FDA Food Inspections Reduced During Shutdown

Most of the food safety inspections have been stopped during the federal government shutdown. FDA Commissioner Dr. Scott Gottlieb says he is trying to figure out what the most essential inspections are and continue those inspections. To achieve this the FDA is said to have to force furloughed workers to work without being paid.

> *There are important things we are not doing." – FDA Commissioner Dr. Scott Gottlieb*

FDA inspectors are not testing products for salmonella, E. coli, listeria, etc. If companies find contamination issues the FDA will still publically announce the recalls. The FDA is still checking foreign food, but there is virtually no inspections of domestic food production.

> *We're doing everything we can to try to maintain our basic consumer protection role. That's our focus." – Gottlieb said in interview to NBC*

https://twitter.com/SGottliebFDA/status/1083055700593516545

> *Some of FDA's work, such as drug approvals, inspections of drug-producing facilities, and regulating tobacco products, are paid for by user fees. They're not greatly affected by the shutdown. But much of the budget is specifically appropriated by Congress, and it's on hold. About 7,000 of the agency's 17,000 employees, or 41 percent of staff, are furloughed." – NBC*

Gottlieb plans to call in about 10% of the FDA's inspection workforce to re-start the inspections of the "high-risk

domestic facilities.” Gottlieb estimates that the FDA employs about 5,000 inspectors and normally does about 160 inspections a month.

> *It’s something we currently aren’t doing. I think it’s the right thing to do for public safety.”*