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FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

Johanns Resigns as Secretary of the Department of Agriculture



Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns delivered his farewell speech to USDA employees on Sept. 20, speaking of his pride in the people and history of the Department of Agriculture and his hope for the future.

“The decision to leave this post has not been an easy one,” Johanns said. “I grew up with farmers and ranchers as my childhood heroes and my mentors. Representing them in Washington has been a great privilege.”

Johanns was sworn in Jan. 21, 2005, as the 28th Secretary of the Department of Agriculture after serving as Nebraska’s 38th governor. During his time in office, he worked to re-open international trade markets to U.S. beef after the 2003 bovine spongiform encephalopathy scare, aided producers by providing timely assistance after the hurricane season of 2005 and worked to educate and prepare the country for a potential avian influenza epidemic.

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Export Requirement Updates



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

European Union

Germany

Russia

Switzerland

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

Johanns Resigns...

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“He is not only a decent person and an honest person, but he’s a person who can get things done,” stated President George W. Bush, praising Johanns during remarks in the White House Rose Garden.

“Serving in this position really fulfilled the dreams of this farm boy,” Johanns said, “Growing

up I didn’t know the names of the other Cabinet members, but I knew the name of the secretary of agriculture.”

Johanns swore Charles F. “Chuck” Conner, deputy secretary, in as acting secretary of agriculture. Conner has served as deputy secretary of agriculture since May 2, 2005.

FSIS to Use More Data to Bridge the *Salmonella* Gap

As part of FSIS’ ongoing efforts to enhance the use of data to protect public health, the agency has recently taken two major steps to close the gap that hinders attribution between human illnesses and the raw products regulated by FSIS, particularly with *Salmonella*. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that there are more than 1.4 million cases of illness in the U.S. associated with *Salmonella*, approximately 95 percent likely to be transmitted through food.

FSIS and the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) have strengthened their data sharing relationship through a cooperative agreement finalized Aug. 27. This agreement ensures that identifying information on *Salmonella* isolates (PFGE patterns) that FSIS collects are compared against information about isolates associated with human illness in PulseNet, a database maintained by CDC. The isolates FSIS provides for comparison are primarily those collected for pathogen reduction/Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point verification testing of raw classes of products, such as, broilers, turkeys and ground beef.

Under the agreement, FSIS will be able to routinely access this data for all isolates maintained by ARS, instead of sending a request for isolates of special interest. The data would also be available in a timeframe rapid enough for data to be relevant to in-plant and public health investigations. These changes are expected to play a significant role in identifying whether products regulated by FSIS contributed to reported human illnesses. Improved access to subtyping information

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FSIS Issues New Directives

FSIS recently issued the following directives:

6100.1 - *Ante-Mortem Livestock Inspection*. This directive provides instructions to inspection program personnel on how to inspect livestock before slaughter. This directive is effective on Oct. 1.

6100.2 - *Post-Mortem Livestock Inspection*. This directive provides instructions to FSIS personnel on how to inspect livestock after slaughter.

6100.4 - *Verification Instructions Related to Specified Risk Materials*. This directive provides instructions to inspection program personnel on how to verify establishments which slaughter cattle, process carcasses or parts of cattle are complying with final regulations which prescribe requirements for the removal, segregation and disposition of specified risk materials. This directive is effective on Oct. 1.

These directives are available on FSIS' Web site at: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/6000_Series-Slaughter_Inspection/index.asp.

Salmonella Gap...

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should enable FSIS to offer more assistance to its public health partners, to take swifter regulatory action to protect consumers and to increase efficiency in detecting clusters or outbreaks of foodborne illness.

FSIS also recently announced that it would begin only considering requests for waivers to agency regulations when the requesting establishment demonstrates "consistent process control" for the presence of *Salmonella* in its raw product. Establishments would have to test for *Salmonella* daily and demonstrate that they maintain the rate of positive samples at or below half the current acceptable number. (See "*Salmonella Initiative Program*" on page 2 of the 8/31/07 Constituent Update.) Under certain conditions, these establishments would be providing to FSIS, for the first time, the *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* isolates they find, which FSIS will include in PulseNet.

NACMCF to Hold Public Meetings

The National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods full committee and subcommittees will hold public meetings on Sept. 24-28.

The Subcommittee on Assessment of the Food Safety Importance of *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis* will meet on Sept. 24, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Subcommittee on Determination of the Most Appropriate Technologies for the FSIS to Adopt in Performing Routine and Baseline Microbiological Analyses will meet on Sept. 24, from 1:30 to 5 p.m, and Sept. 25 and 26, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Subcommittee on Parameters for Inoculated-Pack Challenge Study Protocols will meet on Sept. 26 and 27, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

All subcommittee meetings will be held in Room 369 of the Aerospace Building, 901 D Street, SW., Washington, D.C.

The full Committee will meet on Sept. 28, from 9 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., in the conference room at the south end of the USDA cafeteria located in the South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC.

Agenda items are available on FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/news/meetings_&_events/.

For further information about the public meetings, contact Karen Thomas-Sharp at (202) 690-6620 or by e-mail at Karen.Thomas-Sharp@fsis.usda.gov.

Office of Food Safety to Hold Codex Public Meetings

Food Safety Education for Kids and Teens

USDA Food Safety Mobile Coloring Book (PDF Only)

Meet Thermy™, BAC, and some other colorful characters on these pages while you learn four important food safety steps: Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill. Tell grown-ups to use Thermy™, a food thermometer, when they cook!



Food Safety Mobile Game



The Food Safety Mobile is about to take a ride through Safe Food Park. The invisible enemy is called BAC. Fight him as you make your way through this mobile game!

To view the mobile coloring book, food safety mobile game and obtain additional information for kids and teens, visit FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safety_Education/For_Kids_&_Teens/index.asp.



FSIS issued the following *Federal Register* notices on Sept. 20:

- *Codex Alimentarius Commission: First Session of the Codex Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance.*

This notice announces that USDA's Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety and the Department of Health and Human Services' Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will hold a public meeting to discuss the agenda items coming before the First Session of the Codex Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and to present draft U.S. positions on the agenda items. The First Session on AMR will be held in Seoul, Korea on October 23-26.

The public meeting will be held on Sept. 24, from 2 to 4 p.m., in Room 107-A, Jamie Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC.

- *Codex Alimentarius Commission: Meeting of the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses.*

This notice announces that the Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety and FDA will hold a public meeting to provide information and receive public comments on agenda items and U.S. draft positions. These issues will be discussed at the 29th Session of the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, which will be held in Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, Germany, from Nov. 12-16. In addition, an Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revision of the Standard for Gluten-Free Foods will meet on Nov. 10.

The public meeting will be held on Sept. 25, from 1 to 4 p.m., in the auditorium (1A003) of the Harvey Wiley Federal Building, 5100 Paint Branch Parkway, College Park, Md.

For further information about the public meetings, contact Edith Kennard, staff officer, FSIS, (202) 720-5261, or e-mail at edith.kennard@fsis.usda.gov

The notices are available on FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/index.asp.

FSIS to Request Revision of Currently Approved Information Collection

FSIS issued a *Federal Register* notice on Sept. 20 titled, *Notice of Request for a Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection (Application for Inspection, Accreditation of Laboratories, and Exemptions)*.



In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations, the notice announces the agency's intention to request a revision of an approved information collection concerning the regulatory requirements for application for inspection, accreditation of laboratories and exemptions because of revised estimates that 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 e-mail at fsis.regulationscomments@usda.gov.

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

USDA Web Portal Offers Big Food Safety Benefits for Small Food Processors

USDA has unveiled a new Internet resource to help smaller companies answer food safety questions and help food processors make science-based food production decisions. The portal is available at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/naa/errc/mfsru/portal>.

The Predictive Microbiology Information Portal (PMIP) was developed by scientists with Agricultural Research Service (ARS) at Wyndmoor, Pa., working with colleagues at FSIS, Rutgers University and Decisionalysis Risk Consultants, Inc., in Canada.

“Scientists, food safety risk managers, researchers and



government decision-makers can use this access to predictive modeling tools and food microbiology information,” said Agricultural Research Service Administrator Edward B. Knipling. “The portal is geared towards small and very small processors, but the information collected will benefit companies of all sizes.”

“This partnership builds on our extensive efforts to provide more resources and better tools to small and very small plants so they can enhance the safety

of their products,” said FSIS Administrator Al Almanza.

PMIP focuses on processors with 500 or fewer employees, but the information it contains can benefit companies of all sizes. ARS microbiologist Vijay K. Juneja and his ARS and FSIS colleagues met with many industry members to tailor the Web portal to their diverse needs in providing safe and wholesome products to consumers.

Currently, PMIP offers information on research, regulations and resources related to *Listeria monocytogenes* in ready-to-eat foods, the prototype identified for the project by FSIS. In the coming months, it will be expanded to include other pathogen and food combinations. A searchable database allows users to find information that can also be used by food processors to develop plans for hazard analysis and critical control point, to ensure the safety of food processes.

FSIS will also provide a link to the portal to facilitate access by the meat and poultry industry, especially small and very small plants.

The related news release is available on FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/NR_091907_01/index.asp.