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FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

FSIS Clarifies What to Expect When Contacting Technical Service Center with Technical Questions

FSIS recently posted a document to its Web site confirming its commitment to customer service and outlining what customers should expect when they contact the Technical Service Center (TSC) with technical questions.

The document is available at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/TSC_Response_to_Calls_&EMails.pdf. It can also be accessed by clicking the link under the "Contact TSC" section near the bottom of the TSC home page (http://www.fsis.usda.gov/about_fsis/technical_service_center/index.asp).

The document outlines and clarifies a number of issues, including the following:

1) The TSC is part of the Office of Policy, Program and Employee Development (OPPED) and is located in Omaha, Neb. The hours

that the TSC staff is available to take calls or respond to e-mails are 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Time, Monday through Friday.

2) The TSC may request and take steps to get both the inspected establishment and FSIS personnel on a call together to more clearly define the question, and for all relevant stakeholders to hear the answer.

3) The submitted questions and the TSC-provided answers will be captured as text data and will be analyzed for timeliness, completeness and accuracy.

4) The TSC will attempt to provide answers as quickly as possible within 24-48 hours.

5) The TSC will take certain management actions when TSC employees learn of instances in which inspection personnel

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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.



TSC Questions ...

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believe they have been advised by their supervisors not to follow national policy.

OPPED, including the TSC, continues to seek means for

addressing the needs of stakeholders and for ensuring that food safety policy is understood and effectively implemented.

FSIS Posts 2006 Microbiological Data on *Salmonella* Testing of Raw Meat and Poultry Products

Today, FSIS posted on its Web site microbiological data for *Salmonella* testing of selected raw and meat poultry products for calendar year 2006.

FSIS issued the Pathogen Reduction (PR); Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Systems; Final Rule in July 1996. To verify that industry PR/HACCP systems are effective in controlling the contamination of raw meat and poultry products with disease-causing bacteria, the PR/HACCP rule sets *Salmonella* performance standards that

slaughter establishments and establishments that produce raw ground products should meet. FSIS verifies that establishments are meeting the standards by directing federal inspection program personnel to collect randomly selected product samples and send them to FSIS laboratories for *Salmonella* analysis.

The 2006 microbiological data on *Salmonella* is available on FSIS' Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Microbiology/index.asp>.

FSIS Issues Notices

FSIS issued Notice 20-07 on March 7 titled, *Export Library Revisions for February 2007*.

This notice provides links to the pages of the Export Library for those countries that made changes in their export requirements during the month of February.

The agency also issued Notice 21-07 on March 8. This notice titled, *Availability of Electronic Web-Based FSIS Form 10,240-*

1, Production Information on Post-Lethality Exposed Ready-to-Eat Products, announces the availability of Form 10,240-1 for online submission.

It also instructs inspectors-in-charge to meet with establishments that produce products regulated under 9 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 430 and to advise them that the form is available.

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Appliance Thermometers

One of the critical factors in controlling bacteria in food is controlling temperature.

Pathogenic microorganisms grow very slowly at temperatures below 40° F, multiply rapidly between 40 and 140° F and are destroyed at temperatures above 140° F.

For safety, foods must be held at proper cold temperatures in refrigerators or freezers and they must be cooked thoroughly. But how would a consumer know if the refrigerator was cold enough, or if the oven was heating at the proper temperature?

Appliance thermometers are specially designed to measure the temperature of the air in either the refrigerator/freezer or the oven. Some refrigerator thermometers have long metal probes and are similar in appearance to food thermometers. Other refrigerator thermometers, and most oven thermometers, are designed to hang from a wire rack or sit on a shelf.

Learn more about appliance thermometers by visiting FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Appliance_Thermometers/index.asp.

New Notices...

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

FSIS to Request Revision of Currently Approved Information Collection

FSIS issued a *Federal Register* notice on March 7 titled, *Notice of Request for a Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection (Listeria Control for Ready-to-Eat Products)*.

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and the Office of Management and Budget regulations, this notice announces the agency's intention to request a revision of an approved information collection regarding *Listeria* control for ready-to-eat products to reflect

its most recent plant data, which support a finding of fewer total burden hours.

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

This notice is available on FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/index.asp.

FSIS to Hold Regulatory Education Sessions in Pennsylvania and Alabama

FSIS will hold regulatory education sessions on March 20 and 21 for the owners and operators of small and very small plants in Pennsylvania and Alabama.

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 regulatory education sessions will be held at the following locations:

- Tuesday, March 20, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at the Crowne Plaza Harrisburg, 23 S. Second Street, Harrisburg, Pa.; and

- Wednesday, March 21, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at the Doubletree Birmingham, 808 South 20th Street, Birmingham, Ala.

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.