



Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

What is the Public Health Information System?

FSIS has been working on a number of activities designed to improve food safety and food defense, the most significant of which is the Public Health Information System (PHIS).

PHIS is a web-based application that will replace FSIS' legacy systems, like the Performance-Based Inspection System; facilitate data integration and analysis; and automate paper-based business processes, such as export certification and audits of foreign countries' inspection programs.

"PHIS is going to touch on everything we do. It will make us more effective and efficient public health servants," said Administrator Al Almanza.

The implementation of PHIS will directly support the administration's and department's mission to protect public health and the welfare of consumers. The enhanced data infrastructure and integration of PHIS will improve effectiveness and efficiency of inspection resources; provide ongoing real time assessment, analysis and surveillance of public health and food defense data; implement the incident command procedures to address outbreaks of foodborne illness and contamination of food products; and access both FSIS in-commerce surveillance, investigation and enforcement activities, as well as data from our local, state and other federal partners.

PHIS will allow agency management and inspection personnel to more quickly and accurately identify trends in food safety and food defense, respond to vulnerabilities and allocate resources based on risk to prevent and mitigate problems.

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Agriculture

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Inspection Service

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Export Requirement Updates



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

Canada

Japan

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

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PHIS ...

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Recently, the agency met with stakeholders, including the members of the National Joint Council (NJC), as well as consumer and industry groups, to brief them and get their feedback. During the agency's second of a series of meetings with the NJC on the details of PHIS, from Dec. 15-17, 2009, union members asked about the impact of the system on the duties of inspection program personnel. "FSIS is intensely aware of the importance of ensuring that administrative duties of our employees do not outweigh inspection duties," said OFO Assistant Administrator Dr. Ken Petersen. "Their work duties will not change. We anticipate a transition period in which users in the field will spend more time online getting accustomed to the system, but we also expect that PHIS will assist inspection program personnel in determining when and where to focus their inspection activities, thereby making their inspection activities more efficient and effective."

The agency also briefed a number of external stakeholders, including employee associations; the National Association of State Meat and Food Inspection Directors; and foreign trading partners, with the help of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. Throughout these briefings, FSIS stressed the user-friendliness of the system, which officials say will allow for easy correction of any technical issues with the system itself, as well as field user modification of inspection, sampling and work schedules once the system is implemented.

"As FSIS moves forward with developing, testing and implementing the system, the union, its members, and all future users of the new system will benefit," said Almanza. "We are developing the system with user flexibility built in, so that inspection program personnel in the field can accommodate their own ever-changing needs."

FSIS plans to begin implementing the new system in October 2010.

USDA to Host 2010 Food Safety Education Conference

USDA and NSF International are hosting the 2010 Food Safety Education Conference, *Advancements in Food Safety: Trends, Tools and Technologies*, March 23-26, at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta.

Food safety educators and other professionals worldwide will have the opportunity to discover the latest advancements in food safety education. To register and get more information, visit <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Atlanta2010>.

What's the Scenario?

This week, FSIS has made available two Humane Interactive Knowledge Exchange (HIKE) scenarios on its Web site.

The first scenario, 01-10, provides guidance to operators on training for stunning during humane slaughter of livestock.

The second scenario, 02-10, discusses humane handling issues while in a federal beef slaughter and processing establishment.

Go to http://www.fsis.usda.gov/FSIS_Employees/HIKE_Scenarios/index.asp to review these scenarios.

If you have questions or comments regarding the preliminary HIKE scenario, contact the Policy Development Division at (800) 233-3935.

FSIS Posts Third 2009 Quarterly Report on *Salmonella* Testing

Today, the agency posted to its Web site the third quarterly progress report of calendar year (CY) 2009 on *Salmonella* testing of selected raw meat and poultry products.

This report provides preliminary data from July – September 2009 on all establishments eligible for *Salmonella* testing that have completed at least two sampling verification sets since June 2006.

FSIS's goal is to have 90 percent of all establishments eligible for *Salmonella* testing in Category 1 by 2010. As of September 2009, of all establishments in all product classes, 81 percent are in Category 1, which illustrates no change from second quarter CY09.

From 172 broiler establishments, 1,773 samples were analyzed with a 7.1 percent positive rate, up from a positive rate of 5.2 percent in second quarter CY09. The table lists percentages of broiler establishments by category as of September 2009.

Plant Category	Category 1	Category 2T	Category 2	Category 3
Percentage of Broiler Establishments	82	9	7	2

FSIS continues to post monthly the names of broiler establishments demonstrating variable or inconsistent process control. FSIS highlights performance for the broiler class because of its negative impact on foodborne illness. Turkey establishments are exempt from posting because this product class meets the criteria of at least 90 percent of all establishments in Category 1 and no establishments in Category 3.

The complete report and program details are at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Quarterly_Salmonella_Results/index.asp.

Updates on FSIS Testing for *E. coli*

Weekly updates for the agency's raw beef *E. coli* sampling program are posted to the FSIS Web site.

For comparative previous and current year results, go to http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Ground_Beef_E.Coli_Testing_Results/index.asp.

Agency to Host Web Outreach Seminar on Sanitary Dressing Procedures

FSIS will host a Web outreach seminar on sanitary dressing procedures on Jan. 21, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. ET.

Participants will gain insight on FSIS sanitary dressing procedures and how they are critical to reducing *E. coli* O157:H7 to undetectable levels. The discussion will also provide a better understanding of validated HACCP plans and interventions.

To learn more, go to http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Regulatory_Web_Seminars/index.asp.

Recent Policy Updates

FSIS issues notices and directives to protect public health. The following policy updates were recently issued:

Notice 06-10, *Humane Handling at All Entrances and the Twenty-Eight Hour Law*.

Notice 07-10, *Instructions for Sampling Ammoniated Beef Products*.

All notices and directives are available at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/index.asp.

USDA's Lending Hands to Assist Victims in Haiti

USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) is working with other government agencies to provide assistance in the recovery from the earthquake that struck Haiti last week.

Much of that assistance involves providing emergency food supplies made possible by the great productivity of U.S. farms and producers. For individuals interested in making a contribution, FAS has created the Haiti Response Team and they can be reached at haitidisaster@fas.usda.gov.

Beyond the emergency activities and supplies, the FAS international development staff will be involved with other U.S. government agencies in planning for the longer term reconstruction and development of the devastated regions. For more information and additional resources, go to the FAS Web site at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/>.

Secretary Vilsack Releases Data Sets as Part of Open Government Initiative

As part of President Obama's *Open.gov* initiative, Secretary Vilsack announced on Jan. 20, USDA's release of four data sets to meet the first milestone.

These data sets include:

- FSIS' Meat, Poultry and Egg Product Inspection Directory that provides a listing of federally inspected establishments that produce meat, poultry, and/or egg products;
- Agricultural Research Service's National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, the major authoritative source of information about food composition in the United States;
- Economic Research Service's feed grains dataset, which contains over 300,000 data points on certain feed grains, foreign coarse grains, hay and related items; and
- National Agricultural Statistics Service 2007 Census of Agriculture dataset provides county-level demographic profiles of U.S. farm and ranch operators from the 2007 Census of Agriculture.

These data sets are the first of many that will be published on the USDA Web site and on *Data.gov*.

To read this data and provide feedback, go to <http://www.data.gov/> and click on "Raw Data Catalog." From there, data sets are available for review. For more information on the Open Government Initiative go to <http://www.whitehouse.gov/open>.

Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill

Clean: When preparing food, wash hands and surfaces often.

Separate: Don't cross-contaminate.

Cook: Cook food to safe minimum internal temperatures as checked with a food thermometer.

Chill: Promptly refrigerate or freeze leftovers.

For more helpful tips to prepare a safe and wholesome meal, go to http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/index.asp.

Get Answers at *AskFSIS*

AskFSIS is a Web-based technology and policy question-and-answer forum on topics such as exporting, labeling, inspection, programs and procedures.

In addition, *AskFSIS* offers Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds that link back to the Q&As. Visit <http://askfsis.custhelp.com/> to find the answers to your questions and receive automatic updates.

Recently posted topics include:

Establishments Conducting LTD Sanitation Procedures

http://askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=1346

Conducting a PBIS 01B02 Procedure in an Establishment that Utilizes LTD Sanitation Procedures

http://askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=1347

Intent of Gross Contamination Language in the Directive

http://askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=1348

Less than Daily Sanitation in Other Areas Within the Establishment

http://askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=1349

Addressing Aerobic Plate Count (APC) Testing in the Hazard Analysis in an Establishment that Utilizes LTD Sanitation Procedures

http://askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=1350