



Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

USDA Sets New Standards for Reducing Foodborne Pathogens in Chickens and Turkeys

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

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FSIS announced this week the implementation of revised and new performance standards aimed at reducing the prevalence of *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* in young chickens and turkeys. The standards are set to begin July 2011.

With the new standards, the agency is encouraging establishments that slaughter chicken and turkey to make continued reductions in the occurrence of pathogens – namely *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* – in the products they produce.

After 2 years of enforcing the new standards, FSIS estimates that approximately 5,000 illnesses will be prevented each year under the new *Campylobacter* standards, and approximately 20,000 illnesses will be prevented under the revised *Salmonella* standards each year. FSIS developed stricter performance standards using recently completed nationwide studies that measure the baseline prevalence of *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* in young chickens and turkeys prepared for market. The studies indicated that, despite improvements, there was still a risk of consumers being exposed to these pathogens through poultry.

The President’s Food Safety Working Group (FSWG) developed three core principles to help guide food safety in the United States: prioritizing prevention, strengthening surveillance and enforcement, and improving response and recovery. In its overall mission to ensure a safe food supply for the public, and in response to the FSWG, the agency developed the stricter performance standards to cut the *Salmonella* risk in poultry products. FSIS is announcing the new performance standards and inviting comment in the *Federal Register* notice that will publish shortly.



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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:

Chile

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

FSIS Constituent Update is prepared by the Congressional and Public Affairs Office.

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and Consumer Education**

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FSIS to Begin New Sample Method for *E. coli*

Following a validation study to compare performance of two laboratory sample preparation methods for detecting the pathogen *E. coli* O157:H7 in raw beef samples, FSIS will change the amount of sample tested at the laboratory.

The new testing procedure will begin March 21, 2011. Rather than analyzing 5 individual 65-g samples, the agency will begin analyzing 325-g composite samples of ground beef, trim, and other components of raw ground beef for *E. coli* O157 using a recently published method.

An abstract of the findings can be found on the FSIS website on March 21.

NACMCF Subcommittee to Hold Public Meeting

A subcommittee of the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF) will hold public meetings from April 5-7.

NACMCF's subcommittee on the Study of Microbiological Criteria as Indicators of Process Control or Insanitary Conditions is meeting to develop guidance to assist the Department of Defense (DoD). DoD will use this guidance in developing refined microbiological and other criteria to better evaluate process control and insanitary conditions at the point of production.

The meetings will take place on Tuesday, April 5, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Wednesday, April 6, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; and Thursday, April 7, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Aerospace Building, 901 D St., SW, Room 369, Washington, DC.

To participate, contact Karen Thomas-Sharp at (202) 690-6620 or karen.thomas-sharp@fsis.usda.gov. Due to increased security measures, all persons wishing to attend must RSVP in advance.

Check Out the PHIS Resource Page

Information about the dynamic, user-friendly data analytics system, called the Public Health Information System (PHIS) is available on the FSIS website at www.fsis.usda.gov/PHIS.

FSIS is developing PHIS as an effort to collect, consolidate and analyze data. This public health-based approach is in line with the core principles of the President's Food Safety Working Group.

Our latest in the series of videos, available on YouTube, is entitled *PHIS: Import/Export*. It highlights the system's import/export features. PHIS will streamline current paper-based processes and help ensure the safety of imported and exported products. Check it out at www.youtube.com/watch?v=okn-7c85UKA.

PHIS Previews: PHIS Resources

As FSIS employees and establishments look ahead to the launch of the Public Health Information System (PHIS), the agency is highlighting a range of resources for stakeholders. This includes assistance with start-up procedures, as well as a user guide, a database with frequently asked questions and other educational resources.

“A wealth of information and services will be available to help PHIS users get up to speed quickly on the system,” said FSIS Administrator Al Almanza. “From assisting with eAuthentication to offering detailed training materials, FSIS is committed to helping PHIS users each step of the way.”

Obtaining Access to PHIS

For most establishments, the first step will be obtaining an eAuthentication (eAuth) account and registering for PHIS access. A letter from Administrator Almanza providing detailed instructions on registration and an Invitation Key (password) that is unique to each establishment will soon be mailed to establishments.

Users with eAuth-related questions may contact the USDA eAuth Service Desk at eAuthHelpDesk@ftc.usda.gov or 1-800-457-3642. The USDA Service Desk will be staffed from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Central Time, Monday through Friday (except for federal holidays).

Presentation and Training Materials

FSIS will also offer an interactive PHIS screenshots presentation prior to implementation of the system. This presentation will provide users with step-by-step instructions on how to use PHIS.

A comprehensive PHIS user guide is currently being developed for all establishments using PHIS. Once available, the guide will be posted to the FSIS website at www.fsis.usda.gov/phs. Visit the PHIS page on the FSIS website for a variety of other PHIS informational resources, such as videos and recordings of past webinars.

Keep reading *Constituent Update* for more information on PHIS.

New *Salmonella* Standards: A Weekly Industry Progress Update

Product Class	Percent Completed and Passed as of 3/14/11	Percent That Could Complete and Pass by 3/31/11
Young Chickens	86.7 (0.5)	88.0 (0.0)
Young Turkeys	90.9 (3.1)	93.9 (0.0)

FSIS is tracking industry performance to see if 90 percent of poultry slaughter establishments would have met updated and tightened *Salmonella* standards for 2010 if they had been in effect. (See the Dec. 17, 2010, issue of the *Constituent Update* at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Const_Update_121710/index.asp.)

The table above shows progress as of this week projecting a final best-case possible total with changes from last week indicated in the parentheses.

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/>.

Recently posted topics include:

- **Better Process Control School**
http://askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=1505
- **Processing Authority (9 CFR 318.300(q) and 381.300(q))**
http://askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=1506
- **Submitting Question Related to PHIS During Training**
http://askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=1507
- **Submitting Question Related to PHIS After Training**
http://askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=1508

FSIS Policy Updates

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

- **Directive 9000.6**, *Export Certification of Egg Products From Other Than Official Egg Products Plants*
- **Directive 5720.3**, *Methodology for Performing Scheduled and Targeted Reviews of State Meat and Poultry Inspection Programs*

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