



FSIS Constituent Update

Volume 6, Issue 13

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Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Security

Continued Reductions in Foodborne Illness Announced

Dr. Merle Pierson, Acting Under Secretary for Food Safety highlighted on Thursday before the Senate subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Report shows that USDA's aggressive attention to science based policies and effective enforcement strategies is making meat, poultry and egg products safer and protecting public health.

In its annual report on the incidence of infections from foodborne pathogens, released on Thursday, the CDC noted significant declines in 2004 from the 1996-98 baseline in illnesses caused by *E. coli* O157 (42%), *Listeria monocytogenes* (40%), *Campylobacter* (31%) and *Yersinia* (45%). While overall *Salmonella* illnesses fell by 8%, those caused by *Salmonella Typhimurium*, typically associated with meat and poultry, fell by 41%.

Most significantly, the rate of illness from *E. coli* O157, 0.9 cases per 100,000 individuals, means the U.S. is now below the Healthy People 2010 goal of 1.0 case per 100,000 persons. FSIS is very close to meeting the Healthy People 2010 goal set for illnesses from *Listeria monocytogenes*. This year's report shows that the 2003 reductions in foodborne illness were not an isolated event and that sustained progress is being made toward reducing illness from very dangerous foodborne pathogens. While the CDC data is inclusive of all foods, it is consistent with the results of regulatory testing of meat, poultry and egg products by FSIS.

Earlier this year, FSIS released data showing a 43.3% drop in the percentage of *E. coli* O157:H7 positive ground beef regulatory samples collected in 2004 compared with the previous year.

"We are encouraged by the advances that have been made in decreasing the risk of foodborne disease associated with FSIS regulated products. These must be continued, and at the same time, further progress must be made for pathogens such as *Salmonella*," said Dr. Peirson.

You can read the CDC report in its entirety at: www.cdc.gov/mmwr.

Export Requirement Updates

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

- Mexico
- Montenegro
- People's Republic of China
- Russia
- Serbia
- Taiwan

Complete information is available online at: www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Export_Information/



FSIS Issues Model Food Security Plans for Federal Establishments

Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns announced yesterday the release of model food security plans that meat, poultry and egg processing plants can apply to strengthen security measures and prevent potential acts of intentional contamination.

The security of meat, poultry and egg processing facilities can be enhanced through the implementation of risk-management techniques tailored to each establishment's needs. These food security plans are valuable technical and operational resources that can help plant operators identify various types of preventive steps to minimize the risk of food product tampering or other criminal actions.

"Food security is a shared responsibility of USDA and our many partners to prevent or respond to the contamination of food products and we continue to make these efforts a priority," said Johanns. "By applying the principles contained in these plans, federal and state inspected plants can increase their own preparedness planning while doing their part to protect America's food supply."

The model food security plans are guidance documents and are voluntary. However, FSIS strongly encourages all establishments to develop plans to fit their particular needs as each plant may be vulnerable.

The model plans are designed for meat and poultry slaughter facilities, meat and poultry processing plants, egg processing plants and import facilities. The materials will be available on the FSIS web site (www.fsis.usda.gov) and are intended to be used with other FSIS food security resources, such as food security guidelines and food security checklists that were developed over the past three years.

To assist the industry, especially small and very small establishments in developing food security plans, FSIS will conduct a series of training workshops throughout the nation in May and June, 2005. *See page five for more details on upcoming training.*

THIS WEEK'S HOT WEB LINKS

Safe Food Handling

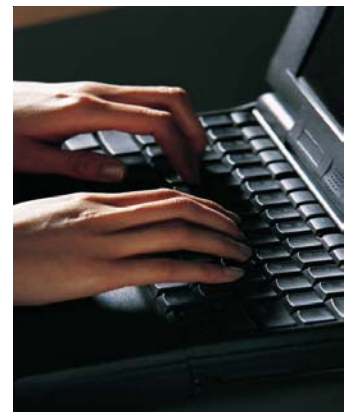
[www.fsis.usda.gov/
Fact_Sheets/
Safe_Food_Handling_Fact_Sheets/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Safe_Food_Handling_Fact_Sheets/)

FSIS Meetings and Events

[www.fsis.usda.gov/
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FSIS Fact Sheets

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FSIS Directive 7700.1 Revision 1: Irradiation of Meat and Poultry Products

FSIS Directive 7700.1 Revision 1 provides inspection program personnel with information and instructions regarding the irradiation of meat and poultry products in official establishments. This directive cancels FSIS Directive 7700.1 dated February 22, 2000. The directive is being reissued in its entirety to provide clarification regarding the off-site irradiation of product as it relates to the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) requirements.

Irradiation is a process of exposing food to high levels of radiant energy. Scientific data indicate that ionizing radiation can significantly reduce levels of many of the pathogenic micro-organisms of concern in meat food products, including *Salmonella*; *Escherichia coli* O157:H7; and *Listeria monocytogenes*.

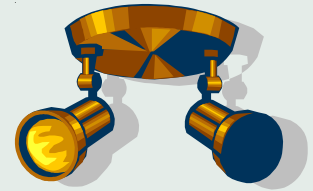
To read the directive in its entirety visit: www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISDirectives/7700.1Rev1.pdf.

FSIS Notice: Clarifying Poultry Chilling Requirements For Ready To Cook Eviscerated Products

FSIS Notice 22-05 clarifies for inspection program personnel the coverage of 9 CFR 381.66(b)(1). This notice does not add new verification procedures for inspection program personnel to perform.

Section 381.66(b)(1) establishes general chilling requirements for all poultry, except ratites, that have been slaughtered and eviscerated under the Poultry Products Inspection Act in an official establishment. This notice explains that if packaged product is held at the official establishment at which the poultry was slaughtered for more than 24 hours, the room in which the product is held must be kept at a temperature of 36 °F or lower.

To read the directive in its entirety visit: www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/Notice_22-05/.



Pathogen Spotlight: Listeriosis

Listeriosis is a serious infection caused by eating food contaminated with the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*. It affects primarily pregnant women, newborns and adults with weakened immune systems.

A person with listeriosis has fever, muscle aches and sometimes gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea or diarrhea. If infection spreads to the nervous system, symptoms such as headache, confusion, convulsions, or even possibly death can occur.

Listeria monocytogenes is found in soil and water. Meat and dairy products can become contaminated. However, ready-to-eat food can also become contaminated after processing within the processing plant or along the route from the plant to your plate. It can be avoided by following a few simple recommendations.

- Reheat until steaming hot your ready-to-eat foods.
- Wash raw vegetables.
- Consume perishable and ready-to-eat foods as soon as possible.
- Do not drink raw, unpasteurized milk or eat foods made from it.

FSIS Releases Guidance and SOPs for New Technology Staff

FSIS has recently released “*New Technology Staff Standard Operating Procedures(SOP) for Notification and Protocol Submission of New Technologies*”, and “*Guidance on Requesting A Waiver of Food Safety and Inspection Service Regulatory Requirements for the use of New Technology.*”

These documents provide helpful information that will facilitate the technology review process. The SOP document provides step-by-step information that details how the Agency reviews new technologies. This will help companies develop notifications and protocols that can move quickly and successfully through the review process. The guidance document provides information on what to include in a waiver request. These documents can be viewed at: www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/New_Technologies.

The New Technology Staff’s mission is to foster the development and use of new technologies that can help reduce pathogens on meat and poultry products. The office also reviews new technologies, and how establishments plan to employ them in order to ensure that they are consistent with agency regulations and will not adversely affect product safety, inspection procedures, or the safety of FSIS inspection program personnel.

For more information contact the New Technology Staff via phone at: (202) 205-0675 or by e-mail at FSIS.Technology@fsis.usda.gov.

Coming Soon...

Later this month the *Constituent Update* is getting a brand new look, and will remain your best source for timely, accurate information regarding FSIS’ activities. Updated features will include improved web links and a new layout making it easier to find valuable FSIS information.

Featured Office of the Week

The Technical Service Center

The Technical Service Center (TSC) serves as the agency’s hub for technical assistance, advice and guidance regarding the implementation of national policies, programs, systems and procedures.

The TSC also acts as a liaison and conduit to exchange information and provide guidance to a variety of groups, including plant owners and operators, who have questions about issues related to the regulation of meat, poultry or egg products.

For more information on the TSC please visit the Web site at: www.fsis.usda.gov/OFO/TSC/ or call the TSC toll-free at 1-800-233-3935.

FSIS to Hold Series of Food Security Workshops

FSIS will hold a series of food security workshops that will be held in May and June 2005. The purpose of the workshops is to provide additional guidance about the development and implementation of food security plans for meat, poultry and egg processing facilities, import establishments and identification warehouses.

The workshops will assist companies with food security awareness and in the development of their food security plans. Tools such as the recently announced Model Food Security Plans, FSIS Industry Self-Assessment Checklist for Food Security and FSIS *Directive 5420.1, Revision 1* (Food Security Verification Procedures) will be addressed in these meetings.

Tentative Food Security Workshop Schedule

- May 14 - Dallas, Texas (Register now)
- May 21 - Oakland, Calif.
- June 4, 2005 Chicago, Ill.
- June 11, 2005 - Savannah, Ga.
- June 25, 2005 - Newark N.J.
- July 9, 2005 - Philadelphia, Pa.

On May 14, the Dallas workshop will be held at the Westin Park Central Hotel, 12720 Merit Drive, Dallas, Texas. You may reach the hotel at (972) 385-3000. Registration is available online is available at: www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Registration_051405.

For further registration information, contact Diane Jones of the FSIS Strategic Initiatives, Partnerships and Outreach Staff at (202) 720-9692. If a sign language interpreter or other special accommodations are required, please contact Ms. Jones no later than one week before the workshop of interest.

For details on the workshops' agenda, curriculum, and presenters, contact Mary Cutshall, director, Strategic Initiatives, Partnerships and Outreach Staff, Office of Public Affairs, Education and Outreach at (202) 690-6520.

For more information on the items to be discussed at the meeting visit: www.fsis.usda.gov/News/Meetings_&_Events/.

To submit comments or questions, contact the editor, Crystal Straughn 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:

April 17-19, 2005

Pima County Fair
Tucson, Ariz.

April 28, 2005

Elementary School
Las Cruces, N.M.