THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

The Food and Drug Administration operates chemical and bacteriological laboratories in 18 field locations, and chemical, bacteriological, and biological laboratories in headquarters installations. The research and regulatory programs conducted in these laboratories are designed to develop information needed in inforcing the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and related legislation.

The resources of the chemical laboratories are devoted to: (1) research on the composition of foods and food additives, drugs, cosmetics, pesticides, colorants, and hazardous household substances; (2) development of reliable methods for determining the concentrations of significant ingredients (including contaminants) in these commodities; and (3) application of analytical methods to the examination of articles encountered in the marketplace for compliance with legal requirements.

The bacteriological laboratories are engaged chiefly in two activities:

(1) They develop methods for detecting, recovering, and identifying undesirable micro-organisms and their deleterious metabolic residues in foods, drugs, and cosmetics; and they examine commercial products to insure that these commodities are free of such contamination.

(2) They devise and apply microbiological assay procedures to determine the potency of antibiotic drugs and vitamin preparations.

The pharmacologists and biochemists in the biological laboratories and associated animal facilities conduct research and regulatory investigations to measure the toxicological properties of substances occurring in foods, drugs, cosmetics, and hazardous household articles; they devise bioassay procedures for determining the potency of drugs (e.g., insulin, digitalis, adre nocon tiotrophic hormones), and they employ these bioassay methods in examining commercial products.

The Food and Drug Administration has maintained liaison with the Department of Defense, other laboratories in the Public Health Service, and Veterans' Administration, and performs laboratory services for them upon their request. The responsibilities of the Food and Drug Administration laboratories, both in executing its own programs and in performing services for other agencies, are continuous in nature. Upon completion of any project, resources are directed to cope with other problems confronting the agency. Priorities for action are assigned upon approval by the Office of the Commissioner of proposals recommended by the laboratory directors. Decisions as to whether a new laboratory facility is needed or the job can be handled within existing laboratories are likewise made in the Office of the Commissioner after discussions with all interested elements in the agency.

To relate the activities of Public Health Service laboratories to the questions asked in your invitation to the Department to testify, your first question concerned the redirection of a laboratory's capabilities when it has completed its assigned mission. Since the basic mission of Public Health Service laboratories is the broad question of health problems, their activities are actually never completed. Specific projects within this broad mission are completed, and at such times new projects are undertaken after thorough planning and review by