



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

Volume 10, Issue 17
May 2, 2008



FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

Comment Period for *E. coli* Public Meeting Extended, Transcripts Posted to Web

FSIS held a public meeting to discuss challenges and proposed solutions in moving forward to address recalls and illnesses related to *E. coli* O157:H7.

Speakers outside the Agency shared their perspectives on the causes of the recent uptick in *E. coli* O157:H7 at the pre-harvest and processing stages as well. In addition, they shared their views on how best to move forward.

The comment period has been extended to May 28. FSIS has taken this action to respond to requests that were made during and after the April meeting.

Transcripts from the meeting are available for review at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/RD_2008-0011/index.asp.

FSIS Posts 2007 Microbiological Data for *E. coli*, *Salmonella* and Ready-to-Eat Meat and Poultry Products

FSIS posted on its Web site 2007 microbiological data for *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) O157:H7 in raw ground beef samples as well sampling results in Ready-to-Eat meat and poultry for calendar year 2007.

The Agency also posted the 2007 *Annual Salmonella Progress Report*. FSIS verifies that establishments are meeting

performance standards by collecting and analyzing randomly selected product samples.

This testing program was initiated in the 1990s and has become a key component of the Agency's overall system for hazard analysis and critical control point verification. The objective of the testing program is to estimate the prevalence and levels of

Continued on page two

Inside this Issue

Public Health and Food Safety Summit.....	2
FSIS Podcast Service.....	3
NACMCF Public Meeting	3

Export Requirement Updates



The Library of Export Requirements has been updated to reflect changes in export requirements for the following:

Russia

Complete information can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Export_Information/index.asp.

FSIS to Hold *E. coli* Workshop in Michigan

FSIS is offering regulatory education workshops on *E. coli* for owners and operators of small and very small plants in Michigan next week.

The May 7 session will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at the Radisson Plaza Hotel Kalamazoo, 100 West Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

To register by phone, call (800) 336-3747. Online registration forms can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Outreach_Sessions_SVS_Plants/index.asp.

2007 Microbiological Data ...

Continued from page one

bacteria on a sample of inspected carcasses. All FSIS studies focus on foodborne pathogens as they relate to public health.

Over time, the Agency has taken steps to improve the effectiveness of testing and its impact on protecting public health through

techniques like increased sample size and adoption of more sensitive testing methods.

Results for 2007 microbiological data for all three reports are available on FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Microbiology/index.asp.

FSIS to Co-Host Public Health and Food Safety Summit on May 15 and 16

FSIS announced a public meeting co-sponsored by the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention titled: Better Communications, *Better Public Health Outcomes: Strategies for Improved Coordination During Foodborne Outbreaks* to discuss strategies on improved information sharing and coordination during multi-jurisdictional foodborne outbreak investigations last month.

Local, state and federal public health partners as well as consumer groups and industry are invited to share their perspectives on best practices and challenges to coordinate effectively during these outbreaks.

The meeting will be held May 15-16 at the Renaissance St. Louis Grand and Suites Hotel, 800 Washington Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri.

The summit will include a public meeting and an invitation-only simulation exercise. The steering committee will include representation from member organizations of the Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response, as well as other stakeholders.

Online registration can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Meetings_&_Events/index.asp.

For further information, contact Bonnie Kissler, Office of Public Health Science, FSIS, at (404) 562-5940 or by e-mail at Bonnie.Kissler@fsis.usda.gov. Persons requiring a sign language interpreter or other special accommodations should notify Dr. Kissler by May 8.

A Consumer's Guide to Food Safety: Severe Storms and Hurricanes

Did you know that a flood, fire, natural disaster, or the loss of power from high winds, snow, or ice could jeopardize the safety of your food?

Knowing how to determine if food is safe and how to keep food safe will help minimize the potential loss of food and reduce the risk of foodborne illness.



The guide titled, *A Consumer's Guide to Food Safety: Severe Storms and Hurricanes*, provides specific food safety recommendations on what to do before, during and after tropical storms and hurricanes.

The guidelines also include recommendations about what to do with food stored in refrigerators and freezers.

To view the consumer's guide, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Severe_Storms_and_Hurricanes_Guide.pdf.

FSIS Podcast Service Available through Apple, Inc.'s iTunes

Last week FSIS launched a series of educational podcasts tailored to address food safety and education issues for consumers and other stakeholders.

After last week's successful launch, the Agency submitted podcasts to the Apple iTunes store, and these are now available on iTunes.

While the initial focus is to provide information to small and very small plant owners and operators and their employees,

the Agency plans to use this tool to communicate with other stakeholders as well.

Users can subscribe to free podcasts through FSIS' Web site, as well as direct subscription from the iTunes store by typing "Food Safety and Inspection Service podcast" in the search engine. Customers can also go directly to <http://phobos.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewPodcast?id=279346056> to access the podcast.

NACMCF Subcommittees to Hold Public Meetings

Subcommittees for the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF) are scheduled to hold public meetings from May 19 through 22.

The Subcommittee on the Determination of the Most Appropriate Technologies for FSIS to Adopt in Performing Routine and Baseline Microbiological Analyses will hold a public meeting on May 19 and 20.

The focus is to discuss and develop guidance to improve laboratory and in-plant testing methods for pathogens and indicator organisms. This project will assist the Agency with its goal to enhance microbiological testing methods and will focus on exploring the utility of new technologies.

The Subcommittee on Parameters for Inoculated Pack/Challenge Study Protocols is set to hold a public meeting on May 21 and 22.

Discussions for this meeting will include recommendations for appropriate criteria in inoculated pack/challenge studies, determining time/temperature controls for safe food preparations. Both public meetings will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in conference room 369 of the Aerospace Building, 901 D Street, S.W., Washington, D.C.

To register, contact Karen Thomas-Sharp, advisory committee specialist at (202) 690-6620 or by email at karen.thomas-sharp@fsis.usda.gov. Individuals are encouraged to pre-register to attend.