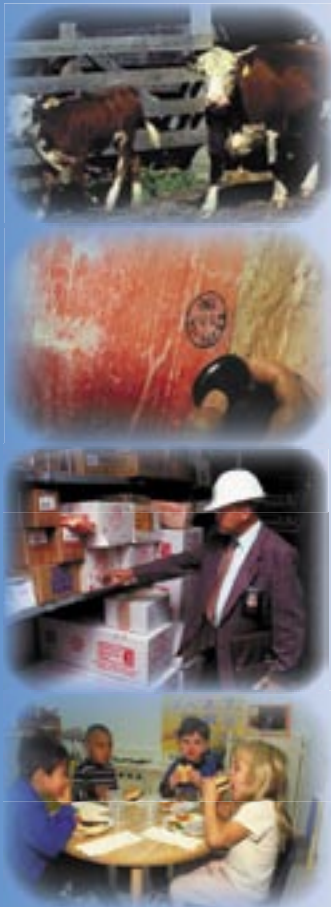




United States
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FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

FSIS Launches 24-Hour Web Feature to Answer Technical and Policy Questions

FSIS issued a news release on Aug. 16 announcing that the agency launched *askFSIS*, a new Web-based feature, designed to help answer technical and policy questions regarding inspection and public health regulations 24 hours a day.

The new interactive feature provides answers on technical issues in more depth than the standard list of “frequently asked questions” currently available through FSIS’ Web site. It allows visitors to seek answers on topics such as exporting, labeling and inspection-related policies, programs and procedures. Users can also register to be notified when answers are updated.

AskFSIS was designed to serve a business audience, much as FSIS’ virtual representative, *Ask Karen* (AskKaren.gov), serves consumers who have questions about safe food handling and the prevention of foodborne illness.

To access *askFSIS*, please visit FSIS’ Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov and select “Help” from the

global navigation buttons at the top of the main page.

The *askFSIS* screen includes four tabs: Answers, My Questions, Login and Help. The “Answers” tab is the starting point for keyword searches; it will also display a real-time list of the most popular topics. The “My Questions” and “Login” tabs are used to create an account for those visitors who wish to submit questions, check the status of a request, or revisit previously saved information. First-time visitors are encouraged to select the ‘Help’ tab for tips on getting started.

“This new Web-based tool will be especially helpful for owners and operators of small and very small plants and is another example of how FSIS is finding new and innovative ways to meet the needs of its customers,” said USDA Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Richard Raymond.

For assistance or details concerning *askFSIS*, send an e-mail to askFSIS@fsis.usda.gov.

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Export Requirement Updates



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

People's Republic of China

Complete information can be found at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Export_Information/index.asp.



NACMCF Subcommittee to Hold Public Meetings

The National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods subcommittee on Parameters for Inoculated Pack/Challenge Study Protocols will hold public meetings on Aug. 30-31 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The purpose of these meetings is to begin discussions toward the development of recommendations for the appropriate criteria for inoculated pack/challenge studies and to determine if a food requires time/temperature control for food safety.

The discussions will also include the appropriate uses of mathematical growth and inactivation models.

The meetings will be held at the Aerospace Building, 901 D Street, SW., Room 369, Washington, D.C.

To register, contact Sharon Oatman at (202) 690-6556 or Sharon.Oatman@fsis.usda.gov. For security reasons, all persons wishing to attend must register in advance.

FSIS to Hold Regulatory Education Sessions in Indiana and California

FSIS will hold regulatory education sessions on Aug. 21 and 22 for the owners and operators of small and very small plants Indiana and California.

The Aug. 21 session will cover a regulatory walk-through of sanitation standard operating procedures, hazard analysis and critical control point and rules of practice regulations.

The session will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Sheraton Indianapolis Hotel and Suites, 8787 Keystone Crossing, Indianapolis, Ind.

The Aug. 22 session will cover regulatory walk-through of sanitation performance standard

regulations and food defense.

The session will be held from 6:30 p.m.

to 8:30 p.m. at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center, 233 Ventura Street, Fresno, Calif.

Online registration forms and information about upcoming sessions can be found at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Outreach_Sessions_SVS_Plants/index.asp.

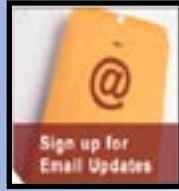
To register by phone, call (800) 336-3747.



Helpful Resources

E-mail Alert Service

- FSIS' e-mail alert service provides subscribers automatic and customized access to selected food safety news and information. Visit http://www.fsis.usda.gov/news_&_events/Email_Subscription/index.asp to sign up for agency e-mail alerts.



Ask Karen

- FSIS' virtual representative can answer your food safety questions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Visit "Ask Karen" at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safety_Education/Ask_Karen/index.asp.



USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline

- Food safety experts are available year-round Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern Time to answer questions about safely preparing and cooking foods. The toll-free number is (888) MPHOTline, (888) 674-6854. Recorded messages are available 24 hours a day.

FSIS Issues Notice and Directive

FSIS issued Notice 51-07 on Aug. 15 to inform inspection program personnel that FSIS, in conjunction with the Agricultural Research Service, will conduct the Dioxin 08 survey beginning Sept. 4. This survey is scheduled to run 12 to 18 months. The survey will gather data about dioxin levels in U.S. beef, pork and poultry.

Upon receipt of the notice and on the 15th of each month thereafter, public health veterinarians should check the list of participating establishments to determine whether establishments in their scheduled assignments are included in the dioxin survey for the following month.

The agency amended Directive 7120.1 on Aug. 16 to revise the list of safe and suitable ingredients for meat and poultry products.

This directive, titled *Safe and Suitable Ingredients Used in the Production of Meat and Poultry Products*, identifies the substances that have been approved in the *Code of Federal Regulations* for use in meat and poultry products as food additives, in generally recognized as safe notices and pre-market notifications, and in letters conveying acceptability determinations.

FSIS will continue to issue updates to the list as needed.

For further policy information regarding the substances, contact FSIS' Labeling and Consumer Protection Staff at (202) 205-0279.

The notice and directive are available on FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/index.asp.