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FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

U.S. Resumes Beef Trade with Japan

On December 11, Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns issued a statement to announce that the Japanese market is now open to U.S. beef products. “Japan’s action today provides an excellent example for other countries in Asia whose markets remain closed. Now is the time for Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, China, Singapore and others to open their markets to U.S. beef,” said Johanns.

Under the agreement, the United States may export beef from cattle 20 months of age and younger to Japan. More than 94 percent of total U.S. ruminant and ruminant products, representing a total export value of \$1.7 billion, are once again eligible for export to Japan.

With the opening of the Japanese border, 67 countries have now established trade to selected U.S. beef and beef products.

FSIS Issues Notice of Request for New Information Collection

Today FSIS published a notice in the Federal Register titled, “Notice of Request for a New Information Collection (Application for Return of Exported Products).” The notice announces FSIS’ intention to request a new information collection form for the return of

exported meat, poultry and egg products to the United States. The form will help FSIS’ Office of International Affairs (OIA) determine if products need to be re-inspected after they are exported to foreign countries and then returned to the United States. In accordance with the

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Export Requirement Updates



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

Iceland

Japan

Romania

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

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Code of Federal Regulations, exported product returned to this country is exempt from FSIS import inspection requirements upon notification to, and approval from, OIA. However product that is shipped back out of the United States might require re-inspection at a federally inspected facility for food safety and food defense determinations. When FSIS

inspection program personnel establish that product is safe and not adulterated or misbranded, the product may be released into commerce.

This notice is available on FSIS' Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Frame/FrameRedirect.asp?main=/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/05-035N.htm>.

FSIS Announces New District Manager for Raleigh

In January 2006, Steven Lalicker will become the District Manager for the Raleigh district.

Lalicker has been with FSIS for over 20 years. He began his career as an intermittent food inspector and has held a variety of positions throughout the agency. Lalicker served as a front line supervisor at FSIS' Technical Service Center and is currently one of two deputy district managers in the Raleigh District Office.

FSIS and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Hold Joint Public Meeting on Jurisdiction

On December 15, FSIS and FDA held a joint public meeting in Rosemont, Ill. Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Richard Raymond delivered welcoming remarks and FSIS Deputy Administrator Bryce Quick and Dr. Robert Brackett, director of FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, gave opening remarks.

During this meeting, the agencies discussed and solicited public

comments on developing a consistent regulatory approach concerning the jurisdiction over certain food products that contain meat and poultry. Both Agencies received compliments for holding the meeting and for attempting to tackle the jurisdiction issue.

FSIS has authority over meat, poultry and egg products and FDA has authority over all foods not under FSIS' jurisdiction. As

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Helpful Resources

USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline - Food safety experts are available year-round Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern Time to answer questions about safely preparing and cooking foods. The toll-free number is 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854). Recorded messages are available 24 hours a day.

Ask Karen - FSIS' virtual representative can answer your questions 24 hours day, seven days a week. Visit "Ask Karen" at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safety_Education/Ask_Karen/index.asp#Question.

Holiday Buffets Fact Sheet - A concise one-page summary about common types of foodborne bacteria associated with holiday foods. The fact sheet also provides recommendations from USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline that will help you have a safe holiday party. http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Holiday_or_Party_Buffets.pdf.

Cooking For Groups Brochure - Helps hosts of large dinner gatherings and parties prepare and serve food safely for large groups. Available at www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Cooking_for_Groups_index/index.asp.

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the principal regulators, FSIS and FDA formed a working group to examine jurisdictional issues for food categories that contain meat and poultry ingredients.

The group concluded that past decisions involving certain product categories are no longer consistent, largely due to marketplace changes.

The group recommended an approach that will utilize defined conditions and factors when making jurisdictional decisions for existing and future food products containing meat and poultry.

The agencies also accepted public comments on the Federal Register notice containing the working group's recommendations.

FSIS Offers Holiday Food Safety Recommendations

This week, FSIS issued a news release with food safety suggestions for holiday gatherings. The news release titled, "USDA Offers Food Safety Recommendations for Holiday Gatherings – Avoiding Foodborne Illness Key to a Food Safe Holiday Season," offers recommendations to consumers to help them avoid foodborne illness while enjoying seasonal feasts.

USDA recommends everyone practice the following four basic food safety steps when preparing food to help reduce foodborne illness:

- Clean - Wash hands and surfaces often.
- Separate - Don't cross-contaminate. Keep raw meat and poultry apart from cooked foods.
- Cook - Use a food thermometer to be sure meat and poultry are safely cooked.
- Chill - Refrigerate or freeze promptly.

The news release also offers recommendations for safe food handling for holiday buffets and dessert tables, and provides helpful resources for additional food safety guidance.

For further information regarding food safety during the holiday season, visit FSIS' Web site at: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>.