



Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

New Labels to Provide Key Nutrition Information for Most Popular Meat and Poultry Products

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

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Starting this week, consumers will now have convenient access to important nutritional information about the raw meat and poultry products they most frequently purchase. FSIS has implemented a new rule that calls for packages of ground or chopped meat and poultry, such as hamburger or ground turkey, to feature nutrition facts panels on their labels.

Additionally, 40 of the most popular whole, raw cuts of meat and poultry, such as chicken breast or steak, will also have nutritional information either on the package labels or on display to consumers at the store.

“Providing nutrition information on meat and poultry products in the store gives shoppers a clearer sense of the options available, allowing them to purchase items that are most appropriate for their families’ needs,” said Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Elisabeth Hagen.

The *Federal Register* notice announcing this rule was published on Dec. 29, 2010. Consumers can review the notice and examples of these labels on the FSIS website at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Interim_&_Final_Rules/index.asp.



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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

Egypt

Jamaica

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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Consumers to Receive Food Safety Alerts Through State Twitter Feeds

Tweets will alert followers to state-specific food recalls or emergency preparation alerts

This week, FSIS launched a series of Twitter feeds that will provide state-specific, food safety alerts to consumers. Followers of these Twitter accounts will receive alerts about recalls of meat, poultry and processed egg products in their state, as well as information on how to protect their food supply during severe weather events.

“These new Twitter feeds provide yet another mechanism for us to provide consumers with critical updates and relevant information they need to protect their families from foodborne illness,” Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Elisabeth Hagen said. “The immediacy of information-sharing through social media is unparalleled, and we believe these timely, targeted updates will better protect public health.”

A list of all FSIS state food safety alert Twitter feeds is available at www.fsis.usda.gov/Fsis_Recalls/Open_Federal_Cases/index.asp#Twitter. For more information on creating a Twitter account and accessing these state feeds, go to twitter.com.

Currently, recalls are announced through news releases and FSIS’ primary Twitter feed, @USDAFoodSafety, which contains information to help consumers identify the recalled product.

FSIS Expands Fish Speciation Testing Capability

The FSIS laboratory system will implement methodology to distinguish catfish from other types of fish. The procedure identifies a specific gene using PCR (polymerase chain reaction) amplification followed by capillary electrophoresis sequencing. The method will be referred to as “Fish Speciation by PCR/ Sequencing of Mitochondrial Cytochrome Oxidase I (COI) Gene.”

Additional details for this testing will be posted in the FSIS Chemistry Laboratory Guidebook with an effective date no earlier than March 5. To review the guidebook, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Chemistry_Lab_Guidebook/index.asp.

Deadline Approaching to Comment on Proposed Rule for

March 3 is the deadline to submit public comments on a proposed rule that will allow establishments to label a broader range of products without first submitting the label to the agency for approval.

FSIS is proposing to amend the meat and poultry products inspection regulations to expand the circumstances in which FSIS will generically approve the labels of meat and poultry products. The Agency also is proposing to combine the regulations that provide for the approval of labels for meat products and poultry products into a new portion of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Individuals are invited to submit comments electronically through the Federal *eRulemaking* Portal at www.regulations.gov.

Enforcement Actions Online as Soon They are Available

As FSIS works to increase openness and transparency, it will begin posting humane handling enforcement information regarding Notices of Suspension, Notices of Intended Enforcement, Letters of Deferral and Notices of Abeyance.

The agency previously posted quarterly enforcement reports online and parties interested in additional information were required to file a FOIA request. The agency will now publish this information, in redacted form, as it becomes available.

Those interested in this information will be able to review the documents in the FOIA Reading Room located on the FSIS website at www.fsis.usda.gov/FOIA/FSIS_Electronic_Reading_Room/index.asp under Enforcement Reports.

New Resource: FSIS Sampling Plan

Today, FSIS has posted its FY12 Annual Sampling Plan that lays out the agency's intended sampling activities. This report presents overall numbers of samples planned for most projects that the agency conducts.

This resource will provide annual results and discuss and highlight major changes. For example, this year FSIS will schedule more *Salmonella* sets in broiler establishments as part of a continued effort to collect data on *Campylobacter* in poultry and because of tightened *Salmonella* performance standards.

FSIS may make changes to specific programs as circumstances warrant. Should that occur, future annual plans will include discussion of those changes.

In addition, there are some sampling activities that will not be in this report. For example, sampling intended for the National Residue Program will continue to be published in the FSIS Blue Book, as traditionally done. Also, certain sampling that is not planned in advance such as foodborne outbreaks or follow-ups to positive test results may not be reflected in this resource.

The Annual Sampling Plan follows the agency's recently published Sampling Report which presents background information about the FSIS sampling programs. Together, these two documents provide a more transparent and comprehensive

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FSIS Policy Update

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

Notice 14-12, Verification and Enforcement Activities Related to Export Certification Reimbursable Services

Notice 15-12, Verifying Nutrition Labeling for the Major Cuts of Single Ingredient Raw Meat and Poultry Products and Ground or Chopped Meat and Poultry Products

Notice 16-12, Nationwide Raw Liquid Egg Microbiological Baseline Survey - Update

Notice 17-12, Verification of Antimicrobial Intervention Coverage of Carcass or Product at Veal Slaughter and Beef Fabrication Establishments

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

...*New Resource*

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look at how the agency is conducting sampling activities and managing its resources. FSIS intends to make the Annual Sampling Plan available at the beginning of each fiscal year. For more information, go to www.fsis.usda.gov/science/data_reporting/index.asp#5.

USDA to Hold Codex Public Meeting on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Food

FSIS and the FDA are sponsoring a public meeting to receive public comments and draft U.S. positions to be discussed at the 20th Session of the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (CCRVDF), which will be held in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The public meeting will be held on March 23, from 1 - 4 p.m. at the Jamie L. Whitten Bldg., USDA, 1400 Independence Ave. S.W., Rm 107-A, Washington, D.C. 20250. Documents and agenda items related to the 20th Session of the CCRVDF will be accessible at the Codex website at www.codexalimentarius.org.

The following items will be discussed during the public meeting:

- Draft Maximum Residue Limits (MRL) for Veterinary Drugs
- Revision of the Committee's Risk Analysis Principles
- Proposed amendments to the Committee's terms of reference
- Risk management recommendations for the veterinary drugs for which no MRL has been recommended by the expert scientific committee because of human health concerns

For more information or to submit written comments about the 20th Session of the CCRVDF, contact Kevin Greenlees at (240) 276-8214 or kevin.greenlees@fda.hhs.gov.

For more information about the public meeting contact Kenneth Lowery at (202) 690-4042 or kenneth.lowery@fsis.usda.gov.