



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

Volume 10, Issue 36
September 12, 2008



FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

Register Online for the Low Dose Irradiation Public Meeting

FSIS will hold a public meeting on September 18 to communicate with stakeholders and receive public comments on what action it should take with respect to a petition from the American Meat Institute (AMI).

The Agency received a petition from AMI in July 2005 to recognize the use of low penetration and low dose electron beam irradiation on the surface of chilled beef carcasses as a processing aid. A copy of the petition is available on FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Petition_Carcass_Surface_Irrad.pdf.

In this petition, AMI argues that research studies demonstrate low dose irradiation in beef is exceptionally effective at reducing levels of *E. coli* O157:H7, does not produce significant losses of either macro- or micro-nutrients and does not have any effect on organoleptic properties, appearance or any lasting effects on shelf life.

Based on research and information collected, as well as a positive evaluation of the safety of irradiation by the Food and Drug Administration, FSIS will consider data and information contained in the petition.

The meeting will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the L'Enfant Plaza Hotel, 480 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W., Washington, D.C.

To register and review an agenda for this meeting, visit the "Meetings and Events" page of FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Meetings_&_Events/index.asp.

Inside this Issue

<i>E. coli</i> Testing Results	2
Animal Raising Claims Public Meeting	3
Public Meeting	3

Export Requirement Updates



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

Colombia

Hong Kong

Kazakhstan

Taiwan

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

Be Prepared, Be Food Safe

Two new video casts in American Sign Language, titled, “Food Safety During a Power Outage” and “Be Food Safe” have been added to the *SignFSIS* library.



Visit FSIS’ Web site to check them out www.fsis.usda.gov/news_&_events/SignFSIS/index.asp.

FSIS Updates *E. coli* O157:H7 Reports

FSIS has updated *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) O157:H7 testing data to include information through September 7, 2008.

Results from Analysis of Raw Ground Beef and Raw Ground Beef Component Samples for *Escherichia coli* O157:H7

Raw Ground Beef						
Source	As of September 9, 2007			As of September 7, 2008		
	Number Analyzed	Number Positive	Percent Positive	Number Analyzed	Number Positive	Percent Positive
Federal Plants	8,342	16	0.19	7,889	28	0.35
Retail Stores	121	0	0.00	282	0	0.00
Imports	61	0	0.00	38	1	2.63
Raw Ground Beef Components						
Source	As of September 9, 2007			As of September 7, 2008		
	Number Analyzed	Number Positive	Percent Positive	Number Analyzed	Number Positive	Percent Positive
Federal Plants	379	2	0.53	1,482	9	0.61
Imports	0	0	0.00	377	2	0.53
The above information is based upon data in the FSIS electronic data system as of September 9, 2008. Results are from FSIS routine and follow-up sampling programs.						

The presence of *E. coli* O157:H7 is often attributed to contamination that occurs during slaughter or is introduced through improper sanitation procedures. Over the years, methods have been developed to help prevent or reduce the presence of *E. coli* O157:H7 on product. Interventions can include steam pasteurization, treatment with antimicrobials such as an organic acid solution, irradiation or other methods. These interventions can be applied at various stages of the process. The application of interventions can be an important part of an establishment’s HACCP plan to control for *E. coli* O157:H7.

Individual positive results from the raw ground beef sampling programs for 2008 are reported on FSIS’ Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/2008_Ecoli_Positive_Results/index.asp.

FSIS Issues Directive

FSIS issued Directive 9030.1 titled *Targeting for High-Risk Imported Product Shipments* on September 10.

This directive provides instructions to designated FSIS field personnel in the Office of International Affairs and the Office of Program Evaluation, Enforcement and Review as well as designated personnel in the Office of Food Defense and Emergency Response, for monitoring risk assigned to imported meat, poultry or processed egg product shipments by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection Automated Targeting System.

This directive also provides inspectors instructions to re-inspect imported products that may pose elevated food defense concerns.

To review this directive in detail, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISDirectives/9030.1.pdf.

USDA to Host Public Meeting on Animal Raising Claims

FSIS and USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will host a public meeting on October 14 to discuss and review its policies on the use of animal raising claims in the labeling of meat and poultry products.

FSIS evaluates animal raising claims by considering information on animal production practices submitted by companies as part of their label approval requests. However, recent events concerning labeling claims related to the use of antibiotics in the raising of poultry have led FSIS to question its ability to verify that labels of meat and poultry products that contain animal raising claims are truthful and not misleading.

Therefore, FSIS and AMS will solicit public input and review its policies on claims related to the use of antibiotics in poultry and on animal raising claims in general.

The meeting will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the L'Enfant Plaza Hotel, 480 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W., Washington, D.C. An agenda will be available for review on FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/meetings_&_events/index.asp.

FSIS to Host Public Meeting to Review Policies on Sampling Procedures

FSIS is hosting a one and a half day public meeting on October 14 and 15 to review its policies on sampling procedures, as well as those employed by non-FSIS entities, including the private sector.

The primary purpose of the meeting is to deal with sampling issues associated with raw beef, particularly for *E. coli* O157:H7 as a first step. FSIS will also expand this meeting format to address other pathogens and species/products in the future. The Agency will also use this public meeting to gather input from all stakeholders on other sampling issues that need to be addressed.

FSIS will compile these issues into a list of discussion topics for a future series of quarterly public meetings on sampling. More information on the location and an upcoming agenda will be available soon at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/meetings_&_events/index.asp.