



Food Safety
and Inspection
Service

Office of Outreach, Employee Education
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United States Department of Agriculture

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Dear Establishment Owner/Operator:

Enclosed please find a copy of the draft HACCP validation guidance. This draft guidance was posted on the FSIS web site on March 19, 2010, with a request for comments. The issuance of the document was considered appropriate now because of the widespread lack of understanding of validation that FSIS has found among establishments, whether large or small in HACCP size or high or low in production volume, and because of the food safety problems that have occurred as a result. We are sharing a printed copy with you to make sure you are aware of the draft guidance, and to be certain you know that we are interested in receiving your comments.

In the enclosed material, you will see a letter along with the draft guidance. The letter, dated March 17, 2010, from the FSIS Administrator, Al Almanza, to nine trade associations. This letter sets out the agency's current thinking on changes it intends to make in its approach to verifying that establishments have appropriately validated their HACCP systems. Attached to the letter is the draft compliance guidance on HACCP systems validation. You will also see a copy of the September 22, 2009, letter to which prompted Mr. Almanza's response.

You can send your comments to us at FSIS by email to this email address:

DraftValidationGuideComments@fsis.usda.gov, or you can mail your comments to the Docket Clerk, USDA, FSIS, Room 2-2127, 5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20705. The comment period for this draft guidance is open through June 19. After this time, FSIS will begin its review of the comments we receives and on deciding how to proceed with respect to the validation of HACCP systems.

If you have questions about how to submit your comments, the staff at the FSIS Small Plant Help Desk is available to help you. The Small Plant Help Desk serves as a "one-stop shop" for operators of small plants. You can contact the staff by calling 1-877-FSISHelp (877-374-7435) or

by e-mailing them at InfoSource@fsis.usda.gov. The help desk is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday. The FSIS Small Plant Help Desk staff is available to assist callers seeking help with agency requirements relating to the regulation of meat, poultry and processed egg products, provide information and guidance materials, and direct them to other FSIS and USDA services.

You are very important to us at FSIS, and to the American public who rely on the food that you produce to be safe.

Sincerely,

/s/

Karlease Kelly
Assistant Administrator
Office of Outreach, Employee Education and Training