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FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

FSIS Reminds Consumers to Properly Handle and Cook Frozen, Stuffed, Raw Chicken Products

FSIS issued a public health alert on July 3, to remind consumers to ensure that frozen, stuffed, raw chicken products are fully cooked and properly handled before they are consumed.

In collaboration with the state of Minnesota, the agency recently investigated illnesses associated with a class of frozen entrees that contain raw chicken. These frozen, breaded, boneless chicken products that may also be stuffed or filled and appear browned are raw and must be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165°F. FSIS recommends the use of a food thermometer to monitor internal temperature.

FSIS believes that in some cases, consumers may not realize that the breading on these products has only been pre-browned and contain raw chicken. The agency is also concerned that consumers may not be following cooking instructions or that because of the variability of microwave ovens, the instructions may not yield a product that reaches an internal minimum temperature of 165° F.

FSIS is requiring that the manufacturers of these products ensure that new labels clearly state that these products contain raw chicken and must be fully cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165° F. In addition, FSIS is taking steps to ensure that cooking instructions are effective, understandable and practical. Consumers should contact the manufacturer if following the cooking instructions yields a product that is unacceptable in terms of taste or texture.

Consumers with food safety questions can phone the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHOTLINE (or 1-888-674-6854); TTY at 1-800-256-7072.

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Export Requirement Updates



There were no changes in the export requirements this week.

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

Avian Influenza (AI) Fact Sheet

The *Avian Influenza Testing and Diagnostics* fact sheet provides definitions and a description of the tests used to diagnose AI in U.S. bird populations.

To learn more about AI, visit www.usda.gov.

FSIS Revises List of Safe and Suitable Ingredients

FSIS amended Directive 7120.1, on July 3, to revise the list of safe and suitable ingredients for meat and poultry products.

This directive titled, *Safe and Suitable Ingredients Used in the Production of Meat and Poultry Products*, 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 Consumer Protection Staff at (202) 205-0279.

This directive is available on FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISDirectives/7120.1_Amend8.pdf.

FSIS Web Site Still Tops in Customer Satisfaction

FSIS' Web site scored 72 percent in customer satisfaction and was tied for the top-scoring USDA Web site for the second quarter of 2006. The site was nationally recognized earlier this year as one of the top three greatest improvers in satisfaction in the federal government sector.

Export Tip of the Week

Meat and poultry products certified for export may be returned to the United States in accordance with procedures described in FSIS Directive 9010.1, *Export Products Returned to the United States*.

If approached by an owner, broker or agent, inspection personnel should contact FSIS' Office of International Affairs (OIA) at importexport@fsis.usda.gov and provide information regarding the returned product as described in the directive.

OIA will decide whether specific shipments should be released into commerce or held for re-inspection as described in the directive.

OIA will coordinate with the owner, broker or agent and the appropriate district office, as necessary, to assure the product goes to the appropriate re-inspection site, control of product movement and product disposition.