

Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

USDA Seeks to Modernize Poultry Inspection in the United States

Inspection Would Focus on Areas Most Critical to Ensuring Food Safety

FSIS is proposing a modernization of poultry slaughter inspection in the United States by focusing FSIS inspection resources on the areas of the poultry production system that pose the greatest risk to food safety.

“The modernization plan will protect public health, improve the efficiency of poultry inspections in the U.S. and reduce spending,” Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said. “The new inspection system will reduce the risk of foodborne illness by focusing FSIS inspection activities on those tasks that advance our core mission of food safety. By revising current procedures and removing outdated regulatory requirements that do not help combat foodborne illness, the result will be a more efficient and effective use of taxpayer dollars.”

Currently, some FSIS employees in poultry establishments often perform several activities unrelated to food safety, such as identifying visual defects. Under the proposed plan, all FSIS inspection activities will focus on critical food safety tasks to ensure that agency resources are tied directly to protecting public health and reducing foodborne illnesses. Additionally, some outdated regulatory requirements are being removed and replaced with more flexible and effective testing and process control requirements. Finally, all poultry establishments will now

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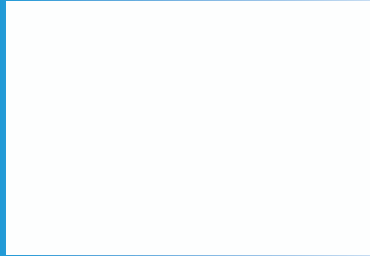
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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety and
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:

Australia

European Union

Japan

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

...Poultry Slaughter

Continued from page 1

have to ensure that their procedures prevent contamination in the production process and provide supporting data to FSIS personnel. FSIS will continue to conduct on-line, carcass-by-carcass inspection as mandated by law. This rule will allow FSIS personnel to conduct a more efficient carcass-by-carcass inspection with agency resources focused on more effective food safety measures. Data collected by the agency over the past several years suggest that off-line inspection activities are more effective in improving food safety. Inspection activities conducted off the evisceration line include pathogen sampling and verifying that establishments are maintaining sanitary conditions and controlling food safety hazards at critical points in the production process.

The proposal was posted today on the FSIS website at www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/Proposed_Rules/index.asp and will soon publish in the *Federal Register*. Once published, the public will have 90 days to submit comments through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov, or by mail to: USDA, FSIS, OPPD, RIMD, Docket Clearance Unit, Patriots Plaza III, Room 8-164, 355 E Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20024-3221. All items submitted by mail or e-mail must include the agency name and docket number, which will be assigned when it is published in the *Federal Register*. For more information, visit http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Proposed_Rules/index.asp.

FSIS Announces Implementation of Microbiological Baseline Data Collection for Raw Chicken Parts

Last week, FSIS posted on its website Notice 04-12, *FSIS Nationwide Microbiological Baseline Data Collection Program for Raw Chicken Parts*. This guidance provides updated instructions to inspection program personnel at establishments participating in the nationwide baseline study.

For approximately 6 months, FSIS will sample non-frozen, not-ready-to-eat chicken parts potentially destined for retail, hotels, restaurants or similar institutions, known as HRIs, along with products bound for export or inclusion in special purchase orders.

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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. To view recently posted topics, visit <http://askfsis.custhelp.com/>.

Unofficial HACCP Records
http://askfsis.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/1721

Register for the 2012 Agricultural Outlook Forum

USDA is hosting the 2012 Agricultural Outlook Forum, *Moving Agriculture Forward: USDA – Growing, Innovating, and Celebrating 150 Years*, Feb. 23-24, at the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel in Arlington, Va.

The forum features 30 breakout sessions spotlighting a range of issues related to global food security, locally grown foods, fighting foodborne illnesses, sustainability and the farm income outlook for 2012.

To learn more and register for the Forum, visit www.usda.gov/oce/forum.

...Baseline Study

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This baseline study will provide FSIS and industry with data concerning the national prevalence estimate, percent positives, as well as quantitative levels of selected foodborne pathogens and microorganisms. The data will enable the agency and industry to target interventions and effectively work toward reducing the risk of foodborne pathogens in FSIS-regulated products. The agency also expects to establish pathogen reduction performance standards for not-ready-to-eat chicken parts.

For general information regarding FSIS baseline studies, go to www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Baseline_Data/index.asp.

Food Safety Agencies to Hold Public Meeting to Discuss Foodborne Illness Attribution Estimates

FSIS, FDA and CDC are holding a public meeting to discuss federal efforts to enhance food safety strategies through improved use and characterization of foodborne illness source attribution. The meeting will be held in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 31 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Discussions will include federal approaches to food source attribution and outline efforts to develop harmonized food source attribution fractions to inform food safety strategies. The meeting also will be used to review a draft strategic plan developed by the Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration, which was formed in 2011 to increase collaboration on analytic projects.

Individuals are encouraged to pre-register online at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/meetings_&_events. Registration closes on Jan. 25.

The meeting will be held at USDA's South Building, Jefferson Auditorium, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250. Non-USDA employees must enter through wing 5 on Independence Ave. and provide photo identification when entering the building.

For general information or to request special accommodations due to a disability, contact Juanita Yates, FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, at (240) 402-1731 or Joan Lindenberger, FSIS, at (202) 720-6755.

Regulatory Webinar Available on Recalls of Products With Undeclared Allergens

The agency will host a webinar on Feb. 7 to provide guidance on addressing a recent increase of products recalled because of undeclared allergens.

The discussion will focus on the steps that establishments can take to prevent the production of items containing undeclared allergens.

To access the webinar, go to <https://connect16.uc.att.com/usda/meet/?ExEventID=85277207> and follow the on-screen instructions. For questions, contact Kristin Goodwin at (301) 504-0878 or kristin.goodwin@fsis.usda.gov.

Updates on FSIS Testing for *E. coli*

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

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

Proposed Rule to Streamline Generic Labeling Approval Processes

FSIS proposed a new rule that will allow establishments to label a broader range of products without first submitting the label to the agency for approval. After the rule goes into effect, FSIS will continue to verify that labels are accurate, not misleading and in compliance with all labeling features.

Individuals are invited to submit comments electronically through the Federal *eRulemaking* Portal at www.regulations.gov until Feb. 3. Comments may also be mailed to USDA, FSIS, OPPD, RIMD, Docket Clearance Unit, Patriots Plaza III, 355 E St., S.W., Rm. 8-164, Washington, D.C. 20024-3221. All items submitted must include the docket number FSIS-2005-0016.

In addition, a webinar on this subject will be held on Feb. 14 at 2 p.m. ET. To access the webinar, go to <https://connect16.uc.att.com/usda/meet/?ExEventID=85277207> and follow the on-screen instructions. For questions, contact Kristin Goodwin at (301) 504-0878 or kristin.goodwin@fsis.usda.gov.

Register for Webinar on Nutrition Labeling Rule

FSIS is delaying the effective date of the final rule that will require nutrition labeling of the major cuts of single-ingredient, raw meat and poultry products and ground or chopped meat and poultry products. The original effective date of the final rule was Jan. 1, but is now delayed until March 1.

The new effective date will ensure that industry has adequate time to comply with the requirements of the final rule. The *Federal Register* notice announcing the delay was published on the FSIS website (www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Interim_&_Final_Rules/index.asp).

A webinar on this subject will be held on Feb 28 at 2 p.m. ET.

To access the webinar, go to <https://connect16.uc.att.com/usda/meet/?ExEventID=85277207> and follow the on-screen instructions. For questions, contact Kristin Goodwin at (301) 504-0878 or kristin.goodwin@fsis.usda.gov.

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 FSIS 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.

Visit USDA's 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 they play in the lives of every American.

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

Regulatory Cooperation Council and Beyond the Border

The U.S.–Canada Regulatory Cooperation Council (RCC) will hold an outreach event in Washington, D.C., on January 30-31, 2012, to offer an opportunity for interested stakeholders to learn more about the Council and to provide valuable input into work plans being developed. The event will be held at both the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Office and the Department of Commerce.

The RCC was established February 4, 2011, by President Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper as a way to promote economic growth and to stimulate job creation. Additionally, the RCC seeks to increase regulatory transparency and coordination. Consequently, on December 7, the RCC released a Joint Action Plan on Regulatory Cooperation as well as an inter-related Joint Action Plan on the Beyond the Border Initiative (BtB). Information about the BtB initiative may be found at www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/us-canada_btbt_action_plan3.pdf.

In order to implement initiatives identified in the RCC and BtB Joint Action Plans, bilateral working groups, led by senior officials from regulatory agencies, are developing work plans with objectives, deliverables and milestones for tangible progress within the RCC's 2-year mandate. To that end, stakeholder participation is appreciated. To register for the stakeholder events on January 30-31, or for further information about the RCC, visit www.trade.gov/rcc/. Should you not be able to attend the event, alternative options to provide feedback will be made available.

Additional information about the RCC and BtB can be accessed via the link to the following White House Fact Sheet: www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/07/fact-sheet-us-canada-beyond-border-and-regulatory-cooperation-council-in. Questions, comments and concerns relative to the RCC/BtB initiatives and the stakeholder meetings can be addressed to RCC-BtB@one.usda.gov. For those unable to attend the stakeholder meetings in Washington, D.C., on January 30-31, they may submit comments to this same address for review and consideration.