



# FSIS Constituent Update

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## Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety

### U.S. Opens Borders to Canadian Beef

#### *Chile's Borders Open to U.S. Beef*

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns outlined the steps necessary to reopen the U.S. border to Canadian cattle under 30 months of age and other ruminants last Friday. On July 18, the first of these cattle entered American commerce.

“We are coordinating very closely with other U.S. and Canadian government agencies to make certain the correct procedures are in place to properly inspect shipments and verify that our criteria are met,” said Johanns before opening the border.

USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has issued Standard Operating Procedures to their field offices, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and U.S. Customs and Border Protection offices. FSIS has issued an updated list of approved products that will be allowed across the border. The Agency will also issue instructions to FSIS personnel who will inspect cattle received for immediate slaughter.

The process for importing shipments of live cattle and other ruminants, once the preparatory steps are complete, will begin in Canada. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency will issue health certificates to verify the age and identification of the animal and ensure it meets the minimal risk rule criteria. Once verified, U.S. Customs and Border Protection will review the documentation and confirm the shipments are appropriate for entry into the United States. The animals will then be released to APHIS veterinarians at border inspection facilities who will inspect the cattle and validate the Canadian certification. Additionally, FSIS inspection personnel will verify U.S. requirements are met at the point of slaughter.

Secretary Johanns also announced this week that Chile is lifting its ban on U.S. beef and beef products from animals less than 30 months of age.

“I applaud the Chilean government for making trade decisions based on internationally accepted scientific standards,” said Johanns. “This is one more step toward normalized international trade in beef. USDA is working hard to normalize trade with all of our beef trading partners, both exporting and importing, based on scientifically-sound, internationally-recognized standards which protect both human and animal health.”

In 2003, the United States exported \$5.3 million worth of beef and beef products to Chile. Chile imposed a ban on U.S. beef and beef products on Dec. 24, 2003.

### Export Requirement Updates

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

**Canada**

**Chile**

**Japan**

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



## Hulebak Elected Codex Vice-Chairperson

On July 19, 2005 USDA Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Richard Raymond announced that Dr. Karen Hulebak, Senior Advisor for Scientific Affairs at FSIS, was elected a Vice-Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission during the organization's 28<sup>th</sup> Session in Rome.

“The United States and the international community are fortunate to have someone of Dr. Hulebak's experience and expertise in this important role,” Dr. Raymond said. “I commend Dr. Hulebak for her previous work on Codex issues and look forward to the progress the Commission will make under her leadership.”

FSIS Acting Administrator Dr. Barbara Masters congratulated Dr. Hulebak on her election and noted her past efforts to strengthen Codex. “Dr. Hulebak has led the way in reaching out to countries in this hemisphere and encouraging them to become involved in Codex issues,” Masters said.

Hulebak has been active in the Commission for a number of years and served most recently as the chairperson of the Committee on Food Hygiene. The Codex Alimentarius Commission has one chairperson and three vice-chairpersons who are elected for one Session of the Commission. They are eligible for re-election only once.

“I am deeply honored to have been chosen for a leadership position by the more than 170 member states of Codex,” Hulebak said. “I am committed to helping to move this great organization towards increasingly rigorous science- and risk-based decision making at an ever more efficient pace.”

Codex was created in 1963 by two United Nations organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Codex develops food standards, guidelines and codes of practice in order to protect the health of consumers, ensure fair food trade practices and promote coordination of food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organizations. The U.S. Codex office is headquartered at USDA in the Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety.

Prior to being named FSIS Science Advisor, Dr. Hulebak served as the FSIS Assistant Administrator for the Office of Public Health Science. Before joining FSIS in March 1999, Dr. Hulebak was Senior Science Policy Advisor and Director of the Policy Research Staff in the Commissioner's Office at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), where she played a central role in the development and management of the President's Food Safety Initiative. Between 1985-1990, Dr. Hulebak directed the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council's Board on Environmental Studies and Toxicology program of risk and exposure assessment studies.

## THIS WEEK'S HOT WEB LINKS

### Attend an FSIS Public Meeting

[www.fsis.usda.gov/  
News\\_&\\_Events/  
Meetings\\_&\\_Events/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Meetings_&_Events/)

### FSIS Speeches and Presentations

[www.fsis.usda.gov/  
News\\_&\\_Events/  
2005\\_speeches/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/2005_speeches/)

### FSIS Fact Sheets

[www.fsis.usda.gov/  
Fact\\_Sheets/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/)



# Nationwide Raw Ground Beef Component Microbiological Baseline Data Collection Program

FSIS issued Notice 48-05 to provide information to inspection program personnel at establishments participating in FSIS' nationwide microbiological baseline data collection program for domestic beef trimmings. Information in this notice applies only to the 90-day training period before the study begins.

This baseline study will consist of samples from beef trimmings that are to be available for the production of raw ground beef. The program will be conducted at about 250 establishments that slaughter and fabricate carcasses into trim available for use in ground beef production. This beef trimmings baseline study will not include head meat, organ meat, or advanced meat recovery product (these may be included in a separate baseline program), nor trimmings that are predominantly fat and are most likely destined for such products as finely textured beef or partially defatted chopped beef. The term "beef trimmings" includes trimmings from subprimal cuts such as boneless chuck or parts of boneless chuck that are frequently used as components of raw ground beef.

Before the baseline program begins, FSIS will conduct a 90-day training period. The purpose of the 90-day training period is to ensure that inspection program personnel are familiar with the new sample collection procedures. During the training period, products will be tested for *salmonella*, generic *escherichia coli*, *enterobacteriaceae*, total coliforms, and aerobic plate counts (apc). To read this notice in its entirety visit:

[www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_&Policies/Notice\\_48-05/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/Notice_48-05/)

## Homeland Security Threat Condition Response - Food Defense Verification Procedures

FSIS released a new directive concerning food security threats and food defense on July 20, 2005. This directive details the emergency Food Defense Verification Procedures that inspection program personnel will follow when a threat condition of Yellow, Orange, or Red is declared by the Department of Homeland Security. Inspection program personnel should begin implementing these procedures only when instructed to do so by the District Manager (DM) or designee. In that event, inspection program personnel are to follow the instructions in this directive for the duration of the declared heightened threat condition. Because inspection program personnel are the first line of defense in food safety, they are in a unique position to witness and identify unusual situations such as food security issues. To read the directive in its entirety visit:

[www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_&Policies/5000\\_Series-Program\\_Services/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/5000_Series-Program_Services/)



### 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:

**July 26**  
Shaw's Supermarket  
(Dedham, Mass.)

**July 27**  
Shaw's Supermarket  
(Concord, N.H.)

**July 29-31**  
Bangor State Fair  
(Bangor, ME)

## **FSIS Proposes Rule Setting Inspection Fees For 2005-2008**

FSIS is proposing a rule to set the fees it charges meat and poultry establishments, egg processing establishments, importers and exporters for providing voluntary inspection services, overtime and holiday inspection services, identification services, certification services and laboratory services for 2005 through 2008.

FSIS bears the cost of mandatory inspection of meat, poultry and egg products. However, establishments incur the costs of inspection services performed on holidays or on an overtime basis. FSIS provides a range of voluntary inspection, certification and identification services. In the past, FSIS has amended its regulations on an annual basis. With this proposed rule, FSIS is providing for four annual fee increases. This will provide the meat, poultry and egg industry with more timely cost information and will streamline the Agency's rulemaking process.

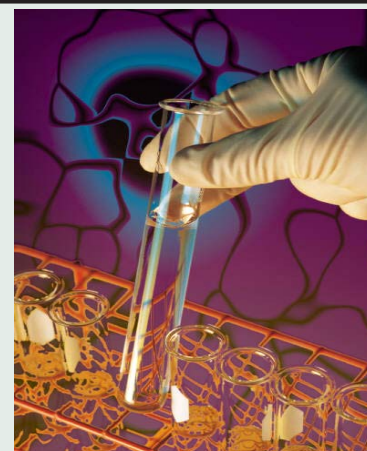
The fee increases reflect the cost of inspection, national and locality pay increases for federal employees, applicable overhead costs, inflation and other inspection costs. For example, the fee for providing meat and poultry voluntary inspection, identification and certification services will increase from \$43.64 per hour per program employee in 2005 to \$49.93 in 2008.

Federal inspection protects the health and welfare of consumers by ensuring that meat, poultry and egg products are safe, wholesome and properly labeled and packaged. FSIS will review each year the fees it charges for providing overtime and holiday meat, poultry and egg products inspection services to determine whether established fees are adequate to recover costs incurred by the Agency.

### ***Save the Date: FSIS Meeting on Pre-Harvest Control of Salmonella***

FSIS will hold a public meeting on pre-harvest control of *Salmonella*. The meeting will be held on August 25-26 in Athens, Ga. More information will be provided as the date approaches.

**To submit comments or questions, contact the editor,  
Crystal Straughn at: [fsisupdate@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:fsisupdate@fsis.usda.gov)  
(202) 720-9113**



### **Office of the Week:**

### **Risk Assessment Division**

The Risk Assessment Division develops and performs risk assessments of biological/chemical hazards in meat, poultry and egg products in support of the Agency's policy development activities. These risk assessments are used to evaluate intervention strategies to reduce foodborne risks and to guide, support, and enhance the Agency's overall decision-making process, risk-management policies, outreach efforts, data collection initiatives, and research priorities. For more information visit: [www.fsis.usda.gov/About\\_Fsis/OPHS/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/About_Fsis/OPHS/)