United States Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service
Washington, D.C. 20250

NOV 8 2007

Dr. Bill Anderson
Director
Meat Programs Division
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
8 Colonnade Road
Ottawa, Ontario K1A0Y9

Dear Dr. Anderson:

This letter is to alert you that on Friday, November 9, 2007, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) will begin increased product exams of exported Canadian meat and poultry products, and pasteurized egg products at import houses in the United States (US). FSIS will also increase testing of raw ground beef for *E. coli* O157:H7. Also, FSIS will begin testing of raw beef manufacturing trim, boxed beef, and subprimals normally sent for grinding for *E. coli* O157:H7. Additionally, FSIS will increase testing for *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Salmonella* in ready-to-eat products. The increase product exams, testing of raw ground beef for *E. coli* O157:H7, and for *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Salmonella* in ready-to-eat products will be at the rate of approximately double that of the past year for Canada.

These measures are consistent with the statement of Dr. Richard Raymond, USDA Undersecretary for Food Safety released on November 3, 2007. The measures are a reflection of our concern about the Canadian inspection system based on the audit findings of May 1-June 6, 2007, and the circumstances related to the unsafe practices employed by Ranchers Beef, Ltd., Establishment 630.

The increase in tests for pathogens will continue while the two US teams currently in Canada complete their audits of Establishment 630, the six establishments that received Notices of Intent to Delist in the last US audit of Canada, the one establishment that was delisted in the last US audit of Canada, and beef slaughter establishments identified as similar to Est. 630 in terms of start-up and operations. FSIS will evaluate the audit results and the results of the increased product exams and testing at the import houses before determining whether the increased testing for *E. coli* O157:H7 in raw ground beef, and for *L. monocytogenes* and *Salmonella* in ready-to-eat products will be changed to new levels determined for all imported products based on targeted verification testing criteria consistent with our regulatory program for similar product.

Please note that the a new targeted verification testing for *E. coli* O157:H7 in raw beef manufacturing trim, boxed beef, and subprimals normally sent for grinding will continue as a permanent program which will be extended to all countries exporting such products to the US at the beginning of 2008.

For Canada at this time, production lots represented by samples collected for pathogen testing will be held at import houses, and will not receive the marks of inspection, until a negative laboratory test result is returned. A positive test result will require rejection of all product represented by the sample. Same source material ("like product") from the production lot that might have been exported to the US prior to any lot that tests positive is subject to recall if a scientific rationale can not be provided to explain why the implicated products are microbiologically independent from each other. If a production lot can not be identified by the exporting establishment as a discrete microbiologically-based segment, at least the entire production of the "like product" represented by the sample will be rejected, and previously exported product represented by the sample will be subject to recall by the importer of record.

FSIS will consider submitted alternatives to holding product at import houses pending test results, and will also consider scientifically justified alternatives for sub-dividing production lots.

If you have any questions, please send them to Dr. Dan Engeljohn, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Policy, Program Evaluation and Development, FSIS, USDA.

Thank you,

Dr. Wm J

Dr. William James
Acting Assistant Administrator
Office of International Affairs
FSIS, USDA