

Technology seen as solution to food safety transportation rule

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What they called the “ice box on wheels” dates back to America’s railroads as early as 1851 and the huge fleets of today’s “reefer” trailers are examples of a transportation industry that has long embraced technology to overcome challenges.

To the extent that the new food safety transportation rule add new requirements to prevent food contamination, the industry is looking mostly to technology for answers.

The final rule — for shippers, loaders, carriers, and receivers— [calls for best sanitation practices in transportation](#), including proper refrigeration, proper cleaning of transportation containers between loads, and use of proper protections for food during transport.

Published Tuesday in the *Federal Register*, the rule is the latest step in implementing the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), with the goal of preventing food safety problems before they arise.



“Consumers deserve a safe food supply and this final rule will help to ensure that all those involved in the farm-to-fork continuum are doing their part to ensure that the food products that arrive in our grocery stores are safe to eat,” said Michael R. Taylor, deputy commissioner for foods and veterinary medicine at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The FDA proposed the rule in February 2014. The final version gives consideration to issues raised in more than 200 comments submitted by the transportation industry, food industry, government regulatory partners, international trading partners, consumer advocates, tribal organizations and others. It builds on the transportation industry’s best practices for cleaning, inspecting, maintaining, loading, unloading and operating vehicles and transportation equipment.

“We recognize the importance of education and training in achieving widespread compliance, and we are committed to working with both industry and our government partners to ensure effective implementation of all of the new food safety rules under the Food Safety Modernization Act,” said Taylor.

Businesses will be required to comply with the new transportation regulation one year from now. Smaller businesses have two years to comply with the new requirements. The final transportation rule is the sixth of seven major rules that implement the core of FSMA.

The “Sanitary Transportation of Human and Animal Food” rule builds on the [Preventive Controls Rules for Human Foods](#) and [Animal Foods](#) rules, the [Produce Safety Rule](#), the [Foreign Supplier Verification Program](#) rule and the [Accreditation of Third-Party Certification](#) rule, all of which FDA finalized last year.

The seventh rule, which focuses on [mitigation strategies to protect food against intentional adulteration](#), is expected to be finalized later in 2016. These seven rules are designed to work together to systemically strengthen the food safety system and better protect public health.

That first insulated boxcar went into service on the Northern Railroad in 1851. Ice-based trailers went into use on the roads in 1878 and ice-based system were replaced with mechanical refrigeration in the 1940s.

Today, transport executives like John Ryan, president of Ryan Systems, say technologies exist to meet the standards called for in the new transportation rule, whether its tracking shipments with GPS or using sensors to record temperatures.

“Technology is actually pretty good,” Ryan told the publication *Fleet Owner*.