

National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection

Update on the Technical Service Center

Purpose

This briefing paper is provided to update the Committee on the status of its recommendations to FSIS, made on November 16 – 17, 2004, regarding how the Technical Service Center (TSC) can provide enhanced technical assistance to establishments and other constituent groups.

Discussion

The TSC was established in 1997. Its role has evolved from managing a hotline directly supporting inspectors implementing the HACCP/PR rule to providing technical expertise, data analysis and correlation to diverse constituencies. Clients include inspection personnel, industry, states and other interested parties. Incorporating recommendations from the Committee, TSC is making progress in improving its function and service. To meet this goal, the TSC is:

- Developing and disseminating additional Q&As on FSIS technical issues
 - Initiating a procedure for collecting trends from telephone calls on new issuances, programs or initiatives;
 - The data is forwarded to the FSIS headquarters policy office where unclear or missing information is developed into a FSIS Notice and the document is expedited;
 - Communicating trends to the Center for Learning, which updates training; and
 - Developing Interactive Knowledge Exchanges (IKEs) as necessary to support understanding of policy information derived from trends. Examples include a recent homeland security directive, guidance documents on relative humidity and guidelines on poultry time and temperature requirements.
 - Developing management controls for consistency of email answers and reviewing/updating archived Q&As; and
 - Planning methods for participation in the Agency's monthly industry meetings.

- Capturing feedback on TSC service
 - Developing, with assistance from the Office of Program Evaluation, Enforcement and Review (OPEER), a survey of district office personnel, including frontline supervisors, inspectors and Enforcement, Investigations and Analysis Officers (EIAOs).

- Compiling helpful information for inspection personnel for use in the FSIS Intranet Resource Center.
 - Training TSC editor and reviewer to update information on the intranet, and
 - Developing a clearance process for TSC PowerPoint presentations.

- Conducting more correlations when there is noncompliance
 - Including headquarters policy staff in TSC's weekly meetings,
 - Available for district correlation session on-site or by conference call,
 - Hosted national correlation meetings for district analysts and public health veterinarians,
 - Meeting quarterly with OFO headquarters on technical issues, and
 - Playing an integral part in the Agency's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) and serving as a technical contact for field personnel on food security issues

In addition to conducting correlation sessions when there are compliance issues, TSC is proactively interacting with field personnel, headquarters staff, and constituents to continually improve the service provided.

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