



FSIS Constituent Update

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Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Security

FSIS Ground Beef Sampling Shows *E. coli* O157:H7 Decline Again In 2004

FSIS has released data showing a 43 percent drop of *E. coli* O157:H7 positive ground beef regulatory samples collected in 2004 compared with the previous year.

Of the 8010 samples collected and analyzed in 2004, 0.17 percent tested positive for *E. coli* O157:H7, down from 0.30 in 2003, 0.78 in 2002, 0.84 in 2001 and 0.86 in 2000. Between 2000 and 2004, the percentage of positive samples in FSIS regulatory sampling has declined by more than 80 percent. The total number of samples collected in 2004 increased by more than 21 percent.

In April 2004, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in its annual report on foodborne illness in America, reported a 36 percent reduction in illnesses from *E. coli* O157:H7 in 2003 compared to 2002. The number of FSIS recall actions related to *E. coli* O157:H7 also continued to drop. There were six recalls related to *E. coli* O157:H7 in 2004 compared to 12 in 2003 and 21 in 2002.

“The reduction in positive *E. coli* O157:H7 regulatory samples demonstrates the continuing success of our agency’s strong, science based policies aimed at reducing pathogens in America’s meat, poultry and egg products,” said Acting FSIS Administrator Dr. Barbara J. Masters. “Improvements in regulatory oversight and training have paid dividends, and we are committed to building on this strong foundation.”

In 2002, FSIS ordered all beef plants to reexamine their food safety plans, based on evidence that *E. coli* O157:H7 is a hazard reasonably likely to occur. Plants were required to implement measures that would sufficiently eliminate or reduce the risk of *E. coli* O157:H7 in their products. A majority of plants have made major changes to their operations based on the directive, including the installation and validation of new technologies specifically designed to combat *E. coli* O157:H7. Many plants have also increased their testing for *E. coli* O157:H7 in order to verify their food safety systems. For more information visit: www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/

Export Requirement Updates

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

Columbia

European Union

Hong Kong

Mexico

Complete information is available online at:
[www.fsis.usda.gov/
Regulations_&_Policies/
Export_Information/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Export_Information/)



Statement by Secretary Johanns Regarding the Temporary Injunction Issued by the U.S. District Court for the District of Montana

“I am very disappointed in Wednesday’s ruling by the court to temporarily delay the implementation of USDA’s minimal-risk rule, which would re-establish trade with Canada for live cattle under 30 months of age.

“USDA remains confident that the requirements of the minimal-risk rule, in combination with the animal and public health measures already in place in the United States and Canada, provide the utmost protection to both U.S. consumers and livestock. We also remain fully confident in the underlying risk assessment, developed in accordance with the OIE guidelines, which determined Canada to be a minimal risk region.

“This ruling is not a reflection on the substance of the minimal-risk rule, but rather a procedural delay while the judge considers the merits of the case. We continue to believe that international trade in beef, founded on science-based regulations, should be re-established in an expeditious manner.”

FSIS Notice 12-05: Documentation of Humane Handling Activities

FSIS Notice 12-05 reissues the information in FSIS Notice 35-04 to include additional information for verification activities under Category VIII - Stunning Effectiveness and Category IX - Check for Conscious Animals. It also provides information regarding inspection program personnel’s response to egregious humane handling noncompliances. In the last paragraph of paragraph III, FSIS Notice 12-05 provides Public Health Veterinarians in multiple In-Plant Performance System (IPPS) assignments instructions related to Humane Activities Tracking (HAT). All other information from FSIS Notice 35-04 remains unchanged, and FSIS Notice 12-05 continues to provide inspection program personnel with clarification regarding what information they are to record in HAT under the Electronic Animal Disposition Reporting System (eADRS), and what information they are to include on noncompliance records (NRs) issued for humane handling noncompliances.

To view the notice visit:

www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Notice_12-05/

Featured Office of the Week



Import Inspection Division

FSIS plans and administers a national import reinspection program. After the U.S. Customs Service and USDA-APHIS requirements are met, shipments imported into the U.S. must be reinspected by FSIS at an approved import inspection facility. FSIS inspectors carry out reinspection in approximately 125 official import establishments. To learn more visit: www.fsis.usda.gov/about_fsis/OIA/

Food Security Training Opportunities

To help reduce the risk of an attack on the food supply, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have joined forces to provide a food security awareness training program.

The training, *Protecting the Food Supply from Intentional Adulteration: An Introductory Training Session to Raise Awareness*, is intended for individuals who play an important role in defending our nation's food from attack. The program is available to any interested individuals free of charge online and at training courses offered across the country.

The online course is available at:

www.fda.gov/ora/training/orau/FoodSecurity/default.htm. Please contact Sebastian Cianci at (301) 436-2291 or at Sebastian.Cianci@cfsan.fda.gov for more information regarding accessing on-line training.

In-person training is being offered in cities across the country through September. The course lasts approximately six hours (8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.) and is free of charge. Space will be limited and registration will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please contact Anne Roberts at 202-488-6609 or at anne.b.roberts@saic.com for further details. The upcoming dates are as follows (registration deadline are in parentheses):

Atlanta, GA – March 22 (March 11)	Boulder, CO – June 9 (May 27)
Seattle, WA – April 19 (April 8)	Chicago, IL – July 12 (July 1)
Alameda, CA – April 21 (April 8)	Minneapolis, MN – July 14 (July 1)
Philadelphia, PA – May 17 (May 6)	Los Angeles, CA – Aug. 4 (July 22)
Boston, MA – May 19 (May 6)	Miami, FL – Sept. 13 (Sept. 2)
Kansas City, MO – June 7 (May 27)	Washington, DC – Sept. 20 (Sept. 9)

For further details please visit:

www.fsis.usda.gov/News/Food_Security_Awareness_Training/

Time and Temperature Tables for Cooking Ready-to-Eat Poultry Products

FSIS Notice 16-05 announces the availability of a compliance guideline, Time-Temperature Tables for Cooking Ready-to-Eat Poultry Products. This guideline provides updated time and temperature tables for cooking ready-to-eat poultry products (9 CFR 381.150). This notice does not issue any verification procedures to FSIS personnel.

The time and temperature tables are available at:

www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISNotices/RTE_Poultry_Tables.pdf

THIS WEEK'S HOT WEB LINKS

FSIS Testimony

www.fsis.usda.gov/news_and_events/testimonies/

FSIS International Affairs

www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/International_Affairs/

FSIS Federal Inspection Programs

www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/Federal_Inspection_Programs/



Reminder: Public Meeting to Address Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling

On March 15, 2005, the Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will hold a public meeting to provide information and receive comments on agenda items that will be discussed at the 26th Session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling in Budapest, Hungary, April 4 - 8, 2005. The public meeting will be held from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., in room 1A002 of the Harvey W. Wiley Federal Building, 5100 Paint Branch Parkway, College Park, Md.

For more information or to arrange a sign language interpreter, contact Dr. Gregory Diachenko, Director, Division of Chemistry Research and Environmental Review, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, FDA, Harvey W. Wiley Federal Building, 5100 Paint Branch Parkway, College Park, Md., 20740, at (301) 436-1898. Agenda items for the meeting can be found at: www.codexalimentarius.net/current.jsp?lang=en.

Save the Date: **FSIS Technical Meeting for the *Salmonella* and *C. perfringens* Risk Assessments**

FSIS will hold a public meeting to present and discuss two draft risk assessments. The first is a quantitative risk assessment of *Salmonella* in ready-to-eat (RTE) meat and poultry products. The second is a quantitative risk assessment of *Clostridium perfringens* and *Clostridium botulinum* in RTE and heat-treated, but not RTE, products.

The public meeting is scheduled for March 24, 2005, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The public meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn – Capitol, 550 C Street, SW., Washington, D.C., 20024. A tentative agenda and the draft risk assessments will be available on the FSIS Web site soon. More information will be provided as the date approaches.

To submit comments or questions, contact the editor at:

fsisupdate@fsis.usda.gov (202) 720-9113



The USDA Food Safety Mobile: *Taking Food Safety Education on the Road*

The USDA Food Safety Mobile travels continuously throughout the United States to educate consumers about the risks associated with mishandling food and steps they can take to reduce their risk of foodborne illness. The food safety mobile's next dates and locations are as follows:

March 19, 2005

Albertson's Grocery
Store
(St. George, UT)

April 8-10, 2005

Clark County Fair &
Rodeo
(Logandale, Nev.)