



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety and
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FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

FSIS to Hold Public Meeting on Definition of the Term “Natural”

FSIS will hold a public meeting on December 12, to discuss a petition to establish a definition for the voluntary claim “natural.” The agency will also gather comments on conditions under which the claim should be allowed to be used on the labels of meat and poultry products.

The public meeting will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the south end of the cafeteria located in the USDA South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, D.C. 20250.

Pre-registration for the meeting is recommended. To pre-register, visit FSIS’ Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News/Meetings_&_Events/. The petition is available for viewing on FSIS’ Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov.

Persons unable to pre-register online or requiring a sign language interpreter or other special accommodations for the public meeting should contact Diane Jones at (202) 720-9692 or by e-mail at Diane.Jones@fsis.usda.gov.

The agency is accepting comments through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> or by e-mail at fsis.regulationscomments@fsis.usda.gov.

The related *Federal Register* notice is available on FSIS’ Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Frame/FrameRedirect.asp?main=http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/2006-0040.htm>.

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Export Requirement Updates



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

Barbados

Cayman Islands

Colombia

Dominican Republic

Japan

Mexico

Peru

Romania

Russia

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

FSIS to Mail Article to Ready-to-Eat Establishments

FSIS will mail a copy of an article from the *Journal of Food Protection* titled, "Requisite Scientific Parameters for Establishing the Equivalence of Alternative Methods of Pasteurization" to small and very small meat and poultry plants that produce ready-to-eat (RTE) products. The mailing is scheduled for the second week of December.

The National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods developed the document in response to a request from FSIS and the Food and Drug Administration for advice on determining appropriate requisite scientific parameters for establishing the equivalence of alternative methods of pasteurization.

It provides guidelines essential to developing safe pasteurization processes. Important considerations for establishing the efficacy and equivalency of alternate pasteurization processes are discussed. The article will assist small and very small meat and poultry plants in assuring that their lethality treatments are adequately validated and that their processes result in safe RTE products.

The document is also available on FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/National_Advisory_Committee_on_Microbiological/index.asp.

FSIS Continues to Solicit and Accept Comments on Risk-Based Inspection

FSIS is continuing to solicit comments on the topics that were discussed during the October public meeting on risk-based inspection (RBI).

FSIS held the public meeting to gather input on risk-based inspection issues. The meeting provided the public with an overview of FSIS' current thinking on risk-based inspection.

FSIS is accepting comments until it posts a report later this month prepared for the agency by the third party facilitator,

Resolve, Inc. The agency will make another announcement at that time about the report's availability and the opportunity for public comment.

Comments can be submitted by e-mail to RiskBasedInspection@fsis.usda.gov or by fax to (202) 690-6519.

For more information about risk-based inspection, visit FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/RiskBased_Inspection/index.asp.

Export Tip of the Week

FSIS Form 9060-5, *Meat and Poultry Export Certificate of Wholesomeness*, is a controlled document with a serial number and should not be photocopied. Importing countries only accept the original copy when product arrives at the port of entry. This also applies to other FSIS export documents that are required by the importing country. The use of copied export forms may result in detained product if foreign customs officials question the authenticity due to print quality.

In some cases, following receipt of the signed Form 9060-5, exporters may be required to provide a photocopy of the form(s) to the importer for pre-clearance purposes. Also, it is acceptable to make copies of the signed document if more copies are needed for internal distribution purposes.

Exporters should advise FSIS plant personnel well in advance of the shipping date so the proper forms can be ordered if not already on hand. The country requirements located on FSIS' Web site should also be consulted prior to export to see what forms are actually required.

For further information, call FSIS' Office of International Affairs at (202) 720-3473.

FSIS Issues Notices

FSIS issued Notice 83-06 on December 5, to explain changes made to the Performance-Based Inspection System (PBIS) Version 5.1.6. The notice also provides instructions to inspection program personnel on how to use this version of PBIS.

FSIS has modified PBIS so that completing plant profile extensions and surveys will be done as part of the scheduled food safety activities of FSIS inspection program personnel. Inspection program personnel will begin using PBIS Version 5.1.6 this month.

The agency also issued Notice 84-06 on December 5, titled, *Contacting the Technical Service Center*. This notice updates employees on the recent changes the TSC has made to improve its services for agency personnel, industry and other constituents.

FSIS conducted an evaluation of the services provided by the TSC, and the TSC has begun to make improvements in response to the evaluation. The improvements include timely and consistently

reliable answers to e-mail questions, an automated phone system and more attention to the needs of small and very small plants.

The TSC encourages agency personnel, industry and other constituents to send questions by e-mail to TechCenter@fsis.usda.gov. Include a contact phone number in the e-mail. The e-mail should include facts and details related to the question.

For those choosing to call, the TSC now has a menu-driven telephone system. Call the TSC at (402) 344-5000 or toll free at (800) 233-3935. Callers are informed, through a series of menu and sub-menu options, how to reach the most appropriate technical expert for their questions. Staff members are available Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 5 p.m., Central Standard Time to assist customers.

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

**To submit comments or questions, contact
the editor, Faye Smith at
fsisupdate@fsis.usda.gov**

or

(202) 720-9113