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FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

USDA Receives New Secretary

Ed Schafer was sworn in as the 29th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture on Jan 28.

Born and raised in Bismarck, North Dakota, Schafer graduated from the University of North Dakota with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and earned a Master of Business Administration from the University of Denver in 1970.

Secretary Schafer brings a record as an innovative two-term governor of North Dakota to USDA along with extensive private sector experience as both an entrepreneur and a business executive.

As North Dakota's governor from 1992 to 2000, he diversified and expanded North Dakota's economy by reducing the cost of government and advancing agriculture as his top priorities in office.

Schafer was elected chair of the Republican Governors Association in 2000 and that same year he co-founded and co-chaired the Governors Biotechnology Partnership to increase public understanding and support for the benefits of agricultural biotechnology.

He worked to normalize trading relations with China and develop the nation as an export market for North Dakota farm products. He also led efforts to upgrade North Dakota's communications infrastructure and make high-speed voice and data networks available to farmers, ranchers and rural businesses.

After leaving office in 2000, he co-founded Extend America, a venture capital-backed company, to provide wireless voice and high-speed data services to commercial and residential customers in five rural Midwestern states.

To view Secretary Schafer's full biography, visit www.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:

Netherlands

Philippines

Singapore

Taiwan

Complete information can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/Export_Information/index.



AskKaren.gov

FSIS Seeks Comments on *Salmonella* Sampling Practices

FSIS announced on Jan. 28 new policies and practices for the agency's *Salmonella* verification sampling program and related activities in meat and poultry establishments.

In February 2006, the agency introduced a comprehensive initiative to reduce the presence of the pathogen in raw meat and poultry products. The initiative includes concentrating resources at establishments with higher levels and changes to the reporting and use of verification test results.

FSIS signed a cooperative agreement with the USDA's Agricultural Research Service to ensure that identifying subtype information on *Salmonella* isolates (PFGE patterns) that FSIS collects is compared with information about isolates associated with human illness in *PulseNet*, a database maintained by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Sharing subtype information will enable FSIS and other stakeholders to determine which *Salmonella* serotypes of human health concern are not only appearing in FSIS-regulated products but are more likely to be associated with cases of human illness.

On March 28, FSIS will post on its Web site completed verification sample set results

from establishments in Category 2 or Category 3 beginning with results from young chicken slaughter establishments because of the increased percentage of positive rates and serotypes of human health concern found in these products.

Currently, the agency schedules approximately 75 new verification sample sets each month for *Salmonella* in raw products. Under the new policies, FSIS is restructuring its sampling and testing initiatives.

Comments must be received on or before Feb. 27, through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov, by mail to: Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 2534, South Building, Washington, D.C. 20250, or by e-mail to fsis.regulationscomments@fsis.usda.gov. All comments must identify FSIS and the docket number FSIS-2006-0034.

Comments will be available for review on the FSIS Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/2008_Notices_Index/index.asp.

Register to Attend the National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection Public Meetings

The National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection will hold public meetings on Feb. 5 and 6 to address the planned public health-based slaughter inspection system for young chickens, and how a similar approach could be used for inspection in processing and other slaughter establishments.

The meetings will be held from 8:15 a.m. to 5:45 p.m., at the Key Bridge Marriott, 1401 Lee Highway, Arlington, Va., three blocks from the Rosslyn Metro Station on Metro's Blue and Orange Lines.

Pre-registration is encouraged. To register online, go to www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&Events/Registration_020508/Meeting/index.asp.

To view the *Federal Register* notice, a copy of the agenda and other supplementary information, visit FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&Events/meetings_&events/index.asp.



Food Defense for Warehouses and Distribution Centers

In January, FSIS issued the *Guide to Developing a Food Defense Plan for Warehouse and Distribution Centers*, the latest informational material developed to help industry to protect the food supply through emergency preparedness.

This guide was designed to help warehouse and distribution center owners develop a food defense plan based on unique operating structure and potential food defense vulnerabilities. FSIS' Office of Food Defense and Emergency Response (OFDER) developed the 15-page guide to provide warehouses and distribution centers that participate in a countermeasures or mitigation strategy workshop hosted by the Department of Homeland Security.

OFDER developed a brochure to accompany the guide when it is distributed by front line supervisors conducting routine visits to establishments in their circuit.

Since 2003, FSIS has developed food defense guidance materials for food processors, transporters, distributors and consumers that provide recommendations on actions they can take to ensure the products they produce, distribute and consume remain safe and secure.

Content from food defense workshops are archived on the FSIS Web site along with other guidance materials at www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Defense_&Emergency_Response/index.asp.

FSIS to Host *E. coli* Workshops

FSIS will hold regulatory education workshops in Alabama and North Carolina on Feb. 27 as part of the agency's ongoing initiative to enhance assistance to small and very small plants.

This specific workshop will cover prerequisite programs and *Notices 65-07, 66-07 and 68-07*, with special emphasis on *Escherichia coli* O157:H7.

The regulatory education session will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at two locations:

- Hyatt Place Inverness, 4686 Highway 280 East, Birmingham, Ala.
- Wyndham Raleigh Durham Hotel, 4260 South Miami Blvd., Durham, N.C.

To register by phone, call (800) 336-3747. Online registration forms and information about these sessions can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&Events/Outreach_Sessions/SVS_Plants/index.asp.