



Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

USDA Streamlining Meat and Poultry Labeling Approval Process

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

Volume 14, Issue 20
May 25, 2012

FSIS this week launched a new web-based label approval system that will streamline the agency’s review process for meat, poultry and egg product labels. The Label Submission Approval System (LSAS) will make it possible for food manufacturers to submit label applications electronically, will flag application submission errors that could delay the approval process and allow users to track the progress of their submission.

“This new system will expedite and simplify the review process for meat, poultry and egg product labels,” said Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Elisabeth Hagen. “Reducing the review times for labels will enhance the agency’s ability to ensure that accurate information is applied to product labels and reaches consumers quickly.”

FSIS reviews labels on the products it regulates to ensure they are truthful and not misleading. LSAS will reduce time and costs incurred by both the industry and the agency. Until the launch of LSAS, companies mailed or hand delivered paper applications to FSIS, and FSIS reviewed and corrected them before returning them in hard copy. The agency receives 150 to 200 label submissions daily, and it can take more than three weeks for a label to be reviewed. The web-based system will make approved or corrected labels immediately available to companies, saving time and mailing costs. The system also will allow companies to

Continued on page two



Inside this Issue

Grill it Safe	3
Food Safety PSAs on YouTube	3
USDA Seeks Nominations for NACMPI	4
Comment Period for Proposed Rule to End	4
FSIS Policy Updates	5
Get Answers at <i>AskFSIS</i>	5

Export Requirement Updates



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

Japan

Ukraine

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.

**Office of Public Affairs
and Consumer Education**

Assistant Administrator
Carol Blake

Executive Staff
Brian Mabry, Acting CPA Director
Greg DiNapoli, Deputy Director

Editor
Ndidi A. Mojay

Assistant Editor
Alexandra Tarrant

Editor-at-Large
Joan Lindenberger

...Labeling

Continued from page one

store labels and make changes electronically, removing the need to print and re-submit modified labels for review to FSIS each time a change is made.

Label submissions are reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis, and the agency will continue to review labels in the same manner using LSAS. If a company chooses to use LSAS to submit a label for approval, during the submission process, the system will notify the company if an application is incomplete through an error message. The system assigns each label a tracking number so the progress of its review can be tracked online. The system also includes an option to first see if the label qualifies for a generic approval before proceeding with a submission (generic approval means the label does not have to be submitted to FSIS for review prior to use).

More information about LSAS, including instructions on accessing the system using Level 2 USDA e-authentication, a user's guide, agency contact information and frequently asked questions is available at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/label_Submission_Approval_System/. FSIS strongly encourages companies to consult the LSAS User's Guide before attempting to submit their first label(s) through the new system. Webinars about LSAS will be scheduled and announced in coming weeks.

The LSAS is another result of an on-going USDA review of existing program rules to determine whether any should be modified, streamlined, clarified or repealed to improve access to USDA programs. With the intent to minimize burdens on individuals, businesses and communities attempting to access programs, the review was directed by President Obama in Executive Order 13563, which was signed January 18, 2011.

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.

Food Safety Takes Spotlight on The Pentagon Channel

In collaboration with partners from the Defense Media Activity at Fort Meade, Md., FSIS joined popular Pentagon Channel personalities, the Grill Sergeants, May 18, for a taping of a television special called “Grill It Safe.”

USDA’s Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Elisabeth Hagen and Food Safety Education’s Deputy Director Diane Van appeared with Army Sergeant First Class Guy Winks and Staff Sergeant Edmund Perez. Together, they served up helpful food safety tips for the barbecuing season.

The show marks the launch of FSIS’ Grill It Safe campaign, which educates consumers about safe food handling practices during outdoor barbecues.

The “Grill It Safe” show is scheduled to air Memorial Day weekend on May 26 at 6 p.m., May 27 at 9 a.m. and May 28 at 8 a.m. ET.

Check your local listings to find The Pentagon Channel or visit The Pentagon Channel website at www.pentagonchannel.mil/thegrillsergeants/index.shtml.

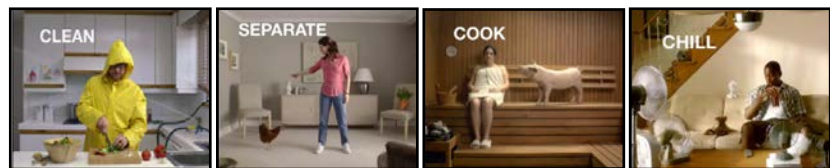
“Grill It Safe” This Memorial Day Weekend

Days are getting warmer, baseball season is in full swing, and Memorial Day is fast approaching—all signs that the summer cookout season is nearly upon us. As you welcome summer at your Memorial Day weekend barbecue this year, FSIS reminds you that no recipe, whether it is meant for the kitchen or the grill, can be a success without including food safety steps. In addition to working to ensure that meat and poultry establishments prevent pathogens from contaminating food, the agency also would like to provide consumers with the necessary tools to further protect their loved ones from foodborne illness.

"As summer cookout season approaches, we want to urge consumers to take the necessary precautions to protect their families from foodborne illness," said USDA Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Elisabeth Hagen. "By following these simple tips, consumers will have the tools and knowledge to ensure that their Memorial Day cookouts will be a fun and safe start to the summer."

FSIS has compiled all of its summer and grilling food safety resources into one convenient location on its website under the heading "Grill It Safe." To find fact sheets, videos and podcasts about safe handling and preparation of food in warmer months, go to www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safety_Education/Grill_It_Safe. Also provided are tips on how the four basic food safety steps—*Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill*—that the agency recommends year-round can be tailored to fit summer activities.

Food Safety PSAs Available on YouTube



As part of the *Food Safe Families* campaign, USDA has posted public service announcements or PSAs called “Check Your Steps”—“Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill.”

PSAs, entertaining depictions of the four key safe food handling behaviors, urge parents to keep their families safe from food poisoning while delivering clear steps to reduce their risk.

Go to www.youtube.com/user/USDAFoodSafety and check out the YouTube USDA Food Safety Channel.

PHIS Import Inspection Component to Launch May 29

FSIS will implement the import component of the Public Health Information System (PHIS) on May 29. All FSIS import regions are scheduled to begin using PHIS on this date.

Letters were distributed to foreign governments and import establishments providing information on changes to certification requirements, product categorization and presentation for import reinspection and sampling at official import inspection establishments.

Copies of these letters are posted at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/PHIS_Import_Component/index.asp and also linked to the FSIS website at www.fsis.usda.gov/PHIS/index.asp.

USDA Solicits Nominations for NACMPI

USDA is accepting nominations for the National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection (NACMPI). All applications need to be received by June 20 to receive consideration.

Nominations for membership to the Committee are being sought from individuals representing academia, public health organizations, industry, state and local government officials, consumer organizations and the public. Federally registered lobbyists will not be considered for membership.

Established in 1971, NACMPI meets on food safety concerns and advises the Secretary of Agriculture on matters affecting federal and state inspection program activities. The advisory committee also contributes to USDA's regulatory policy development. Recommendations made by NACMPI are sent to USDA's Under Secretary for Food Safety for consideration and review by the Secretary of Agriculture. For more information about NACMPI, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/About_Fsis/NACMPI.

Application packages should include a cover letter, typed resume and USDA Advisory Committee Membership Background Information form AD-755 (www.fsis.usda.gov/forms/index.asp). The resume or curriculum vitae must be limited to five, one-sided pages and should include educational background and expertise. Application packets should be sent to Thomas Vilsack, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250, Attn: National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection.

Comment Period Closing Next Week

The comment period for a proposed rule to modernize the way young chickens and turkeys are inspected will close on Tuesday, May 29. The notice (www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/Proposed_Rules/index.asp) clarifies answers to questions from several groups; the posting of those answers ensures that the groups and the public have access to the same information. The notice also specifies that FSIS is seeking information and data on potential impacts of line speeds on worker safety.

Comments may be submitted through the Federal *eRulemaking* Portal at www.regulations.gov, or by mail to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), FSIS, Docket Clerk, Patriots Plaza III, 355 E St., S.W., 8-163A, Mailstop 3782, Washington, DC 20250-3700. All items submitted by mail or electronic mail must include docket number FSIS 2011-0012.

New Podcast

Tune in to podcasts on selecting, handling and preparing meat and poultry products to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. FSIS released this podcast helpful to consumers.

- **Food Safety Reminders for This Summer**

Check out this podcast at www.fsis.usda.gov/news_&_events/Podcasts/index.asp.

Spanish language consumer podcasts are available at www.fsis.usda.gov/En_Espanol/Podcasts_SP/index.asp. Video-casts in American Sign Language are available at www.fsis.usda.gov/news_&_events/SignFSIS/index.asp.

USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline

Food safety experts are available year-round from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET to answer questions in English and Spanish about safely preparing and cooking foods.

The toll-free number is 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854). Recorded messages are available 24 hours a day.

FSIS Policy Updates

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

Notice 32-12, *Inspection Responsibilities When a Chemical Residue Does Not Have an Established Tolerance*

Notice 33-12, *Conducting Weekly Meetings in Egg Products Plants*

Notice 34-12, *Responsibilities Related to Receiving Notice of Adulterated or Misbranded Product, and Verifying Written Recall Procedures and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Reassessment Documentation*

Notice 35-12, *New Containers for Use When Collecting Raw Beef Samples for E. coli (STEC) Testing*

Directive 6120.1, *High Pressure Processing (HPP) and Inspection Program Personnel Verification Responsibilities*

Directive 9900.2, *Import Inspection of Meat, Poultry and Egg Products*

Directive 9900.3, *Pre-Stamping Imported Products*

Directive 9900.6, *Laboratory Sampling Program*

Directive 9900.8, *Meat, Poultry, Egg Products and Shell Eggs Refused Entry into the U.S.*

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

Upgrade to Scheduling of Tasks in PHIS

http://askfsis.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/1796

Notification, Documentation and Recordkeeping Final Rule

http://askfsis.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/1797