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Food Safety and
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FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

Agency Awards More Than \$2.5 Million in Cooperative Agreements

FSIS awarded more than \$2.5 million in cooperative agreements to academic institutions, non-profit organizations and federal and state government agencies in fiscal year 2005.

The cooperative agreements support efforts seeking new ideas and strategies to protect public health by reducing the incidence of foodborne illnesses associated with meat, poultry and egg products. They also seek to protect the food supply from intentional acts of contamination.

Products developed from these cooperative agreements will be available for public use nationwide.

The cooperative agreements support five areas and are broken down as follows:

- 18 projects supporting integration of data at the federal, state and local level to enhance the capability of the Food Emergency Response Network to protect the food supply;
- 10 projects supporting the implementation of new technologies that allow small and very small meat, poultry and egg products establishments to produce safer products;
- Eight projects supporting improvements in food animal production, transportation and marketing;
- Eight projects supporting retail stores, food service

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Export Requirement Updates



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

Canada

European Union

Guatemala

Romania

Saudi Arabia

Vietnam

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

Cooperative Agreements...

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- establishments and other inspection-exempt enterprises subject to state, local or tribal regulations that process or otherwise handle meat, poultry and egg products; and
- Five projects supporting small and very small

federally and state-inspected establishments to improve food safety training and education.

For further information on cooperative agreements, visit FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov.

FSIS Begins New Data Collection Program

FSIS recently released Notice 73-05, announcing the Nationwide Microbiological Baseline Data Collection Program for Domestic Beef Trimmings, which will begin on November 28. It also nullifies FSIS Notice 48-05.

73-05 informs inspection program personnel about the sample beef trimmings which are available for the production of ground beef. The sampling will be conducted at approximately 250 establishments and will include both regulatory testing for *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 and non-regulatory testing for other microorganisms.

Information provided in the previously-issued Computer Based Training (CBT) compact disc (CD) still applies to the continued sampling program.

As well as publicizing the beginning of the data collection program, the notice also announces an important change in procedure from the training

period. For an efficient and speedy response, all samples need to be collected and shipped on the day the beef trimmings are produced. This is a change from the CBT CD, but is not a change on how the samples are to be collected. The inspection personnel must continue to follow the training from the CBT CD.

During the training phase for this baseline study, various questions were received by FSIS' Technical Service Center and through e-mail. Notice 73-05 includes Attachment 1, titled "Consolidated Questions and Answers Concerning Nationwide Microbiological Baseline Data Collection Program for Domestic Beef Trimmings." The attachment should assist in the clarification of commonly asked questions.

Complete information about this notice and the baseline collection program can be found on FSIS' Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISNotices/73-05.pdf>.

Thanksgiving Food Safety Tips Offered

Undersecretary for Food Safety Dr. Richard Raymond discussed important tips for preventing food borne illness during the holidays with volunteers from the Capital Area Food Bank November 15.

Dr. Raymond, joined by Washington Chef Terrell Danley of Crème Café.

Among the tips offered by Dr. Raymond were USDA's four basic food safety messages: *Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill*.

A number of recommendations for safely thawing turkey were also offered.

For more information, visit FSIS' Web site at <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=2005/11/0488.xml>.



FSIS Answers Questions on Notice 45-05

FSIS issued Notice 72-05 November 8 in response to questions arising from the issuance of FSIS Notice 45-05. Titled "Availability of Questions and Answers Related to FSIS Notice 45-05," the notice announces the posting of frequently asked questions and related answers on FSIS' Web site.

Notice 45-05 provided inspection program personnel

with instructions for ensuring establishments have implemented the appropriate process controls for ingredients that are public health concerns.

The questions and answers address situations that have arisen since Notice 45-05 was issued. They are available on FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/FAQs_for_Notice_45-05/index.asp.

Reminder for Meeting on Amenability

A public meeting to discuss possible changes to the jurisdiction over certain food products that contain meat and poultry will be held by FSIS and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Food and Drug Administration (FDA) from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. December 15 at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, 5555 North River Road, Rosemont, Ill.

Amenability is the only issue that will be discussed at this meeting.

Seats at the meeting are limited, and anyone wishing to attend is encouraged to register in advance at http://register.grad.usda.gov/conferences/fda/fda-fsis_reg_form.cfm.

Furthermore, both agencies

encourage the submission of comments before the meeting takes place.

FSIS and FDA will be accepting public comments, which may be submitted to Docket No. 05-013N by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>;
- FSIS' Web site: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations/2005_Notices_Index/index.asp;
- E-mail: FSIS. regulationscomments@fsis.usda.gov;
- Mail/hand delivery/courier: Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, 300 12th Street, S.W., Room 102 Cotton Annex, Washington, D.C. 20250.