December 2010

PBIS and PHIS:
A Side-by-Side Comparison

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture is preparing to launch its new Public Health Information System (PHIS), a user-friendly, Web-based application that will replace existing applications such as the Performance Based Inspection System (PBIS). This comparison factsheet highlights ways that PHIS will help FSIS better collect, consolidate, and analyze data, thus enabling the Agency to detect and respond to foodborne hazards more effectively and to improve its ability to protect public health. Additional information on PHIS is available on the FSIS Web site at *www.fsis.usda.gov/phis*.

Function	Performance Based Inspection System (PBIS)	Public Health Information System (PHIS)	PHIS Benefits
Design	Originally designed to meet food safety inspection needs nationwide, in a centralized system.	Designed to integrate data from all agency systems and program areas for use as a tool in making the *most informed* decisions about inspection, sampling, policy and other food safety activities to *protect public health.*	More informed decision-making; inspection personnel have access to assignment-related data from all parts of FSIS. *Example:* On PHIS home pages, inspection personnel can view tasks (including status), NRs, FSAs, MOIs, appeals to NRs and the establishment's sampling history in one place, including direct links to NRs, FSAs and MOIs for assigned plants. This will help personnel stay informed on an establishment's regulatory compliance.
Plant Profile	Limited information; often out of date. Establishment cannot view current data.	Includes extensive information about operations, product types, HACCP system, etc. Creates a specific task for inspection personnel to periodically review and update establishment profiles. Establishment can access and view its own profile.	Inspection tasks as well as sampling and other activities can be tailored for public health priorities by using specifics about plants' operations and previous verification results. Personnel are provided with clear expectations of activities for maintaining plant profiles; a tool for incorporating these activities with other tasks, as a reminder; and the ability to document task performance on their calendars.

Function	Performance Based Inspection System (PBIS)	Public Health Information System (PHIS)	PHIS Benefits
Establishment Access to Data	Establishments do not have direct electronic access to FSIS information about their own plants.	After obtaining a USDA e-Authentication (eAuth) account, establishments will be able to view certain data, receive reports about their own establishments and respond to and appeal NRs.	Supports clear, meaningful communication between establishments and inspection personnel to improve food safety; if establishments identify data that appear inaccurate, they can request corrections. *Example:* An establishment with access to PHIS can request reports directly from the system instead of going through inspection personnel.
Documentation	Stores limited information about specific task performed and does not provide a way to document other, more specific information.	Records findings and specific regulations verified by inspection personnel, who select each regulation from a "pick list." Enables personnel to document additional information for some procedures (e.g., "HACCP plan verified," "CCP and product involved," or lot number and specific regulations verified, as appropriate).	Facilitates improved documentation of tasks completed and regulations verified; provides inspection personnel and others in FSIS with higher-quality information to use in identifying where failures occur in an establishment's system as well as an establishment's history of meeting specific regulatory requirements.
Documentation	Does not provide a way to document memorandums of interview (MOI) or notes for and on meetings with plant management.	Keeps record of MOIs and notes for and on meetings with plant management.	Improves communication among inspection personnel; eliminates need for inspection personnel to set up additional files in which to store MOIs. Easier to create agendas for weekly meetings with establishments and to more easily document MOIs after meetings. A list of MOIs on the home page provides a direct link to each MOI.
Follow-up Procedures	Does not provide reminder or tool for inspection personnel to initiate follow-up procedures.	Following noncompliance findings, automatically generates follow-up tasks and adds them to task list for inspection personnel to perform; data are available to all program areas.	Facilitates effective follow-up; eliminates the need for inspection personnel to provide specific establishment information to generate a follow-up sample or task. *Example:* PHIS automatically assigns the required unscheduled HACCP 02 procedure as a follow-up verification to a positive *E. coli* O157:H7 sample result.