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Food Safety and
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FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

Secretary Mike Johanns Announces Japanese Beef Trade Agreement

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced an agreement on June 21, regarding the status for the resumption of U.S. beef trade with Japan.

“Although this agreement is another step toward the resumption of beef trade with Japan, I will not be satisfied until U.S. beef is once again accepted into the Japanese market,” said Johanns.

The Secretary also announced that Japanese audit teams will arrive in the United States this weekend and conclude their work by July 21. Upon completion of the audits, Japan has agreed to expeditiously resume beef trade.

Johanns stated, “Ultimately, it is our goal to complete the Japanese audits with all plants that have met U.S. requirements to export beef to Japan being approved to do so at the same time. I cannot

emphasize strongly enough the importance of Japan recognizing the U.S. food safety inspection system as a single, effective system and acting accordingly in resuming trade.

“When that occurs, my expectation is that minor noncompliance issues will not disrupt our entire trading relationship. Instead, Japan has agreed to notify us of such issues and discuss the appropriate course, such as the rejection of individual shipments, if appropriate.”

“Japan has been conducting an exhaustive examination to confirm the safety of U.S. beef and these audits must constitute the final step. We have instituted numerous changes in our system, answered every question posed by Japan, and delivered an abundance of factual, science-based assurances that U.S. beef is safe. It is time for beef trade to resume with Japan.”

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Export Requirement Updates



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

Japan

Taiwan

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

FSIS Begins Outreach Sessions for Small and Very Small Plants

This week, FSIS began outreach sessions for small and very small plants. FSIS invited small and very small plant owners and operators to join agency and state inspection personnel at outreach sessions to bring industry and inspectors together to promote a uniform understanding of the regulations.

The purpose of these outreach sessions is to review basic regulatory principles with small and very small plant owners and operators, providing them with information to enhance the design and implementation of their food safety systems.

The sessions, conducted by FSIS' regional trainers, were held in Athens and Atlanta, Ga., and in Salt Lake City, Utah. The sessions covered an overview

of FSIS' Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point and Rules of Practice regulations.

Bobby Palesano, deputy executive associate of FSIS' Office of Policy, Program and Employee Development and co-leader of FSIS' task force on small and very small plant outreach, led the sessions in Georgia. "Nearly every industry representative told me they were very appreciative of the sessions and think the outreach initiative is a step in the right direction," said Palesano.

For a schedule of upcoming sessions, visit FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&Events/Meetings_&Events/index.asp.

FSIS Issues Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

FSIS published a *Federal Register* notice on June 23, titled, *Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection (Exportation, Transportation, and Importation of Meat and Poultry Products)*.

This notice announces that FSIS is requesting an extension of a currently approved information collection regarding exportation, transportation and importation of meat and poultry products.

The agency is accepting comments through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> and by electronic mail at fsis.regulationscomments@fsis.usda.gov.

This notice is available on FSIS' Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Frame/FrameRedirect.asp?main=http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/2006-0014.htm>.

FSIS' 100 Years Commemorative Web Page

This year, FSIS celebrates 100 years of protecting the food supply under the Federal Meat Inspection Act.

To access FSIS' 100 years commemorative Web page, visit <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/100years/>.

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 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854), TTY: 1-800-256-7072. Recorded messages are available 24 hours a day.

Ask Karen

FSIS' virtual representative can answer your questions 24 hours day, seven days a week.

Visit "Ask Karen" at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safety_Education/Ask_Karen/index.asp.

FSIS Issues Notice on Nominations for Membership on the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods

FSIS published a *Federal Register* notice on June 23, titled, *Nominations for Membership on the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods*.

This notice announces that USDA is soliciting nominations for membership on the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods. Nominations for membership are being sought from individuals with scientific expertise in the fields of epidemiology, food technology, microbiology (food, clinical and predictive), risk assessment, infectious disease, biostatistics and other related sciences.

Persons from state and federal governments, industry, consumer

groups and academia, as well as all other interested persons, are invited to submit nominations. Members who are not federal government employees will be appointed to serve as non-compensated special government employees.

The agency is accepting comments through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> and by electronic mail at fsis.regulationscomments@fsis.usda.gov.

This notice is available on FSIS' Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Frame/FrameRedirect.asp?main=http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/2006-0015.htm>.

FSIS Issues News Release on Summer Grilling

FSIS issued a news release on June 20 to offer food safety advice for summer grilling.

"The risk of foodborne illness increases during the summer months because disease-causing bacteria grow faster on raw meat and poultry products in warmer weather," said Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Richard Raymond.

"Bacteria also need moisture to flourish and summer weather,

often hot and humid, provides the perfect conditions."

The news release addresses the four key recommendations that can help keep friends and family safe from foodborne illness and provides important recommendations for grillers.

The news release is available at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/NR_062006_01/index.asp.

FSIS Posts Quarterly Progress Report on *Salmonella* Testing of Raw Meat and Poultry Products

**To submit
comments or
questions, contact
the editor,
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FSIS posted on its Web site the quarterly progress report on *Salmonella* testing of selected raw and meat poultry products. This quarterly report provides preliminary data from the first three months of 2006.

In February 2006, FSIS posted in the *Federal Register* its intention to publish results quarterly and to change how it used the results from its *Salmonella* verification sampling program for meat and poultry establishments as

a way to enhance public health protection.

FSIS is now providing results from individual *Salmonella* verification sample tests the agency regularly conducts at meat and poultry establishments to establishments that have asked to be informed of various tests.

The quarterly report is available on FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/science/Q1_2006_Salmonella_Testing/index.asp.

Export Tip of the Week

As a reminder, a "replacement certificate" for the FSIS Form 9060-5, *Meat and Poultry Export Certificate of Wholesomeness*, should only be issued if: (1) the original certificate was lost; (2) the original certificate contained incorrect information; (3) the original certificate was not complete; or (4) the name of the exporter has changed.

Replacement certificates may be issued for other reasons, but these are the primary conditions for which they are issued. Replacement certificates must

be dated with the same date as that shown on the original certificate.

Replacement certificates do not represent the product's current condition but rather the condition of the product at the time of the initial export certification.

Visit FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/Export_Information/index.asp to learn more about requirements for exporting products to other countries.