



FSIS Constituent Update

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Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety

USDA Issues Rule Establishing Minimal-Risk Regions for BSE

After conducting an extensive risk assessment, USDA announced yesterday that it is establishing conditions under which it will allow the import of live cattle under 30 months of age and certain other commodities from regions with effective BSE prevention and detection measures.

This final rule ensures the continued protection of public health and animal health from BSE, while removing prohibitions on the importation of certain animals and commodities from minimal-risk regions. The final rule will be published in the January 4, 2005 *Federal Register* and will be effective March 7, 2005.

“We are committed to ensuring that our regulatory approach keeps pace with the body of scientific knowledge about BSE,” said Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman. “After conducting an extensive review, we are confident that imports of certain commodities from regions of minimal risk can occur with virtually no risk to human or animal health.”

Canada will be the first country recognized as a minimal-risk region. Thus, it will be eligible to export live cattle under the age of 30 months, as well as certain other animals and products. Live cattle imported from Canada under this rule will be subject to restrictions designed to ensure that they are slaughtered by the time they reach 30 months of age.

USDA is confident that the animal and public health measures that Canada has in place to prevent BSE, combined with existing U.S. domestic safeguards and additional safeguards provided in the final rule, provide the utmost protections to U.S. consumers and livestock. Beef imports that have already undergone Canadian inspection are also subject to re-inspection at ports of entry by USDA to ensure only eligible products are imported.

Information on this final rule, including USDA news releases, fact sheets and Questions and Answers, are available on the Internet at www.usda.gov.

Export Requirement Updates

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

Canada

European Union

France

Germany

Complete information is available online at:
www.fsis.usda.gov/OFO/export/explib.htm



FSIS Issues Notice for HACCP Reassessments at Plants That Slaughter Young Cattle

FSIS issued a notice (Docket #04-017N) on December 23, 2004, informing slaughterers of young calves, including those labeled as “veal,” of the need to reassess their food safety plans with respect to residues and the use of unapproved new animal drugs.

The notice reflects the need of slaughterers to consider new conditions that affect the hazard analysis or otherwise alter Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans of establishments. It requires establishments to reassess their HACCP plans to determine if unapproved new animal drugs are hazards reasonably likely to occur in production. Through these reassessments, establishments should make appropriate changes to HACCP plans or Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOP) to prevent and control identified potential food safety hazards.

FSIS is concerned about the illegal and widespread use of implants in young calves, and believes this reflects a change in conditions that would affect the hazard analysis or alter the HACCP plans of establishments that slaughter young calves.

For further information contact Carole Thomas, Technical Analysis Staff, Office of Policy, Program, and Employee Development, FSIS, phone (202) 205-0210.

Comments must be received by February 22, 2005. Written comments may be submitted to the FSIS Docket Room, Reference Docket #04-017N, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Room 102 Cotton Annex, 300 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20250-3700. Any comments received will be available for public inspection in the FSIS Docket Room from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and will be posted at www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRDockets.htm.

The entire notice is available on FSIS' Website at: www.fsis.usda.gov/Frame/FrameRedirect.asp?main=/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/04-017N.htm.



Holiday Food Safety

I am serving food buffet style to my guests this New Years Eve. What can I do to minimize any risk of foodborne illness?

There are five simple steps any host should take to keep the food they are serving their guests safe.

Keep it Fresh

Use clean containers and utensils to store and serve your food. When a dish is empty or nearly empty, replace with a fresh container of food, removing the previous container.

Keep it Cold

Place cold food in containers on ice and be sure to hold cold foods at or below 40° F.

Keep it Hot

For hot food once fully cooked, place in chafing dishes, preheated steam tables, warming trays or slow cookers. Check the temperature frequently to be sure food stays at or above 140° F.

New Year's Resolutions to Keep You Safe

FSIS has developed a helpful checklist for family cooks and "Take-Out" consumers that could save you, or a family member, a trip to the doctor in the coming year. The food safety resolutions suggested by FSIS include:

- 1. I will buy and use a food thermometer.**
It's the only way to know if meat, poultry and fish are cooked safely. You can't tell just by looking.
- 2. I will use an appliance thermometer in the refrigerator and will check to make sure that the temperature is 40° F, or below. In the freezer, I will make sure the thermometer reads zero degrees F, or below.**
Bacteria grow rapidly at temperatures above 40° F.
- 3. If I have a question about food safety, I will call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline toll free at 1-888-MPHotline or 1-888-674-6854, TTY: 1-800- 256-7072.**
The Hotline is there to help you get your questions answered. Do not guess about food safety because the health of your family and friends is at stake. Answers are available in English and Spanish.
- 4. I will wash my hands and all food preparation surfaces with soap and water before and after touching raw meat, poultry or fish.**
Bacteria on raw meat, fish or poultry can contaminate other foods such as bread or lettuce that will not be cooked.
- 5. I will not feed my dog or cat old "leftovers" or "take-out" food that's no longer fit for people.**
Animals can also be stricken with foodborne illnesses.
- 6. I will not leave "take-out" or "ready-to-eat" food in the refrigerator so long that it's forgotten.**
You can't tell by look or smell if a food is unsafe. Throw it away after three days and never taste a food that you don't know what it is or how long it has been in the refrigerator!

You can find the complete checklist, which FSIS hopes will be at the top of your 2005 New Year's list, at: www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/NR_122704_01/index.asp

THIS WEEK'S HOT WEB LINKS

Food Safety Fact Sheets

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

Subscribe to FSIS Newsletters

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Update on Codex Alimentarius Activities

Now Available: Codex Committee Meeting Report

The 13th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) was held on December 6-10, in Melbourne, Australia. At the meeting the committee made significant progress in developing principles and guidelines for risk-based inspection of imported food. The full report by the U.S. Delegate to the meeting is available on the FSIS Website at: www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/Delegate_Report_13CCFICS/.

Reminder: Public Meeting to Discuss Food Labeling Agenda Items

On January 19, 2005, a public meeting will be held to provide information and receive comments on agenda items to be discussed at the 33rd Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labeling (CCFL) in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, May 9-13, 2004.

The public meeting will be held from 1-4 p.m. in the Auditorium, Room 1A-003, Harvey W. Wiley Federal Building, 5100 Paint Branch Parkway, College Park, Md. Among the agenda items to be discussed are: *Proposed Draft Guidelines for the Labeling of Foods Obtained Through Certain Techniques of Genetic Modification/Genetic Engineering; Labeling Provisions and Definitions; Country of Origin Labeling; Discussion paper on advertising; and Proposed Draft Amendment to the General Standard for the Labeling of Prepackaged Foods*. A complete agenda for the meeting can be found at www.codexalimentarius.net/current.asp.

The CCFL drafts provisions on labeling applicable to all foods, and considers, amends if necessary, and endorses specific provisions on labeling of draft standards, codes of practice and guidelines prepared by other Codex committees. In addition, the committee studies specific labeling problems assigned to it by the Commission and studies problems associated with the advertisement of food with particular reference to claims and misleading descriptions.

For further information about the CCFL, contact U.S. Delegate, Leslye Fraser, J.D., Director, Office of Regulations and Policy, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, FDA at (301) 436-2378. If you have questions concerning the public meeting or for a sign language interpreter contact Ellen Matten, International Issues Analyst, U.S. Codex Office, at (202) 205-7760.

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 next dates and locations are as follows:

Jan 11, 2005
Three Kings Day
Parade & Festival
Miami, FL

Jan 12, 2005
Local School
Miami, FL

Jan 13, 2005
Publix Supermarket
Miami, FL