



FSIS Constituent Update

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Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Security

Johanns Announces Delay in Import of Meat from Older Animals from Canada

USDA announced a final rule on December 29, 2004, that establishes criteria for geographic regions to be recognized as presenting minimal risk of introducing Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) into the United States. It places Canada in the minimal-risk category, and defines the requirements that must be met for the import of certain ruminants and ruminant products from Canada. A minimal-risk region can include a region in which BSE-infected animals have been diagnosed, but where sufficient risk-mitigation measures have been put in place to make the introduction of BSE into the United States unlikely. The final rule published in the Federal Register on January 4, 2005 and will become effective March 7, 2005.

In a statement released February 9, Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns said: "Our ongoing investigations into the recent finds of BSE in Canada in animals over 30 months are not complete. Therefore, I feel it is prudent to delay the effective date for allowing imports of meat from animals 30-months and over.

"At the same time, I am asking U.S. officials to move forward in consideration and development of a plan to allow imports of animals 30-months and older for slaughter as well as beef from over 30-month animals as the next step in resuming full trade with Canada. As always, decisions will be made based on the latest scientific information and with the protection of public and animal health the highest priority.

"We remain very confident that the combination of the rule's requirements, in addition to the animal and public health measures that Canada has in place to prevent the spread of BSE, along with the extensive U.S. regulatory food-safety and animal-health systems, provide the protection to U.S. consumers and livestock. The removal of Specified Risk Materials is the most effective barrier to protect consumers, and therefore the rest of the rule will proceed as announced."

To view the statement in its entirety visit: www.usda.gov

Export Requirement Updates

The [Library of Export Requirements](#) has been updated to reflect changes in export requirements for the following:

Qatar

Russia

Complete information is available online at:
[www.fsis.usda.gov/
Regulations_&Policies/
Export_Information/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/Export_Information/)



FSIS Adds Slovakia to the Meat Export Eligibility List

On February 8, 2005, FSIS issued a final rule adding Slovakia to the list of countries eligible to export meat products to the United States. Reviews of Slovakia's laws, regulations, and other written materials show that its meat processing system meets requirements that are equivalent to the relevant provisions of the Federal Meat Inspection Act.

Meat products processed in certified establishments in Slovakia will be eligible to be exported only if these products are derived from cattle, sheep, swine or goats slaughtered in federally inspected establishments in the United States or in certified slaughter establishments in other countries eligible to export meat to the United States. All meat products exported from Slovakia to the United States will be subject to reinspection at the U.S. ports-of-entry by FSIS inspectors as required by law. The final rule will go into effect April 11, 2005.

To view Docket No. 99-018F visit: www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/

Public Meeting to Address Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling

On March 15, 2005 the Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will hold a public meeting to provide information and receive comments on agenda items that will be discussed at the 26th Session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling in Budapest, Hungary, April 4 - 8, 2005. The public meeting will be held from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., in room 1A002 of the Harvey W. Wiley Federal Building, 5100 Paint Branch Parkway, College Park, Md.

For more information or for a sign language interpreter, contact Dr. Gregory Diachenko, Director, Division of Chemistry Research and Environmental Review, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, FDA, Harvey W. Wiley Federal Building, 5100 Paint Branch Parkway, College Park, Md., 20740, at (301) 436-1898. Agenda items for the meeting can be found at: www.codexalimentarius.net/current.asp.

THIS WEEK'S HOT WEB LINKS

FSIS Recalls

[www.fsis.usda.gov/
Fsis_Recalls/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fsis_Recalls/)

Industry Self-Assessment Checklist for Food Security

[www.fsis.usda.gov/
PDF/
Self_Assessment
Checklist
Food_Security.pdf](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Self_Assessment_Checklist_Food_Security.pdf)



USDA Offers Dating Guidance for Valentine's Day: Out with the Old, In With the New

If your plans for a romantic Valentine's Day dinner begin with a peek inside your refrigerator, check twice to be sure you've not missed the moment of opportunity. That nice chicken breast, pork loin, or steak bought a week ago and marked "sell by February 1" may have passed its prime.

Dating can be delicate — it's important to know when the timing is right. "Sell by/use by/purchase by/best-if-used-by" — how do consumers know which to follow? To eliminate the guessing, USDA offers some practical guidance on how to read those dates — on food labels — and stay healthy.

Generally, dates such as "sell by" are voluntary, meaning they are not mandated by the federal government. Dates are provided by manufacturers as a quality guide. One exception is baby formula and some baby food in which this requirement is linked to nutritional adequacy.

So what about that chicken you plan to roast and serve? Think about timing when you're in the store. Be sure that you buy fresh chicken before the "sell by" date on the package. After that, you can keep it in your refrigerator one to two days before cooking. Or, pop it in the freezer and extend its possibilities for up to one year.

If you have a question about meat, poultry or egg products, call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline toll free at 1-888-MPHotline or 1-888-674-6854, TTY: 1-800-256-7072.

For more information and tips visit: www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/NR_020705_01/.

To submit comments or questions, contact the editor at:

fsisupdate@fsis.usda.gov (202) 720-9113



The USDA Food Safety Mobile: Taking Food Safety Education on the Road

The USDA Food Safety Mobile travels continuously throughout the United States to educate consumers about the risks associated with mishandling food and steps they can take to reduce their risk of foodborne illness. The food safety mobile's next dates and locations are as follows:

March 1, 2005

Stockton Food Bank
(Stockton, Calif.)

March 5, 2005

Cerritos Farmers Market
(Cerritos, Calif.)

March 6, 2005

Encino Farmers Market
(Van Nuys, Calif.)