information in a more timely manner. Once these improvements are fully implemented, the Department believes inspectors will be able to identify and inspect new establishments more effectively. In addition, methods to reduce administrative burdens on inspectors were also identified and are being put into place, as technological resources become available.

Recommendation 3: Increase efforts to provide coordinated real-time access to data among divisions and obtain training on how to use that data to perform necessary analytics to monitor performance, including activities such as inspections and complaint response.

Comment: The Division has conducted a thorough analysis of core activities (consumer complaints, investigations, food seizure, hearings, recalls, samples, and inspections) by inspector and zone. As previously noted, managers and supervisors are now provided with periodic analytics to monitor and improve performance. Quality control measures for the complaint process have been implemented to provide assurance that complaints are responded to in a timely manner.

Should you require any further information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Ball
Acting Commissioner

cc Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Honorable Dean G. Skelos
Honorable Jeffrey D. Klein
Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Honorable Sheldon Silver
Honorable Joseph D. Morelle
Honorable Brian M. Kolb
Honorable John A. DeFrancisco
Honorable Liz Krueger
Honorable Herman D. Farrell, Jr.
Honorable Robert C. Oaks
Division of the Budget, Examination Unit