

**CONSUMERS UNION \* CONSUMER FEDERATION OF AMERICA \*  
US PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP**

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Contacts: Susan Herold, CU, 202-462-6262  
Travis Plunkett, CFA, 202-387-6121  
Lindsey Johnson, USPIRG, 202-546-9707

**Consumer Groups: Senate Must ‘Vet the Vet’  
Bush nomination of FDA acting director to head agency raises significant  
food and drug safety concerns**

(Washington, D.C.) – Citing growing safety concerns with the nation’s drug and food supply, leading consumer groups today urged the U.S. Senate to thoroughly “vet the vet” in the wake of President Bush’s nomination of Dr. Lester Crawford to head the Food and Drug Administration. Crawford, a veterinarian by training with a doctorate in microbiology, has served as acting FDA commissioner since last March.

“Senators should ask Lester Crawford tough questions about his record at the FDA and his agenda before they vote up or down on his nomination,” said Janell Mayo Duncan, legislative and regulatory counsel for Consumers Union, publisher of *Consumer Reports*. “Under Dr. Crawford’s watch, the FDA has failed to protect the public from dangerous prescription drugs, dietary supplements and contaminated animal feed that could carry mad cow disease.”

“It is time to vet the vet,” said Travis Plunkett, legislative director for Consumer Federation of America. “The Senate must question Dr. Crawford’s independence from the pharmaceutical industry and his attitude toward agency whistleblowers who have questioned the FDA’s commitment to public safety.”

“We look forward to hearing senators grill Dr. Crawford about his views on critical issues, such as establishing a transparent clinical trial registry for drugs, creating an independent office of drug safety and instituting a mandatory adverse-reaction reporting system for dietary supplements,” said Lindsey Johnson, a consumer advocate for U.S. Public Interest Research Group.

Added Duncan: “The FDA lacked vigilant and effective leadership for much of President Bush’s first term. The agency went without a permanent director for two-thirds of the term, and during that time the public has lost confidence in the ability and the willingness of FDA to protect consumers from unreasonably dangerous products.”

The groups stated that they have taken no position on the nomination, but were calling on the Senate to ensure that Crawford thoroughly address these public safety concerns before considering his nomination. Consumer groups recently called for an independent commissioner who puts public safety first. That letter can be found at:  
[http://www.consumersunion.org/pub/core\\_health\\_care/001760.html](http://www.consumersunion.org/pub/core_health_care/001760.html)