

## **Section I. Purpose**

The National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) is the federal/state cooperative program recognized by the U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference (ISSC) for the sanitary control of shellfish produced and sold for human consumption. The purpose of the NSSP is to promote and improve the sanitation of shellfish (oysters, clams, mussels and scallops) moving in interstate commerce through federal/state cooperation and uniformity of State shellfish programs. Participants in the NSSP include agencies from shellfish producing and non-producing States, FDA, EPA, NOAA, and the shellfish industry. Under international agreements with FDA, foreign governments also participate in the NSSP. Other components of the NSSP include program guidelines, State growing area classification and dealer certification programs, and FDA evaluation of State program elements.

In 1984, the FDA entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference recognizing the ISSC as the primary voluntary national organization of State shellfish regulatory officials that provide guidance and counsel on matters for the sanitary control of shellfish. The purpose of the ISSC is to provide a formal structure for State regulatory authorities to participate in establishing updated regulatory guidelines and procedures for uniform state application of the Program. The ISSC has adopted formal procedures for state representatives to review shellfish sanitation issues and develop regulatory guidelines. Following FDA concurrence, these guidelines are published in revisions of the NSSP Model Ordinance.

The NSSP Guide for the Control of Molluscan Shellfish consists of a Model Ordinance, supporting guidance documents, recommended forms, and other related materials associated with the Program. The Model Ordinance includes guidelines to ensure that the shellfish produced in States in compliance with the guidelines are safe and sanitary. The Model Ordinance provides readily adoptable standards and administrative practices necessary for the sanitary control of molluscan shellfish.