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FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

FSIS Takes Aggressive Actions in Combating *E. Coli* O157:H7

FSIS issued a news release and held a teleconference on Oct. 23, to announce new, continued and upcoming actions, including expanded testing and more rapid recalls, to protect public health against the risk of *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) O157:H7.

“We want the American consumers to know that FSIS has taken a number of aggressive actions to respond to a recent increase in *E. coli* O157:H7 recalls and illnesses associated with this pathogen and we are further expanding these efforts,” said Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Richard A. Raymond.

In June 2007, FSIS identified an increased number of *E. coli* O157:H7 positive tests in beef, as well as a larger number of recalls and illnesses caused by this pathogen than in recent years. The agency immediately took a number of steps. For example, there were an increased number of tests on ground beef for *E. coli* O157:H7 by more than 75 percent in July.

The agency also began planning for a new follow-up testing program for federally inspected beef plants that had positive tests for *E. coli* O157:H7.

“Lessons learned from a number of recalls including the recent Topps recall emphasized the need for us to do even more to strengthen our policies and programs,” said Raymond. “We also realized that to make risk-based inspection in processing most effective, we need to strengthen our database that will support that system.”

FSIS is determined to ensure that inspection program personnel and the industry fully understand the nature of the challenge presented by *E. coli* O157:H7. The agency is ensuring that suppliers, processors and FSIS inspection personnel will be able to identify an emerging problem as early as possible and to prevent contaminated product from entering commerce.

The agency is committed to enhancing a close working



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Export Requirement Updates



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

Republic of Korea

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



Learn more about basic food safety principles by visiting FSIS' fact sheets at www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/index.asp.

Actions ...

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relationship with consumer and industry organizations and has developed a comprehensive list outlining key initiatives which are targeted to federally inspected plants that produce raw beef products.

A comprehensive list of these initiatives and a transcript of the Oct. 23 teleconference, which are included as an attachment to an FSIS news release, are available on FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&Events/NR_102307_01/index.asp.

Agency Posts Checklist

FSIS is collecting information on the control measures that establishments use during production of beef trim, other raw ground beef components, ground beef, mechanically tenderized, and enhanced raw beef products to prevent, reduce or eliminate *E. coli* O157:H7.

The agency will use the information collected for several purposes:

- to assist in the design and development of risk-based verification sampling program of *E. coli* O157:H7,
- to prioritize the scheduling of food safety assessments at establishments, and
- for the general analysis of raw beef processing practices and volumes at individual establishments and in aggregate.

FSIS in-plant inspection personnel will complete a "final" checklist e-mailed this week to inspection program personnel for each establishment at which they are the inspector-in-charge when the establishment:

- grinds trim or other raw ground beef components,
- fabricates trim or other raw ground beef components,
- slaughters cattle,
- regrinds coarse ground beef,
- forms beef patties,
- "enhances" (marinates or injects) raw beef products,
- mechanically tenderizes raw beef products, or
- conducts some combination of these operations.

The "final" checklist is posted on the FSIS Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&policies/FSIS_Notices_Index/index.asp, as a bulleted item under Notice 65-07, *Notice of Reassessment for Escherichia coli 0157:H7 Control and Completion of a Checklist for All Beef Operations*.

Agency to Host Outreach Web Seminar

FSIS will hold a Web seminar on Nov. 6, the first of a six-part outreach series targeted to small and very small plants which will continue through April 16.

This seminar will cover the FSIS final rule on specific risk material removal (SRM) and recordkeeping, which became effective Oct. 1.

The objective is to focus on changes in the final rule (compared with the interim rule that plants have been operating under since 2004). The agency will also discuss SRM requirements mandated by the final rule, including the new recordkeeping requirements.

The seminar will be held from 10 to 11 a.m. EST and from 6 to 7 p.m. EST. To register by phone, call (800) 336-3747.

Information about upcoming Web seminars can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&Events/Outreach_Sessions_SVS_Plants/index.asp.

FSIS to Issue Directives and Notices

FSIS frequently publishes directives and notices to enhance the agency's efforts in protecting public health.

The agency amended Directive 7120.1 on Oct. 3, to revise the list of safe and suitable ingredients for meat and poultry products.

The following directives are expected to be issued within the next month:

- 5420.1 - *Homeland Security*;
- 5420.3 – *Office of Program Evaluation, Enforcement and Review Homeland Security*;
- 5420.4 - *Homeland Security - Office of International Affairs*;
- 5500.2, Revision 2 - *Non-Routine Incident Response*;
- 6100.3 - *Ante-mortem and Post-mortem Inspection*;
- 6170.1 - *Ratite Inspection Methodology*;
- 8080.1, Revision 5 - *Recall of Meat and Poultry Products*; and

- 8140.1 - *Inspection Program Responsibilities When Establishments Receive Adulterated or Misbranded Products*.

Notices are expected to be issued on the following topics:

- cancellation of meat and poultry manual and other obsolete documents;
- questions and answers for *Salmonella*;
- documentation of non-compliance reports in egg product plants;
- planned directives and notices for egg products inspection;
- stamping of pork carcasses and primal parts;
- reassessment and training; and
- transporting between custom exempt establishments.