



# FSIS Constituent Update

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Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Security

## FSIS Holds Public Meeting to Discuss Risk Assessments

FSIS held a public meeting yesterday to discuss and receive comments on two draft risk assessments. The morning session addressed the risk assessment for *Clostridium perfringens* (*C. perfringens*) in ready-to-eat (RTE) and partially cooked meat and poultry products. *Salmonella* in RTE meat and poultry products was discussed in the afternoon.

Dr. Barbara J. Masters, Acting Administrator for FSIS stressed the importance of risk assessments in food safety. "Risk assessments are an extremely important process that provides regulatory agencies with a solid foundation for policy changes that can improve public health. FSIS is using science-based risk assessments to support new policies aimed at ensuring that meat, poultry and egg products are safe, wholesome and properly labeled. Risk assessments allow us to focus resources on hazards that pose the greatest threat to public health."

FSIS experts and scientists and educators from various companies and groups discussed the risk assessments in depth during the public meeting. *C. perfringens* is a bacterium that grows well on meat, poultry, and their products in the absence of oxygen, and favors relatively high temperatures. FSIS performed a quantitative risk assessment for the occurrence of diarrheal illness due to the bacterium *C. perfringens* in meat-containing RTE and partially cooked foods.

*Salmonellosis*, or a *Salmonella* infection, is the illness that can occur if live *Salmonella* bacteria enter the body, usually through eating foods containing the bacteria. *Salmonellosis* is one of the most common bacterial foodborne illnesses. The risk assessment discusses the impact of lethality standards on *Salmonellosis* from RTE meat and poultry products.

Dr. Merle Pierson, Acting Under Secretary for Food Safety reminded attendees that their contributions are vital in continuing to protect food safety. "Your input in these forums is critical toward the development of our food safety policies. Advancing food safety is such a tremendous challenge that it is only accomplished through the joint efforts of all stakeholders."

To read the risk assessments visit:  
[www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Risk\\_Assessments/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Risk_Assessments/)

## Export Requirement Updates

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

**Australia**

**Indonesia**

**Russia**

**Taiwan**

Complete information is available online at:  
[www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_&\\_Policies/Export\\_Information/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Export_Information/)



# Food Security Verification Procedures FSIS Directive Revision

FSIS released directive 5420.1 Revision 1 (Homeland Security Threat Condition Response—Food Security Verification Procedures) to address issues regarding how inspection program personnel are to respond and follow-up when there is a potential breach in food security, without product adulteration.

If a potential breach in food security is found, FSIS Directive 5420.1, Revision 1, paragraph IX, instructs inspection program personnel to immediately notify the establishment management and discuss the findings. After doing so, inspection program personnel are to prepare a memorandum of interview that describes the findings and the discussions with the establishment management.

To read the entire directive visit:

[www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISDirectives/5420.1\\_Rev1.pdf](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISDirectives/5420.1_Rev1.pdf)

## Public Meeting to Discuss Task Force on Foods Derived Through Biotechnology

The Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services will hold a public meeting on April 7, 2005 to provide information and receive comments on draft U.S. responses to Codex Circular Letter CL 2005/2-FBT. The letter outlines proposals for new work to be undertaken by the Codex Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology that was established at the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Committee in Geneva in 2004.

The public meeting will be held from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. in Room 5066, South Agriculture Building, 1400 Independence Ave, SE., Washington, D.C. Further information on Codex Letter CL 2005/2FBT is available at:

[www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Codex\\_cl05\\_02e.pdf](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Codex_cl05_02e.pdf).

The Codex ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology will develop standards, guidelines and recommendations for foods derived from modern biotechnology. These will be based on scientific evidence and risk analysis relevant to the health of consumers and the promotion of fair practices in the food trade.

For more information about the public meeting, contact Paulo Almeida, U.S. Codex Office, FSIS, at (202) 690-4042 or by fax at (202) 720-3157.



## Holiday Food Safety Tips

**For egg safety – to stay healthy and avoid foodborne illness — USDA advises:**

- Buy clean uncracked eggs from a refrigerated case.
- Buy eggs before the “Sell-By” or “EXP” (expiration) date on the carton.
- Refrigerate eggs right away. Check that the refrigerator is set at 40°F or below. Keep eggs in the carton and store them in the coldest part of the refrigerator — not on the door.
- Raw shell eggs in the carton can stay in your refrigerator for three to five weeks from the purchase date. Although the “Sell-By” date might pass during that time, the eggs are still safe to use. (The date is not required by federal law, but some states may require it.)
- Don’t keep raw or cooked eggs out of the refrigerator more than two hours.
- Egg dishes such as deviled eggs or egg salad should be used within three to four days.

## Reminder: Tuesday Public Meeting to Address Codex Committee on General Principles

The Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services will hold a public meeting on March 29, 2005 to provide information and receive comments on agenda items that will be discussed at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles in Paris, France, on April 11-15, 2005.

The public meeting will be held from 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. in the back of the USDA South Building Cafeteria at 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, D.C.

The Codex Committee on General Principles was established to address procedural and general matters referred by the Codex Alimentarius Commission and is hosted by the government of France.

At the March 29, 2005 public meeting, attendees will have the opportunity to pose questions and offer comments on the agenda items listed at: [www.codexalimentarius.net/current.asp](http://www.codexalimentarius.net/current.asp)

## Recent FSIS Speeches Now Available

Two recent speeches delivered by Acting Under Secretary for Food Safety, Dr. Merle Pierson are now available on FSIS' Web site.

The first speech, "USDA's Pathogen Reduction Policies for Poultry", was delivered at the 2005 *Campylobacter* Control Conference on February 23 in Atlanta, Ga. You can access these remarks at: [www.fsis.usda.gov/News/Speech\\_022305\\_Pierson/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News/Speech_022305_Pierson/)

The second speech, "USDA's Food Safety Policies and Challenges," was given at a Clemson University conference on February 24 in Myrtle Beach, S. C. This speech is available at: [www.fsis.usda.gov/News\\_&\\_Events/Speech\\_022405\\_Pierson/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Speech_022405_Pierson/)

**To submit comments or questions, contact the editor at:**

[fsisupdate@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:fsisupdate@fsis.usda.gov) (202) 720-9113



### Pathogen Spotlight: *E. coli* O157:H7

**What is *E. coli* O157:H7?**  
*E. coli* O157:H7 is one of hundreds of strains of the bacterium *Escherichia coli*. Although most strains are harmless and live in the intestines of healthy humans and animals, this strain produces a powerful toxin and can cause severe illness.

### What illness does *E. coli* O157:H7 cause?

Infection often leads to bloody diarrhea and occasionally to kidney failure.

### What can you do to prevent *E. coli* O157:H7 infection?

Cook all ground beef and hamburger thoroughly and use a meat thermometer to ensure temperature reaches 160° F. Persons who cook ground beef without using a thermometer can decrease their risk of illness by not eating ground beef patties that are still pink in the middle.

Wash hands, counters and utensils with hot soapy water after they touch raw meat.

For more information visit:

[www.fsis.usda.gov/  
Fact\\_Sheets/E\\_coli/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/E_coli/)