



United States
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Food Safety and
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FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

2006 Food Safety Education Conference Begins Wednesday

FSIS' food safety education conference in Denver, Colo., begins next week. From September 27-29, participants will focus on educating general and at-risk populations such as pregnant women, children, older adults, immune-compromised patients and culturally diverse populations about food safety.

The conference will be held at the Adam's Mark Hotel, 1550 Court Place, Denver, Colo. Pre-conference workshops will be held on September 25-26.

The conference is sponsored by: FSIS; NSF International; the Food and Drug Administration; the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service; and the NSF/World Health Organization Collaborating Center for Food Safety.

The conference will be organized around five primary themes:

- Foodborne Illness Surveillance and Epidemiological Insights;
- Food Safety Behavioral and Attitudinal Research;
- Social Marketing, Educational Interventions and Program Research;
- Role of Food Service and Food Industries; and
- New Technologies.

To register or view the conference program, visit FSIS' Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/denver2006>.

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Export Requirement Updates



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

Cuba

Hong Kong

Lebanon

Mexico

New Caledonia

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

FSIS to Hold Public Meeting on Risk-Based Inspection

FSIS will hold a public meeting to discuss risk-based inspection on October 10 - 11. The meeting will consist of presentations and discussions on the vision of risk-based inspection, establishment risk control, inherent product risk and risk-based inspection implementation.

The meeting is scheduled for October 10, from 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. EST, and for October 11, from 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., EST. The meeting will be held at George Mason University, Arlington Campus, 3401 Fairfax Drive, Arlington, Va. 22201.

Prior to the meeting, attendees are encouraged to read the

technical papers on measuring product inherent risk for risk-based inspection and measuring establishment risk control for risk-based inspection. Additional information on risk-based inspection will be forthcoming.

The meeting will also be broadcast as a net meeting. For more information about risk-based inspection, the technical papers and the public meeting, visit FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/RiskBased_Inspection/index.asp.

FSIS Web Site Wins Prestigious Best Practices Award

FSIS' Web site, www.fsis.usda.gov, tied with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's site to win top honors in the general audience category for the prestigious best practices award presented to top government Web sites by webcontent.gov, a consortium of government, Federal and military Web site managers.

The award represented the FSIS Web site's achievement in displaying best practices in serving its customers. FSIS' Web site was selected by a panel of Federal Web managers, mostly comprised of the Web Managers Advisory Council. The group includes representatives from every cabinet-level agency, several independent agencies and representatives from the judicial and legislative branches.

Over 50 Web sites were nominated for awards. Winners were named during the group's Fall Government Web Managers Workshop, on September 19, in Washington, D.C. A list of finalists and additional information about the award can be found at <http://www.firstgov.gov/webcontent/improving/marketing/awards/finalists.shtml>.

Food Safety Tip for College Students

Question: How do you thaw frozen foods in the microwave safely?

Answer: Remove food from packaging before defrosting. Do not use foam trays and plastic wraps because they are not heat stable at high temperatures.

Melting or warping may cause harmful chemicals to migrate into food. Cook meat, poultry, egg casseroles and fish immediately after defrosting in the microwave oven because some areas of the frozen food may begin to cook during the defrosting time. Do not hold partially cooked food to cook later.

For additional food safety information about meat, poultry or egg products, call the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854); for the hearing impaired (TTY) 1-800-256-7072.

FSIS Posts Q & As on Sanitation Performance Standards

FSIS has posted on its Web site the first set of questions that are frequently asked by owners and operators of small and very small plants. The first set of Q & As focuses on the sanitation performance standards. Future topics will include hazard analysis and critical control point, sanitation standard operating procedures and noncompliance reports.

The Q & As can be viewed on FSIS' Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Businesses/index.asp>.

The Technical Service Center (TSC) serves FSIS' center for technical assistance, advice and guidance regarding the implementation of national policies, programs, systems and procedures.

If you have additional questions regarding the Q & As or their subject matter, then contact the TSC outreach team at 1-800-235-3935. Press "1" for the TSC staff, and then "2" for an outreach team member.

FSIS Revises Homeland Security Emergency Procedures

FSIS revised Directive 5420.4, Revision 3 on September 15, to provide FSIS Office of International Affairs personnel with updated information regarding food defense procedures that should be followed at or above the threat condition "elevated" yellow level.

The directive titled, *Homeland Security Threat Condition Response – Emergency Procedures for the Office of International Affairs Import Inspection Division*, also provides new food defense verification procedures at official import establishments and food defense surveillance activities in commerce. It further provides instructions for communicating the surveillance activities to appropriate levels in FSIS.

FSIS Directive 5420.4, Revision 3 is available on FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISDirectives/5420.4_Rev3.pdf.

FSIS Delays Implementation Date for Homeland Security Monitoring and Surveillance Directive

FSIS issued Notice 61-06, on September 15, titled, *Delay of Implementation Date for FSIS Directive 5420.3, Homeland Security Threat Condition Response – Monitoring and Surveillance of Products in Commerce*.

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Focus on Ground Beef

Question: What's the difference between "hamburger" and "ground beef?"

Answer: Beef fat may be added to "hamburger," but not "ground beef," if the meat is ground and packaged at a USDA-inspected plant.

A maximum of 30% fat by weight is allowed in either hamburger or ground beef. Both hamburger and ground beef can have seasonings, but no water, phosphates, extenders or binders added.

They must be labeled in accordance with Federal Standards and Labeling Policy and marked with a USDA-inspected label.

For more information regarding facts about ground beef, visit FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Ground_Beef_and_Food_Safety/index.asp.

New Notice ...

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This notice announces that FSIS Office of Program Evaluation, Enforcement and Review personnel should not implement the instructions in FSIS Directive 5420.3 until October 16.

Notice 61-06 is available on FSIS' Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISNotices/61-06.pdf>.

Export Tip of the Week

There are more than a dozen countries importing red meat products where either export verification (EV) or less than 30 (LT30) months of age program is required.

If calls are received concerning these programs, direct them to <http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/arc/bev.htm>.

Exporters may also contact:

Program Director James Riva at (540) 361-7640 or by electronic mail at James.Riva@usda.gov;

Program Assistant Director Samantha Simon at (540) 361-2613 or by electronic mail at Samantha.Simon@usda.gov; or

Program Assistant Director Dana Stahl at (540) 361-2094 or by electronic mail at Dana.Stahl@usda.gov.

Questions concerning the EV or LT30 months of age program should be referred to the above AMS officials.

Visit FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/Export_Information/index.asp to learn more about requirements for exporting products to other countries.