



Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

FSIS Posts Two Data Analysis Reports for RTE Sampling Programs

This week, the agency published two reports focusing on *Listeria monocytogenes* (*Lm*) and *Salmonella* in ready-to-eat (RTE) products.

The first report is entitled, *Results of Data Analysis for the Listeria monocytogenes RLM Risk-based Sampling Program, Calendar Year 2008*. The sampling program is designed to detect *Lm* contamination on food contact surfaces and non-food contact environmental sites such as walls, floors and drains, as well as in post-lethality exposed RTE meat and poultry products.

For additional details, go to www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Results_RLM_Sampling_Program_CY2008.pdf. Also go to www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Results_Data_Analysis_Lm.pdf to review data from a previous report covering the period of April 2006 through December 2007.

The second report, *Analysis of ALLRTE and RTE001 Sampling Results for Salmonella species, Calendar Years 2005 through 2008*, is an evaluation of *Salmonella* sampling results for RTE meat and poultry products. The ALLRTE sampling program is random and the RTE001 sampling program is risk based; both involve testing for *Lm* and *Salmonella*.

This report focuses on *Salmonella* sampling results, and is the first in-depth analysis of the pathogen in FSIS-regulated RTE meat and poultry products since both sampling programs were initiated in 2004-2005. Go to www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Analysis_ALLRTE_RTE001_Sampling_Salmonella_2005-2008.pdf to review the report.

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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:

Ecuador

Russia

Ukraine

United Arab Emirates

Vietnam

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

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**Office of Public Affairs
and Consumer Education**

Acting Assistant Administrator
Robert Tynan

Executive Staff
Carol Blake, CPA Director
Greg DiNapoli, Deputy Director

Editor
Ndidi A. Mojay

Assistant Editor
Alexandra Tarrant

Editor-at-Large
Joan Lindenberger

New *Salmonella* Standards

The President's Food Safety Working Group (FSWG) charged the agency with developing new standards for chilled poultry carcasses to reduce the prevalence of *Salmonella*. FSIS is preparing a *Federal Register* notice on implementing the new standards.

The FSWG set a goal for 90 percent of poultry slaughter establishments meeting these new standards by the end of calendar year (CY) 2010 (www.foodsafetyworkinggroup.gov/FSWG_Key_Findings.pdf).

Though the standards were not formally in effect in 2010, the agency has been measuring poultry industry performance to see what percentage of establishments would have met the standards for 2010 had they been in effect. FSIS is counting completed sample sets that started no later than Dec. 31, 2010 and complete no later than March 31, 2011.

As of Dec. 13, 2010, 87.3 percent of young chicken slaughter establishments would have met the new standard for 2010. Based on past and current trends and assuming the passing rate remains constant or rises, FSIS projects that between 87.3 and 92.5 percent of young chicken slaughter establishments would have met the new standard for 2010.

Also as of this week, 88.2 percent of young turkey slaughter establishments would have met the new standard for 2010. Based on past and current trends and assuming the passing rate holds steady or rises, FSIS projects that between 88.2 and 94.1 percent of young turkey slaughter establishments would have met the new standard had been in effect.

The agency encourages the poultry industry to continue efforts to reduce *Salmonella* contamination in poultry products. During CY2011, FSIS will focus on reducing the relatively high positive rate in "comminuted" poultry products (poultry processed mechanically to reduce particle size). FSIS encourages the meat industry to take further steps to reduce *Salmonella* in raw classes of meat.

The Basics on the PHIS

FSIS plans to feature a video providing a comprehensive overview of the user-friendly system called *PHIS 101: The Basics*.

Go to the FSIS website next week at www.fsis.usda.gov/PHIS to watch the video.

Also, keep reading the *Constituent Update* for more information about PHIS in future issues.

USDA Blog

Every day, the USDA Blog shares something new about its expansive mission.

The Blog provides a rich and diverse look at the work within the Department spanning the nation – and even the world – and highlights the breadth of USDA programs and the role it plays in the lives of every American.

Go to <http://blogs.usda.gov/> and see what's happening within the agency and across the Department.

Revised Burden of Foodborne Illness Estimates Are Out

At the heart of FSIS' food safety mission in protecting public health, foodborne illness remains a substantial concern that affects millions each year.

On Dec. 15, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released revised decade-old estimates of the foodborne illness burden. According to the new estimates, about 48 million people (1 in 6 Americans) get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die each year from foodborne diseases.

FSIS can use these new burden of foodborne illness data as a reliable resource for gauging the magnitude of the burden, prioritizing areas of focus and pairing it with other surveillance studies such as FoodNet to get a more concise and accurate depiction of what is causing illnesses—ultimately shaping our future food safety policy.

“Additionally, these new estimates will help us establish a more comprehensive data collection system that we can use to examine the risks associated with pathogens—those we don't know, and those we need to know more about,” said Dr. David Goldman, assistant administrator for FSIS' Office of Public Health Science,

“Science, data and research are invaluable tools that we use to protect public health. FSIS welcomes these updates for a number of reasons. First, we can use the estimates to better measure and analyze the risk of foodborne disease to shape policy. Second, these estimates reveal significant improvements in the way that the public health community collects and evaluates data, which informs our entire food safety system. And third, the estimates provide us a baseline for future work,” said Goldman.

FSIS has taken a number of measures over the past decade to attack foodborne pathogens. FSIS has announced new performance standards to reduce *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* in young chickens (broilers) and turkeys in the *Federal Register* for public comment. In 2011, FSIS plans to implement these standards after careful evaluation of the comments. FSIS is continuously researching new data as it becomes available and using the latest technologies to expedite the reduction of contamination.

More information about the new CDC estimates can be found at www.cdc.gov/media/pressrel/2010/r101215.html.

Follow Us on Twitter

Find food safety information for at-risk people along with tips and resources to keep consumers and other interested groups informed of the latest agency news and events. Follow FSIS on Twitter at www.twitter.com/USDAFoodSafety.

Also Tweet En Español

The Spanish language Twitter feed keeps consumers and other interested communities informed of the latest agency news and events and provides useful food safety tips.

Follow FSIS' Spanish Twitter account at www.twitter.com/usdafoodsafes_es.

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 askfsis.custhelp.com/ to find the answers to your questions. Recently posted topics include:

KISTM and FAST testing

http://askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=1449

Updates on FSIS Testing for *E. coli*

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

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

The *FSIS Constituent Update* will not publish December 24 or December 31 but will resume publishing on January 7.

The staff wishes you and your family a happy and healthy holiday.