



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

Volume 8, Issue 2
January 12, 2007



FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

FSIS to Extend Comment Period on Term “Natural”

FSIS has extended the comment period on how to define the term “natural” until March 5.

FSIS held a public meeting on December 12 to discuss a petition to establish a definition for the voluntary claim “natural.” The agency also gathered comments on conditions under which the claim should be allowed to be used on the labels of meat and poultry products.

The original comment period closed on January 11; however, FSIS has taken this action to respond to requests that were made at and after the December 12 meeting.

To view a transcript from the public meeting, visit FSIS’ Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Natural_Claims_Transcripts.pdf.

FSIS Issues Notices

FSIS issued Notice 01-07 on January 8 to clarify how inspection program personnel should document regulatory noncompliance related to 9 *Code of Federal Regulations* 310.22 for controlling specified risk materials (SRMs), as well as other regulations.

The agency also issued Notice 02-07 on January 10 titled, *Export Library Revisions for December 2006*.

This notice provides links to the pages of the Export Library for those countries that made changes in their export requirements during December 2006. A red asterisk (*) indicates the most recent change in the country’s requirements.

Both notices can be viewed on FSIS’ Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/FSIS_Notices_Index/index.asp.

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Export Requirement Updates



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

Australia

Cayman Islands

European Union

Russia

United Kingdom

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

Export Tip of the Week

FSIS does not provide an export license for meat and poultry products destined to foreign countries. If required, such licenses may be issued by the Department of Commerce or the Department of Treasury depending on the country.

For further information, call FSIS' Office of International Affairs at (202) 720-3473.

FSIS to Hold Regulatory Education Sessions for Small and Very Small Plants

FSIS will hold regulatory education sessions on January 24 and 31 for the owners and operators of small and very small plants in California, Virginia and Wyoming.

The sessions will cover a regulatory walk-through of sanitation standard operating procedures and the hazard analysis and critical control point and rules of practice regulations. The agency has moved forward with plans to expand the regulatory education sessions.

The regulatory education sessions will be held at the following locations:

- Wednesday, January 24 from 5-7 p.m., at the Embassy Suites

Hotel - Covina, 1211 E. Garvey Street, Covina, Calif.;

- Wednesday, January 24 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at the Doubletree Charlottesville, 990 Hilton Heights Road, Charlottesville, Va.; and

- Wednesday, January 31 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at the High Plains Power, 230 West Main, Riverton, Wyo.

To register by phone, call (800) 336-3747. Online registration forms and information about upcoming sessions can be found at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&Events/Outreach_Sessions_SVS_Plants/index.asp.

FSIS to Mail Food Safety Resource Brochures

FSIS recently mailed a copy of its *Food Safety Resources: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Systems Small and Very Small Plant Outreach* brochure to all meat and poultry establishments.

The mailing is part of an ongoing outreach program to provide small and very small plants with the latest and most comprehensive information on foodborne hazards, up-to-date procedures and proven technologies.

FSIS Generic HACCP Models; guidance documents; and FSIS workshop materials on *Listeria monocytogenes*, *E. coli* O157:H7 and food defense materials will be offered at no cost. Most materials are available in both English and Spanish.

The brochure is also available on the FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/HACCP_Resources_Brochure_Apr2006.pdf.

Helpful Resources

E-mail Subscription Service - FSIS' e-mail alert service provides automatic and customized access to selected food safety news and information. Visit http://www.fsis.usda.gov/news_&events/Email_Subscription/index.asp to sign up for agency e-mail alerts.

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). Recorded messages are available 24 hours a day.

Ask Karen - FSIS' virtual representative can answer your food safety 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 Solicits Feedback from FOIA Customers

On January 10, FSIS launched an electronic customer feedback section on the agency's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Web page.

The feedback section has been made available so that unsolicited comments and suggestions from customers who have requested records from FSIS can be shared.

Prior to launching this section, FSIS researched several USDA and various other agency Web

sites to determine the most efficient and cost effective approach to receiving this type of feedback.

This section serves as part of FSIS' continuing efforts to improve customer service, as well as comply with the President's Executive Order 13392.

To access the FOIA customer feedback section, visit FSIS' Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/FOIA/index.asp>.

IKE Preliminary Scenario Available Online

FSIS has made available the preliminary Interactive Knowledge Exchange (IKE) Scenario 01D-07, *Citing Relevant Regulations When Documenting SRM Noncompliance*, for comment through January 19.

This IKE scenario supports FSIS Notice 01-07. It is designed to help inspection program personnel understand that they should include all relevant regulatory citations when documenting noncompliance, including the failure to properly remove,

segregate or dispose of specified risk materials.

The scenario can be viewed on FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/FSIS_Employees/IKE_Comment/index.asp.

If you have questions or comments regarding this preliminary IKE scenario, contact FSIS' Technical Service Center at (800) 233-3935, or by e-mail at ike@fsis.usda.gov.