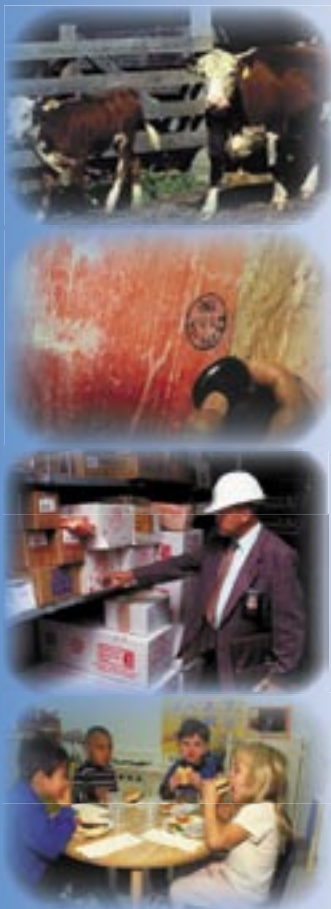




United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food Safety and  
Inspection Service

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# FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

## Handling the Largest Meat Recall in U.S. History

On Sunday February 17, Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Company located in Chino, Calif., voluntarily recalled approximately 143 million pounds of raw and frozen beef products covering a two year period of production.

The Hallmark/Westland recall was designated as a Class II recall due to the remote probability that the recalled beef would cause adverse health effects if consumed.

A video released by the Humane Society of the United States on January 30, 2008, prompted an investigation of Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Company. USDA immediately placed an administrative hold on all the plant's products because of potential violations of regulatory requirements and contractual terms as a supplier of products to the Federal food and nutrition programs.

In addition, the plant was indefinitely suspended from being

an eligible participant to Federal food and nutrition programs, specifically the National School Lunch Program, the Emergency Food Assistance Program and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations.

Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Richard Raymond then announced on February 4, that FSIS was suspending inspection due to "the establishment's clear violation of Federal regulations and the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act."

As a result of the ongoing investigation, the Agency determined on February 17 these products to be unfit for human consumption because the establishment did not consistently contact FSIS public health veterinarians in situations in which cattle became non-ambulatory after passing ante-mortem inspection.

The plant was in clear violation of FSIS' July 2007, final rule, titled *Prohibition of the Use*

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## Export Requirement Updates



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

**Chile**

**Japan**

**Mexico**

**People's Republic of China**

**Taiwan**

Complete information can be found at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_&\\_Policies/Export\\_Information/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Export_Information/index.asp).



[AskKaren.gov](http://AskKaren.gov)

## ***Hallmark/Westland Recall ...***

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*of Specified Risk Materials for Human Food and Requirements for the Disposition of Non-Ambulatory Disabled Cattle.*

This rule requires that a case by case disposition must be made by an FSIS Public Health Veterinarian for every animal that becomes non-ambulatory disabled (“downer”) after passing ante-mortem inspection.

“The prohibition of non-ambulatory cattle from entering the food supply is an additional safeguard against bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE),” said Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer in a statement on February 17. In fact it’s only one measure in an interlocking system of controls the federal government has in place to protect the food supply from BSE.

“It’s extremely unlikely that the animals at the Hallmark/Westland plant were at risk for BSE because of these multiple safeguards,” added Schafer. “However, the recall is necessary because plant procedures violated USDA regulations.”

FSIS is assisting USDA’s Office of Inspector General in the violations at the plant. “We maintain an inspection system that safeguards the safety and wholesomeness of our food supply,” said Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Richard Raymond. “We will respond immediately if further findings warrant.”

For more information and the latest developments about this recall and USDA actions, go to [www.usda.gov/actions](http://www.usda.gov/actions).

## **NACMCF Subcommittee to Hold Public Meeting**

The National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF) will hold public hearings on March 4 and March 5 from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm and March 6 from 8:30 am to 12:00 pm at the Aerospace Building, 901 D St., SW, Room 369, Washington, D.C.

NACMCF’s Subcommittee on Determination of the Most Appropriate Technologies for FSIS to Adopt in Performing

Routine and Baseline Microbiological Analyses will discuss and develop guidance and recommendations for FSIS to consider on improving laboratory and in-plant testing methods for pathogens and indicator organisms.

NACMCF was established in 1988 to provide scientific advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human

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## Don't Forget to Register!

A regulatory education seminar will be held on February 25 from 10 to 11 a.m. EST and from 6 to 7 p.m. EST.

This web seminar will cover a variety of technical topics concerning FSIS policies to control *E. coli* O157:H7 in beef products, including the FSIS checklist, FSIS' enhanced risk-based sampling program, and industry best practices.

To register by phone, call (800) 336-3747 or e-mail questions to [netmeetingseminars@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:netmeetingseminars@fsis.usda.gov).

Information about upcoming Web seminars can be found at [www.fsis.usda.gov/News\\_&\\_Events/Regulatory\\_Web\\_Seminars/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Regulatory_Web_Seminars/index.asp).



Learn more about basic food safety principles by visiting FSIS' facts sheets at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/index.asp).

## NACMFC Public Meeting...

*Continued from page two*

Services on public issues related to the safety and wholesomeness of the U.S. food supply. These issues include the development of microbiological criteria, review and evaluation of epidemiological and risk assessment data, and methodologies for assessing microbiological hazards in foods.

The committee also provides scientific advice

and recommendations to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Departments of Commerce and Defense.

To attend these meetings contact Karen Thomas-Sharp, advisory committee specialist, by phone at (202) 690-6620, or by email at: [karen.thomas-sharp@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:karen.thomas-sharp@fsis.usda.gov).

## Agency to Host Workshop for Small and Very Small Plants

FSIS will hold a regulatory education workshop in Denver, Colo. on March 5 as part of the Agency's ongoing initiative to enhance outreach to small and very small plants.

These workshops will cover prerequisite programs and the following notices:

- 65-07, *Notice of Reassessment for Escherichia coli O157:H7 Control and Completion of a Checklist for All Beef Operations*;
- 66-07, *Multiple Follow-Up Sampling After FSIS Positive Escherichia coli O157:H7 Results*; and

- 68-07, *Routine Sampling and Testing of Raw Ground Beef Components Other Than Trim and Imported Raw Ground Beef Components for Escherichia coli O157:H7*.

The regulatory education session will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at the Four Points by Sheraton Denver Southeast, 6363 E. Hampton Ave., Denver, Colo.

To register by phone, call (800) 336-3747. Online registration forms and information about upcoming sessions can be found at [www.fsis.usda.gov/News\\_&\\_Events/Outreach\\_Sessions\\_SVS\\_Plants/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Outreach_Sessions_SVS_Plants/index.asp).

## Food Safety Resources

Keeping good records is an important part of a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system.

The HACCP - Plan Implementation and Records Management video was developed by Ohio State University through a cooperative agreement with FSIS.

The video and accompanying manual provide examples of critical control points (CCPs), plus how to do verification procedures, pre-shipment reviews, as well as and how to manage the records that will be generated from CCPs.

To request this item or any other food safety resource, fax the order form found on FSIS' *Food Safety Resources Brochure for Small and Very Small Plants* to (202) 690-6519, or complete an online version of the form and send it to [FoodSafetyResources@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:FoodSafetyResources@fsis.usda.gov).

The online form can be found at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/HACCP\\_Resources\\_Order\\_Form/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/HACCP_Resources_Order_Form/index.asp).

## USDA and HHS to Hold Public Meeting on Codex

USDA's Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety and the Department of Health and Human Services' Food and Drug Administration will hold a public meeting on February 28.

The purpose of this meeting is to provide information and receive comments on agenda items and draft U.S. positions that will be discussed at the 29th Session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS), scheduled for March 10-14 in Budapest, Hungary.

The public meeting will be held from 2 to 3 p.m., in Room 1A001, Harvey Wiley Federal Building, 5100 Paint Branch Parkway, College Park, Md.

The related *Federal Register* notice can be found at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/2008-0001.pdf>.

Agenda items and documents relating to the 29th Session of CCMAS will be available on the Codex Alimentarius Web site at [www.codexalimentarius.net/current.asp](http://www.codexalimentarius.net/current.asp).

Persons requiring a sign language interpreter or other special accommodations for the public meeting should notify Syed Ali, international issues analyst, U.S. Codex Office, at (202) 205-7760 or by e-mail at [syed.ali@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:syed.ali@fsis.usda.gov).

## FSIS Amends Directive for Suitable Ingredients in Meat and Poultry Products

FSIS amended Directive 7120.1, *Safe and Suitable Ingredients Used in the Production of Meat and Poultry Products* on February 20.

This directive 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, 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 Program Delivery Division at (202) 205-0279.

This directive can be viewed on FSIS' Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_&\\_Policies/7000\\_Series-Processed\\_Products/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/7000_Series-Processed_Products/index.asp).