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FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

New Office for Small and Very Small Plant Outreach Introduced

Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Richard Raymond proudly announced FSIS’ newest office, the Office of Outreach, Employee Education and Training, which is the result of several years of hard work by Agency employees and the International HACCP Alliance led by Dr. Kerri Harris in changing the Agency’s approach to serve the needs of small and very small plants.

The genesis of this new office actually goes back to 2005 when many in the industry questioned whether FSIS took the needs of small and very small establishments under consideration when HACCP was first implemented.

FSIS responded quickly to address the issue and held listening sessions across the nation to get input from small and very small plants on how the Agency could serve their needs better. Using this input, Dr. Harris’ International HACCP Alliance hosted a meeting with FSIS, academic and industry personnel in December 2005 to discuss these needs further and formulate a plan to address them.

As an outcome, an intra-Agency task force developed the *Strategic Implementation Plan to Strengthen Small and Very Small Plant Outreach*. Based on the plan, FSIS wanted to make sure that all federally and state inspected establishments have the training and resources necessary to produce the safest food possible in the 21st century, no matter the size of the plant or the type of product that the plant produces.

“This task force made a lot of progress,” said Raymond. “But, we realized that for long-term success, we needed to make the important function of training and outreach for small and very small plants a formal part of the Agency.”

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Export Requirement Updates



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

Canada

Cuba

Japan

Vietnam

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

Check out USDA's Food Safety Quiz for Parents and Kids

Before you let kids have the run of the kitchen, USDA advises you to take a little quiz together, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/NR_090704_01/index.asp.

Small and Very Small Plant Outreach ...

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Therefore, FSIS' next step was to create the Office of Outreach, Employee Education and Training with a dedicated staff and resources to provide consistent delivery of key Agency outreach and training services on current, and future, food safety and food defense issues.

"A very important thing to note here is that the creation of this new office took no new dollars and no new FTEs," added Raymond. "It was simply a consolidation of our resources for better efficiencies."

Leading the new Office of Outreach, Employee Education and Training is Dr. Karlease Kelly who has been instrumental in leading the consolidation of outreach and training.

"Ensuring that small plants get the exact resources they need to comply with any regulatory requirements is a true passion of mine," said Kelly. "I'm looking forward to furthering the Agency's goal of improving its outreach and training services for plant and agency personnel alike."

To get the latest information on the Agency's small and very small plant outreach, visit the Small and Very Small Plant Web page at www.fsis.usda.gov/Small_Very_Small_Plants/index.asp or call (800) 336-3747, for more information.

Codex Public Meeting on Food Additives

USDA and the Food and Drug Administration announced a public meeting to provide information and receive public comments on agenda items and draft U.S. positions that will be discussed at the 40th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives.

The public meeting is scheduled for March 12, from 1 to 4 p.m., 5100 Paint Branch Parkway, Harvey Wiley Federal Building Auditorium, Room 1A003, College Park, Md.

Attendees should register electronically by March 10, at ccfa@fda.hhs.gov. For further information about the public meeting contact Doreen Chen-Moulec at (202) 720-4063.

Agenda items and documents related to the 40th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives may be accessed prior to the public meeting at www.codexalimentarius.net/current.asp.

To view the related *Federal Register* notice for more information, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/Frame/FrameRedirect.asp?main=http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/2008-0006.htm.

Slaughter Inspection 101 Fact Sheet

USDA offers Slaughter Inspection 101, this fact sheet describes the mission of FSIS, the basics of inspection, and the duties performed by FSIS inspectors, in meat and poultry slaughter facilities.

Have questions? View details at www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Slaughter_Inspection_101/index.asp.



AskFSIS Online 24 Hours a Day to Answer Technical and Policy Questions

AskFSIS is user-friendly tool to assist small plant owners and operators with technical and policy-related questions 24 hours a day.

For more details about this feature, visit http://askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std_alp.php or send an e-mail to askFSIS@fsis.usda.gov.

FSIS Issues Notice on Humane Handling

On February 29, FSIS published Notice 14-08, *Humane Handling Activities and Documentation in Livestock Slaughter Establishments*.

This notice provides added instruction for Public Health Veterinarians and other inspection program personnel to conduct humane handling activities randomly throughout their tour of duty. This document also encourages establishments to develop and implement a systematic approach for the humane handling of animals.

Notices are available for review on FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/FSIS_Notices_Index/index.asp.

E. coli O157:H7 –Addressing the Challenges, Moving Forward With Solutions

On April 9, FSIS will sponsor a public meeting focused on *E. coli* O157:H7. The purpose of the meeting is to have a discussion with stakeholders on recent spikes in recalls/illnesses related to *E. coli* O157:H7, provide updates on FSIS initiatives and build a foundation for establishing solutions to address the challenges this pathogen causes.

More information on the meeting, including the agenda, will be made available in future issues of the *FSIS Constituent Update*. Also, be sure to check the Meetings and Events page of FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Meetings_&_Events/index.asp for more updates.

