



# FSIS Constituent Update

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Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety

## USDA and HHS Strengthen Safeguards Against BSE

Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Tommy G. Thompson and Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced three additional measures being taken to strengthen existing safeguards that protect Americans against the agent that causes bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE, also known as “mad cow disease”).

The three rules being announced today are: an interim final HHS rule that prohibits the use of certain cattle-derived materials in the product of and as ingredients in all human food and cosmetics; a proposed rule that requests comments on recordkeeping requirements for the interim final rule; and a joint USDA/HHS notice that asks for public comment on additional preventive actions concerning BSE.

To allow interested parties and stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the wide variety of regulatory policy decisions, USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and FSIS, along with the HHS, developed an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) to inform the public about the international review team’s report and recommendations, actions already taken by each agency on BSE, and to solicit public comment on the additional measures under consideration.

“We are taking this proactive step to ensure that as USDA and HHS move ahead with comprehensive BSE strategies and long term policies, stakeholders and the public will have the opportunity to provide their input,” said Secretary Veneman.

For more information on the rules and how to comment visit:  
[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News\\_&\\_Events/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/)

## Export Requirement Updates

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

**Belize**  
**Chile**  
**El Salvador**  
**Kazakhstan**  
**Mexico**  
**Russia**  
**Singapore**

Complete information can be found at:  
[www.fsis.usda.gov/OFO/export/explib.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OFO/export/explib.htm)



## Inconclusive BSE Test Results are Negative

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection (APHIS) service was notified that an inconclusive BSE test result was received on a rapid screening test used as part of the enhanced BSE surveillance program on June 25 and June 29. Tissue samples were sent to USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa, the national BSE reference lab, for confirmatory testing.

On June 30, NVSL announced the June 25 inconclusive screen came back negative and on July 2 announced that the June 29 inconclusive screen also came back negative. NVSL used the world-recognized gold-standard test for BSE, the immunohistochemistry test, to confirm this finding.

Deputy Administrator, APHIS, Dr. John Clifford assured, "An inconclusive result does not mean we have found another case of BSE in this country. Inconclusive results are a normal component of screening tests, which are designed to be extremely sensitive so they will detect any sample that could *possibly* be positive."

The carcasses were accounted for and did not enter the food supply. The ban on specified risk materials from the human food chain provides protection to public health, should another case of BSE ever be detected in the United States.

The surveillance program is designed to test as many animals as possible in the populations that are considered to be at high risk for BSE. USDA is on track to test 268,000 animals in the next 12 to 18 months. These tests will be able to find the disease if it occurs in as few as one in 10 million adult cattle with a 99 percent confidence level assuming that all of the positives are in the targeted high risk population. In other words, the program could detect BSE even if there were only five positive animals in the target population in the entire country.

## Directive on Detention and Seizure Procedures Rewritten

FSIS Directive 8410.1, Rev. 2, provides the procedures that program personnel follow when detaining, or preparing a recommendation to seize, meat, poultry, and egg products. This directive has been rewritten in its entirety to reflect the new duties of some FSIS program personnel and to update the procedures for carrying out detentions and for petitioning for seizures. To view this directive visit:

[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_&\\_Policies/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/)

## THIS WEEK'S HOT WEB LINKS

### Codex Alimentarius

[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_&\\_Policies/Codex\\_Alimentarius/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Codex_Alimentarius/)

### Speeches and Presentations

[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News\\_&\\_Events/2004\\_speeches/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/2004_speeches/)

### Food Security and Emergency Preparedness

[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food\\_Security\\_&\\_Emergency\\_Preparedness/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Security_&_Emergency_Preparedness/)



# ***E. coli* O157:H7 Workshop Locations for July**

FSIS continues its series of teaching workshops around the nation through September 2004 for small and very small plants on new directives designed to strengthen *E. coli* O157:H7 prevention procedures. The workshops are scheduled on Saturdays from 9 am to 2 pm FSIS officials will present the materials in the directives to operators of small and very small federally-inspected plants, state-inspected plants, federal and state inspection personnel, members of academia and other interested parties. The three directives to be covered during the sessions are: Directive 10,010.1 Revision 1, Microbiological Testing Program and Other Verification Activities for *E. coli* O157:H7 in Raw Ground Beef Products and Raw Ground Beef Components and Beef Patty Components; Directive 6420.0, Verification of Procedures for Controlling Fecal Material, Ingesta and Milk in Slaughter Operations; and Directive 5000.2, Review of Establishment Data by Inspection Program Personnel.

The following workshops scheduled for July are as follows:

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Meeting Location</u>  |
|-------------|--|
| July 10     | The Westin New York at Times Square<br>270 West 43rd St.<br>New York, N.Y.<br>(212) 201-2700               |
| July 17     | Holiday Inn Capitol Plaza<br>300 "J" Street<br>Sacramento, Calif.<br>(916) 446-0100                        |
| July 24     | Doubletree Hotel and Conference Center<br>16625 Swingley Ridge Road<br>Chesterfield, Mo.<br>(636) 532-5000 |
| July 31     | Ramada Inn - East<br>1355 East Boulevard<br>Montgomery, AL 36117<br>Phone: (334) 277-2200                  |

To pre-register for this weekend's workshop in New York, N.Y. please call (202) 690-6520 or e-mail [renee.ellis@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:renee.ellis@fsis.usda.gov). You may also register for this workshop and all future workshops by calling (866) 553-3052 or via FSIS' Web site: [www.fsis.usda.gov/News/Meetings\\_&\\_Events](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News/Meetings_&_Events)

## **To Contact the Constituent Update Editor**

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## **Featured Office of the Week**



### **The International Equivalence Staff**

The International Equivalence Staff is responsible for ensuring meat, poultry and egg products imported into the US are produced under standards equivalent to US food safety standards.

FSIS determines equivalence by evaluating whether foreign food regulatory systems attain the appropriate level of protection provided by our domestic system.

Thus, while foreign food regulatory systems need not be identical to the US system, they must employ equivalent sanitary measures that provide the same level of protection against food hazards as is achieved domestically. FSIS evaluates foreign food regulatory systems for equivalence through document reviews, on-site audits and port-of-entry reinspection of products at the time of importation.

For more information on the equivalence process please visit [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations\\_&\\_policies/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/)

# FSIS Directive: Experimental and Sample Products Policy

FSIS Directive 7000.2, provides instructions to FSIS personnel concerning the production and inspection of experimental and sample products.

Experimental products are products that are produced for research and development and not offered for sale. They are new products or existing products that introduce a new formulation or flavor. These products may be prepared and taste tested in such facilities as test kitchens, sensory panel rooms, research and development facilities within a corporate organization, and inspected or non-inspected areas within an establishment. While still under the control of the company, these products may be made available to test panels or company employees that will judge the quality and appeal of the new product. The panels may meet within the establishment's facilities, sensory panel rooms, or under contracted conditions, such as at an independent evaluator's location where the company retains control of the product. Sample products are products that are made available for pre-market consumer testing and available to the general public and not for sale. The company relinquishes control of the product by its distribution to those outside the employ of the company. To view this directive visit: [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_&\\_Policies/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/)

## FSIS Seeks Comments on New Technology Web Site

FSIS issued a *Federal Register* notice (Docket No. 04-003N) on June 17, 2004, requesting comments on the types of information it intends to post on its web site regarding new food safety technologies that meat and poultry establishments may implement.

The posted information will focus on new technologies currently under review, or that have already been reviewed, by the agency. Comments are being sought specifically regarding the value to the public, as well as the potential costs and negative effects that this information would have if made available to the public.

All submissions received must include the agency name and docket number 04-003N and be received by July 19, 2004. Comments may be submitted to Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, 300 12th Street, SW, Room 102 Cotton Annex, Washington, DC 20250 or through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

The notice is available at:

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/04-003N.htm>



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

The USDA Food Safety Mobile is a 35-foot, recreational-style vehicle covered with a bold, eye-catching design and prominent food safety messages, including the four Fight BAC!® messages of the Partnership for Food Safety Education.

**July 10- 11, 2004**

Taste of Buffalo  
New York, N.Y.

**July 13, 2004**

Food Safety Fair in  
Hanover Square  
Syracuse, N.Y.