



FSIS Constituent Update

Volume 6, Issue 17

May 20, 2005

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Security

USDA and HHS Propose To Modernize Principles for Food Standards of Identity

FSIS and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published a joint proposed rule to establish a set of general principles for evaluating whether to revise, eliminate, or create new standards of identity for food. This shared effort is a step in the agencies' food standards modernization initiative.

Standards of identity define what a given food product is, its name, and the ingredients that must be used, or may be used in the manufacture of the food. Food standards ensure that consumers get what they expect when they purchase certain food products and that the basic nature of foods is maintained no matter where they buy the product.

"Today's action starts us down the road on a set of general principles that mark a significant step toward modernizing food standards," said Acting FSIS Administrator Barbara J. Masters. "The rule will likely encourage the development of food products with better nutritional profiles and stimulate innovations in food processing technology. The rule, if adopted, will allow both agencies to better utilize resources to better protect public health."

Recent technological advances in the food industry have led to increases in petitions to modify food standards. It is intended that the general principles will lead to the updating of existing standards or the creation of new standards with the goal of allowing industry to continue to produce safe and wholesome products while stimulating technological innovation.

FSIS and FDA share the responsibility for ensuring that food labels are truthful and not misleading. FSIS has authority to regulate the labeling for meat, poultry, and processed egg products while FDA regulates the labeling of all other foods.

Export Requirement Updates

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

Cuba

European Union

Republic of Korea

Russia

Complete information is available online at:

[www.fsis.usda.gov/
Regulations_&Policies/
Export_Information/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/Export_Information/)



Register Now for Upcoming Workshops

FSIS food security workshops have begun and continue through July 2005. By participating in one of six FSIS Food Security Workshops, you will be:

- **Provided the most current food security information available.**
- **Afforded the ability to interact with federal regulators and gain first-hand information on new FSIS Directives that affect you.**
- **Furnished the tools and technical expertise to design a Food Security Plan.** Senior officials from FSIS' Office of Food Security and Emergency Preparedness will present interactive training and provide step-by-step instruction to help you develop your own Food Security Plan.
- **Ahead of the curve.** FSIS considers food security plans to be essential. The Agency considers these plans to be so important that it is monitoring the extent to which plants adopt them.
- **Making a difference.** Ultimately, everyone's goal is to reduce the likelihood of intentional contamination of food. But, we need your help. By participating in the workshops, you can make a difference. Ensuring the security of our nation's food supply is a test that none of us can afford to fail.

The workshop dates are: May 21 (Oakland, Calif.), June 4 (Chicago, Ill. or its suburbs), June 11 (Savannah, Ga.), and June 25 (Newark N.J.) and July 9 (Philadelphia, Pa.). The workshops in Oakland and Philadelphia will be Web cast. Pre-registration is highly encouraged.

Registration is available online at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/meetings_&_events/. You may also register on the automated Pre-registration Line at 1-800-485-4424.

FSIS Model Food Security Plans: Feedback Form

Recently, FSIS announced the availability of model food security plans to strengthen security measures and prevent potential acts of intentional contamination. FSIS is asking for comments and questions on the four plans. You may submit comments at: www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Security_&_Emergency_Preparedness/model_plans_feedback_form

The four model food security plans can be found at: www.fsis.usda.gov/food_security_and_emergency_preparedness/Security_Guidelines/

THIS WEEK'S HOT WEB LINKS

FSIS New Technology Office

[www.fsis.usda.gov/
Regulations_&_Policies/
New_Technologies/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/New_Technologies/)

FSIS Careers

www.fsis.usda.gov/Careers/

FSIS Consumers and Educators

[www.fsis.usda.gov/
Consumers_&_Educators/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Consumers_&_Educators/)



Notice 30-05: Availability of Q&As Regarding FSIS Directives

FSIS issued Notice 30-05 on May 17 to inform personnel that two question and answer documents relating to FSIS Directives 10,010.1, Revision 1 (Microbiological Testing Program for *Escherichia Coli* O157:H7 in Raw Ground Beef Products and Raw Ground Beef Components and Beef Patty Components, 5000.2 (Review of Establishment Data by Inspection Personnel), and 6420.2 (Verification of Procedures for Controlling Fecal Material, Ingesta and Milk in Slaughter Operations) are now available.

The Q&A documents are at:

www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/5000_Series-Program_Services/

www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/6000_Series-Slaughter_Inspection/

www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/10000_Series-Laboratory_Services/

Non-Routine Incident Report Instructions

FSIS issued Notice 31-05 on May 18 to provide FSIS program offices with instructions about when a non-routine incident report (NRIR) should be initiated, who should fill out the form, and where the form should be sent. FSIS program offices, the Department, and other government agencies all may submit information regarding a suspected non-routine incident involving an FSIS-regulated product to FSIS' Office of Food Security and Emergency Preparedness. In most cases, the NRIR will be submitted by an FSIS program office.

To read this notice in its entirety visit:

www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/FSIS_notices_index/

Risk Assessments Public Comment Period has been Extended

FSIS held a public meeting in March to present and discuss two draft risk assessments on *Salmonella* in ready-to-eat (RTE) meat and poultry products and *Clostridium perfringens* in both RTE and heat-treated, but not RTE, products.

The comment period has been extended to July 11, 2005. The notice of proposed rulemaking [66 FR 12589], draft risk assessments and a list of current comments are available at: www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations/2005_Notices_Index/

Featured Office of the Week

Food Emergency Response Network (FERN) Division

The FSIS FERN Division works with the Department of Health and Human Services' Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to expand and manage an existing group of federal, state, and local laboratories with the capability to detect and identify biological, chemical and radiological agents in food.

Personnel at participating FERN laboratories will analyze surveillance samples, validate new methods used to detect threat agents in food products and meet a list of guidelines to ensure the security and safety of their facilities and employees. The FERN Division coordinates many of these activities as well as recruiting new public laboratories to participate in the network.

For more information on FERN visit:

www.fsis.usda.gov/About_FSIS/OPHS/

Dr. Pierson Testifies on Food Safety Coordination

Acting Under Secretary Dr. Merle Pierson testified before the House Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce and Agency Organization on May 17 to discuss FSIS' accomplishments in protecting the nation's food supply.

"Ensuring the safety of meat, poultry, and egg products requires a strong infrastructure," Pierson said in his testimony. "FSIS has a workforce of over 7,600 inspection personnel in approximately 6,000 federally inspected meat, poultry, and egg product plants and import establishments every day. Also, through close cooperation, communication, and coordination, Federal agencies and others work effectively together to ensure a safe and secure food supply. As a partner in the U.S. food safety effort, FSIS strives to maintain a strong working relationship with its sister public health agencies."

During his testimony, Pierson discussed how FSIS' efforts have led to decline in foodborne illness over the last eight years. Last month, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported continued reductions in foodborne illnesses in 2004 from *E. coli* O157 (42% compared to the 1996-98 baseline), *Listeria monocytogenes* (40%), *Campylobacter* (31%), *Yersinia* (45%) and *Salmonella* (8%). The CDC attributes the changes in the incidence of these infections in part to the control measures implemented by government and industry leaders, enhanced food-safety education efforts, and increased attention by consumer groups and the media.

Pierson also discussed the authorities and responsibilities of FSIS and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Food and Drug Administration and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point regulations.

To read the CDC report visit: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/

The Constituent Update will not publish the week of May 27 due to the scheduled federal holiday.

To submit comments or questions, contact the editor, Crystal Straughn 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:

May 21, 2005
Wal-Mart
(Casper, Wyo.)

May 24, 2005
Wal-Mart
(Rock Springs, Wyo.)

May 26, 2005
Elementary School
(Pocatello, ID)

May 27, 2005
Elementary School
(Blackfoot, ID)