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FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

FSIS Releases Results of Checklist and Reassessment to Control for *E. coli* O157:H7 in Beef Operations

Today, FSIS posted a report titled “*Results of Checklist and Reassessment of Control for Escherichia coli O157:H7 in Beef Operations.*” The data was collected in response to several events in 2007 including an increase in the number of *E. coli* O157:H7 positives and recalls.

This report details the results and analysis of information received in response to FSIS Notice 65-07 titled *Notice of Reassessment for Escherichia Coli O157:H7 Control and Completion of a Checklist for All Beef Operations*, which instructs FSIS inspectors to collect data about establishments’ reassessment of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans. Inspection program personnel also had to complete a checklist, collecting information about the practices at several types of raw beef operations.



FSIS welcomes comments from its stakeholders and there will be a 30 day comment period, at which individuals may submit information to O157H7EstablishmentPractices@fsis.usda.gov.

FSIS believes this report will assist the Agency to develop additional risk mitigation actions to control for *E. coli* O157:H7. The report can be found on FSIS’ Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Ecoli_Reassement_&_Checklist.pdf.



Inside this Issue

<i>E. coli</i> Compliance Guidelines	2
<i>E. coli</i> Testing Results	3
NACMPI Public Meeting	4
Low Dose Irradiation Public Meeting	4
Shift in FSIS Leadership	5
NACMCF Web Subcommittee Meeting	5

Export Requirement Updates



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

Costa Rica

Japan

Republic of Korea

Taiwan

Trinidad

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

FSIS Posts Draft Compliance Guidelines for Sampling Beef Trimmings and Beef Products for *Escherichia coli* O157:H7

FSIS has posted two draft compliance guideline documents on sampling with a particular focus on beef trimmings for *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 (*E. coli* O157:H7) this week on its Web site.

FSIS is providing the documents to stakeholders for review and there will be a 30 day comment period. FSIS will consider suggestions received and if appropriate, will revise the documents based on the comments and issue final guidance via a future FSIS Notice to inspection program personnel. At that time, FSIS will convey verification procedures to inspectors to ensure that raw beef operations are aware of the guidance. Through these compliance guidelines, FSIS expects establishments to increase their consistency and uniformity in the design of control procedures for raw beef operations.

The specific purpose of these draft guidance documents is to provide information about the design of sampling and testing programs for *E. coli* O157:H7. These documents are focused on manufacturers and users of boneless beef manufacturing trimmings and other raw ground beef components (“trimmings”). These draft guidance documents are intended to assist establishments in developing programs to assess the adequacy of process controls for *E. coli* O157:H7.

Comments are to be submitted on or before September 15. FSIS expects to issue final guidance documents within two months after the close of the comment period. All stakeholders are encouraged to submit their comment via email to the Office of Policy and Program Development, Risk Management Division at FSISGuidanceDocumentComments@fsis.usda.gov.

To view the “Compliance Guidelines for Sampling Beef Trimmings for *Escherichia coli* O157:H7”, visit FSIS’ Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/Compliance_Guides_Index/index.asp#Ecoli.

FSIS Updates

E. coli O157:H7 Reports

FSIS has updated *E. coli* O157:H7 testing data to include information through August 10, 2008.



AskKaren.gov

Results from Analysis of Raw Ground Beef and Raw Ground Beef Component Samples for *Escherichia coli* O157:H7

Raw Ground Beef						
Source	As of August 12, 2007			As of August 10, 2008		
	Number Analyzed	Number Positive	Percent Positive	Number Analyzed	Number Positive	Percent Positive
Federal Plants	7,329	16	0.22	7,092	24	0.34
Retail Stores	112	0	0.00	259	0	0.00
Imports	60	0	0.00	37	1	2.70
Raw Ground Beef Components						
Source	As of August 12, 2007			As of August 10, 2008		
	Number Analyzed	Number Positive	Percent Positive	Number Analyzed	Number Positive	Percent Positive
Federal Plants	316	2	0.63	1,268	6	0.47
Imports	0	0	0.00	332	0	0.00
The above information is based upon data in the FSIS electronic data system as of August 12, 2008. Results are from FSIS routine and follow-up sampling programs.						



E-mail Alert Service - FSIS' e-mail alert service provides subscribers automatic and customized access to selected food safety news and information.

Visit www.fsis.usda.gov/news_&_events/Email_Subscription/index.asp to sign up for agency e-mail alerts.

In January 1999, FSIS clarified that intact raw beef products that are to be processed further into non-intact raw beef products, such as raw ground beef, should be treated in the same manner as non-intact raw beef products themselves (January 19, 1999 *Federal Register* Notice 64:11 *Beef Products Contaminated With Escherichia Coli O157:H7*, p. 2804).

In March 2007, FSIS initiated a project for the routine sampling and testing of domestic beef trimmings intended for use in raw ground beef. There had been some sampling of raw beef trimmings as early as 2004. In certain cases, FSIS sampled beef manufacturing trimmings at suppliers whose product was used by a grinding establishment with a positive raw ground beef sample. In October 2007, the routine trim testing program was expanded to imported trim as well as the overall raw beef component testing program that was expanded to include other raw beef components such as head meat.

Individual positive results for all 2008 Raw Ground Beef sampling programs are reported on FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/2008_Ecoli_Positive_Results/index.asp.

A Consumer's Guide to Food Safety: Severe Storms and Hurricanes

Did you know that a flood, fire, natural disaster, or the loss of power from high winds, snow, or ice could jeopardize the safety of your food? Knowing how to determine if food is safe and how to keep food safe will help minimize the potential loss of food and reduce the risk of foodborne illness.



The guide titled, *A Consumer's Guide to Food Safety: Severe Storms and Hurricanes*, provides specific food safety recommendations on what to do before, during and after tropical storms and hurricanes.

The guidelines also include recommendations about what to do with food stored in refrigerators and freezers.

To view the consumer's guide, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Severe_Storms_and_Hurricanes_Guide.pdf.

National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection to Hold Public Meeting

The National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection will hold a public meeting on August 27 and 28 to review and discuss international equivalence relating to audits associated with equivalence criteria, determinations of a country's status and the reinspection system for imported product.

The committee will meet August 27 from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and August 28 from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the conference room at the south end of the USDA South Building cafeteria, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C.

A draft of the agenda as well as other supporting documents is available on the "Meetings and Events" page of FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Meetings_&_Events/index.asp.

To pre-register, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Reg_082708_Meeting/index.asp. For further information about the public meeting, contact Keith Payne at (202) 690-6522 or send an email to keith.payne@fsis.usda.gov.

Public Meeting to Discuss the Use of Low Dose Irradiation in Beef

FSIS received a petition from the American Meat Institute (AMI) in July 2005 to recognize the use of low penetration and low dose electron beam irradiation on the surface of chilled beef carcasses as a processing aid.

Based upon research and information collected, as well as a positive evaluation of the safety of irradiation by the Food and Drug Administration, FSIS will consider data and information contained in the petition.

Before FSIS moves to a decision, a public meeting will be held on September 18 to communicate with other stakeholders and to receive public comments on what action it should take with respect to the petition. A copy of the petition is available on the FSIS Web site.

Be sure to check the "Meetings and Events" page of FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Meetings_&_Events/index.asp for more updates, a meeting location and supporting documents will be available soon.

FSIS to Host Regulatory Education Workshop in St. Louis

The Agency will host a regulatory education workshop in St. Louis, Missouri on August 20 as part of FSIS' ongoing initiative to enhance outreach to small and very small plants.

The workshops will cover a variety of topics and prerequisite programs, including hazard analysis and critical control points, sanitation performance standards, sanitation standard operating procedures, rules of practice, food defense strategies as well as *E. coli* O157:H7 related workshops and notices.

The August 20 session will be held at the Sheraton Westport Plaza Towers, 900 Westport Plaza Drive, St. Louis, Missouri from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

To register by phone, call (800) 336-3747. Online registration forms and information about upcoming sessions can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Outreach_Sessions_SVS_Plants/index.asp.

A Shift in FSIS Leadership: Loren Lange Assumes Executive Leadership Role in the Data Analysis and Integration Group

On June 16, Deputy Assistant Administrator Loren Lange of the Office of Public Health Science (OPHS), assumed an executive leadership role in the Data Analysis and Integration Group (DAIG) located within the Office of Food Defense and Emergency Response (OFDER).

By incorporating Lange's expertise with the DAIG, FSIS continues to innovate in the field of food safety and public health protection to better protect consumers. DAIG is the integration of science, policy and data analysis, coordinating accurate and relevant data between program areas to assist the Agency in identifying key data needs. DAIG is also key to implementing FSIS' enhanced data infrastructure by targeting the type of information to be gathered.

Lange, who has been with FSIS since 1979, brings to DAIG a unique and far-reaching perspective on Agency impact and potential. Lange has also worked and has contacts in various branches of the Agency, something which will prove vital to DAIG's coordination of OFDER, OPHS, the Office of Policy and Program Development and the Office of Field Operations.

During Lange's detail, Dr. Elisabeth Hagen will serve as the Deputy Assistant Administrator of OPHS.

NACMCF Subcommittee to Meet Via Webcast

The National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF) Subcommittee on Determination of the Most Appropriate Technologies for the FSIS to Adopt in Performing Routine and Baseline Microbiological will meet through a Web conference on August 21 from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The purpose of this meeting is to continue discussion of developing guidance and recommendations for FSIS to consider to improve laboratory and in-plant testing methods for pathogens and indicator organisms.

The public is welcome to attend this Web meeting at 901 D Street, SW, Room 369 Aerospace Building, Washington, D.C. Individuals must pre-register to attend. For more information, contact Gerri Ransom, NACMCF executive secretary at gerri.ransom@fsis.usda.gov. A summary report of the subcommittee meeting will be posted on FSIS' Web site, www.fsis.usda.gov/About_FSIS/NACMCF_Subcommittee_Meetings/index.asp.