Federal Agencies
Regulating Food

Anthropology of Food
University of Minnesota Duluth
Tim Roufs ©2014
a primer on . . .
The 1992 USDA food pyramid
the United States Department of Agriculture is known widely for its “food guide pyramid” . . . one of the most recognized logos in the world
this is the old (1992) version

the 1992 “Food Guide Pyramid”
the 1992 Food Guide Pyramid

was replaced by

MyPyramid

on 19 April 2005
The 2005 USDA food guide pyramid
the 2005 MyPyramid

was replaced by

MyPlate

on 2 June 2011
MyPyramid was replaced by MyPlate on 2 June 2011.
Inflatable USDA Food Pyramid

http://www.ethnicfoodsco.com/Japan/JapaneseFoodPyramid.htm
by law, the primary mission of the USDA is to promote U.S. agriculture
the USDA should not to be confused with United States Food and Drug Administration
the United States Food and Drug Administration is responsible for regulating and supervising the safety of foods, dietary supplements, etc.
promotes U.S.A. agriculture
regulates U.S.A. food safety

Inflatable USDA Food Pyramid
www.ethnicfoodsco.com/Japan/JapaneseFoodPyramid.htm
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regulates U.S.A. food safety

and in addition there is the

[Logos of USDA, FDA, and Environmental Protection Agency]
promotes U.S.A. agriculture
regulates U.S.A. food safety
which is charged to protect U.S.A. human health and the environment
is charged to protect U.S.A. human health and the environment

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epa
is charged to protect U.S.A. human health and the environment

but . . .

a big question for them is . . .

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epa
How to value life? EPA devalues its estimate

$900,000 taken off in what critics say is way to weaken pollution rules

Each American is now valued at $5.9 million by the EPA in figuring out the costs/benefits of rulemaking — that’s nearly $1 million less than five years ago.
Value of life, EPA’s air division*

$8 million

Feb. 2003: $7.8

Value of life on the decline

In May, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency put the value of a U.S. life at $6.9 million, nearly a $1 million drop from 2003.

May 2008: $6.9

1996 97 98 99 00 01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08

*The EPA’s water division uses different and larger values of life.

SOURCE: Environmental Protection Agency

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/25626294/
human life was officially devalued $900,000 by the G. W. Bush Administration

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/25626294/
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So what?

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*The EPA’s water division uses different and larger values of life.

SOURCE: Environmental Protection Agency

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/25626294/
“The EPA figure is not based on people's earning capacity, or their potential contributions to society, or how much they are loved and needed by their friends and family — some of the factors used in insurance claims and wrongful-death lawsuits. Instead, economists calculate the value based on what people are willing to pay to avoid certain risks, and on how much extra employers pay their workers to take on additional risks.”
How to value life? EPA devalues its estimate
$900,000 taken off in what critics say is way to weaken pollution rules

“Though it may seem like a harmless bureaucratic recalculation, the devaluation has real consequences.”

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http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/25626294/
“Dan Esty, a senior EPA policy official in the first Bush administration and now director of the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy, said that ‘it's hard to imagine that it has other than a political motivation.’”

Each American is now valued at $6.9 million by the EPA in figuring out the costs/benefits of rulemaking — that’s nearly $1 million less than five years ago.
When drawing up regulations, government agencies put a value on human life and then weigh the costs versus the lifesaving benefits of a proposed rule. The less a life is worth to the government, the less the need for a regulation, such as tighter restrictions on pollution.

Each American is now valued at $6.9 million by the EPA in figuring out the costs/benefits of rulemaking — that's nearly $1 million less than five years ago.
e.g., Factory Farming (CAFOs) has environmental impacts and health risks . . .

EPA

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CAFO
Consider, for example, a hypothetical regulation that costs $18 billion to enforce but will prevent 2,500 deaths. At $7.8 million per person (the old figure), the lifesaving benefits outweigh the costs. But at $6.9 million per person, the rule costs more than the lives it saves, so it may not be adopted.

Each American is now valued at $6.9 million by the EPA in figuring out the costs/benefits of rulemaking — that's nearly $1 million less than five years ago.
e.g., Factory Farming (CAFOs) and decisions affect animal welfare, food ethics . . .

EPA

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CAFO
and to the list federal regulators you must also add
promotes U.S.A. agriculture

regulates U.S.A. food safety

is charged to protect U.S.A. human health and the environment

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
“works to protect public health and safety by providing information to enhance health decisions”
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (or CDC) is a United States federal agency under the Department of Health and Human Services based in Atlanta, Georgia. It works to protect public health and safety by providing information to enhance health decisions, and it promotes health through partnerships with state health departments and other organizations. The CDC focuses national attention on developing and applying disease prevention and control (especially infectious diseases), environmental health, occupational safety and health, health promotion, prevention and education activities designed to improve the health of the people of the United States.
an excellent work that sorts all of this out is Marion Nestle’s *Food Politics*
and, of course, The United States Supreme Court trumps everybody . . .
for e.g.,

Polluters Beyond the Law

Since recent Supreme Court decisions that have limited the reach of the federal Clean Water Act, the Environmental Protection Agency has logged more violations by major permit holders but has taken enforcement action against fewer of these polluters.

CLEAN WATER ACT VIOLATIONS ARE RISING . . .
30,000 violations

. . . BUT E.P.A. ENFORCEMENT IS DOWN
3,000 facilities

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Source: New York Times analysis of Environmental Protection Agency data

“When drawing up regulations, government agencies put a value on human life and then weigh the costs versus the lifesaving benefits of a proposed rule. The less a life is worth to the government, the less the need for a regulation, such as tighter restrictions on pollution.”

Each American is now valued at $6.9 million by the EPA in figuring out the costs/benefits of rulemaking — that’s nearly $1 million less than five years ago.
... and when tighter restrictions on pollution are attempted the affected parties [legally] fight the regulations to the US Supreme Court.

Net result: the USDA
and the FDA
and the EPA
and the CDC
[fill in the blank __________________]
again, an excellent treatment of all of this can be found in . . .

Marion Nestle

Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health

University of California Press
2007