



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

Volume 10, Issue 18
May 9, 2008



FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

Statement Issued on the Safety of the U.S. Beef Supply

Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Richard Raymond reasserted that American beef is among the safest in the world and does not pose human health risks. The comments were made Sunday in Washington, D.C., at a news conference held primarily for Korean journalists.

In his prepared statement, Raymond said, “The U.S. Government believes the current agreement well addresses the health and food safety concerns of Korean consumers. It provides for Korea’s sovereign right to conduct an audit of our facilities and to work with USDA inspection authorities if any food safety concerns are identified. When the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) gave the United States “controlled risk” status a year ago, it was after the world’s *Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy* experts reviewed the preventative and food safety measures in the United States.”

“Since the requirements to export to Korea are consistent with science, U.S. requirements as well as those of the OIE require that if any food safety concern is found, it would be fully investigated and immediately corrected by USDA.”

“I want to assure all consumers – both domestic and abroad – that the U.S. beef supply is among the safest in the world. To help ensure its safety, USDA takes a number of steps to prevent foodborne illness.”

FSIS employs over 9,000 personnel, including 7,800 full-time in-plant and other front-line personnel protecting the public health in approximately 6,200 federally inspected establishments nationwide. FSIS personnel must be continuously present for slaughter operations and observe the animal both in motion and at rest before slaughter, and every carcass after slaughter.

To read more about Dr. Raymond’s statement regarding the safety of the U.S. food supply, visit FSIS’ Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Raymond_Statement_050408.pdf.

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Export Requirement Updates



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

Costa Rica

European Union

Kazakhstan

Philippines

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



Learn more about basic food safety principles by visiting FSIS' facts sheets at www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/index.asp.

FSIS to Conduct Food Defense Plan Survey in August

FSIS will conduct a survey on August 1, to determine how many FSIS-regulated slaughter and processing plants have voluntarily adopted functional food defense plans.

Prior to this date, the agency will revise the survey to assure that plans containing functional food defense measures, but called something other than food defense plans, are considered in the survey. A notice of instruction and training will also be provided for guidance.

Additional outreach initiatives will also be launched such as providing assistance to members at trade association meetings on how to develop a functional food defense plan and posting "questions and answers" specific to developing a plan into *AskFSIS*, on the Agency's Web site.

There are no regulatory requirements for an establishment to develop a plan; however, FSIS strongly encourages establishments to maintain a food defense plan. A food defense plan helps to identify steps that will help minimize the risk that food products in an establishment will be intentionally contaminated

or tampered with and it also increases preparedness.

Although the plan should be in place at all times, it may be particularly helpful during emergencies. During a crisis, when stress is high and response time is at a premium, a documented set of procedures will improve an establishment's ability to respond quickly. A food defense plan also helps to maintain a safe working environment for employees, provide a quality product to customers, and protect an establishment's bottom line.

The agency is expecting to see a goal of a 50% adoption rate since the prior two surveys in which the adoption rate was less than 50%. Ultimately, FSIS is expecting industry to reach a goal of at least 90% of plants adopting functional food defense plans in order to stave off the agency's move forward with rulemaking that will mandate functional food defense plans.

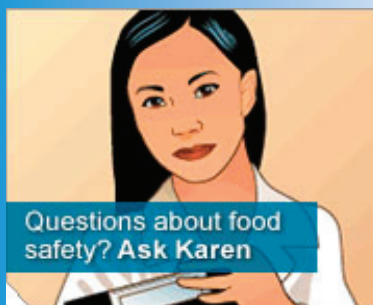
To learn how to develop a functional food defense plan, visit FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Defense_&_Emergency_Response/Guidance_Materials/index.asp.

FSIS Issues Notice

Last week, FSIS issued Notice 35-08 titled: “*Verification of Carcasses that an Establishment Further Processes Without an Official Inspection Legend.*”

This notice provides inspection program personnel with clarification related to establishments that elect not to have the mark of inspection applied to carcasses that will remain in the facility for further processing.

This notice is available on FSIS’ Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/FSIS_Notices_Index/index.asp



AskKaren.gov

Helpful Resource

E-mail Alert Service - FSIS’ e-mail alert service provides subscribers automatic and customized access to selected food safety news and information.

Visit www.fsis.usda.gov/news_&_events/Email_Subscription/index.asp to sign up for agency e-mail alerts.

Register for Public Health and Food Safety Summit on May 15 and 16

FSIS is co-sponsoring a two-day summit with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration titled *Better Communications, Better Public Health Outcomes: Strategies for Improved Coordination During Foodborne Outbreaks.*

The meeting will be held May 15-16 at the Renaissance St. Louis Grand and Suites Hotel, 800 Washington Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri.

The summit will include a public meeting and an invitation-only simulation exercise. The steering committee will include representation from member organizations of the Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response (CIFOR), as well as other stakeholders.

CIFOR is a multidisciplinary working group whose mission is to increase collaboration across the country to reduce the burden of foodborne illness in the United States. As a member, FSIS recognizes the excellent and important work already being done by CIFOR and plans to continue active participation in future efforts.

Online registration can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&Events/Meetings_&_Events/index.asp.

Agency Launches “Food Safety at Home” Podcast Service for Consumers

This week, FSIS launched the “Food Safety at Home” series of podcasts that offers consumers another method of obtaining food safety information for meat, poultry and processed egg products.

Users can currently hear an introduction to this series by USDA Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Richard Raymond. The first topic presented by food safety specialists is the “*Is it done yet?*” campaign which discusses the importance of using a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of meat, poultry and egg dishes to ensure food is thoroughly cooked.

Additional food safety topics such as what to do during a power outage; the four food safety messages of clean, separate, cook, chill as well as tips from the Meat and Poultry Hotline are just some of the future topics that will be presented in these short, factual audio files.

To listen to individual podcasts or sign up for a free subscription, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&Events/podcasts/index.asp. For assistance or details concerning FSIS podcasts, send an e-mail to podcast@fsis.usda.gov.

USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline

Food safety experts are available year-round from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. EST to answer questions about safely preparing and cooking foods. The Hotline is closed on Federal government holidays.

The toll-free number is 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854). Recorded messages are available 24 hours a day.

Check out USDA's Food Safety Quiz for Parents and Kids

Before you let kids have the run of the kitchen, USDA advises you to take a little quiz together. Visit www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/NR_090704_01/index.asp.



FSIS Posts Compliance Guideline for Controlling *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* in Poultry

FSIS has posted on its Web site the second edition of the *Compliance Guideline for Controlling Salmonella and Campylobacter in Poultry*.

The updated guideline includes recommendations for controlling both *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*.

The compliance guideline describes concerns and validated controls for each step in the broiler slaughter process. It targets small and very small poultry plants to help them better comply with regulatory requirements.

The compliance guide includes the following changes:

- Addition of guidance for the control of *Campylobacter* both at pre-harvest and during slaughter processing;
- Updated information regarding progress on implementation of the *Salmonella* verification program;
- Information for controlling *Salmonella Enteritidis* at pre-harvest provided in Appendix A;
- Information on current research by FSIS and the Agricultural Research Service; and
- Examples of case studies as additional ways of validating a plant's food system.

To view the *Compliance Guideline for Controlling Salmonella and Campylobacter in Poultry* on FSIS' Web site, go to www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Compliance_Guideline_Controlling_Salmonella_Poultry.pdf.