

# Small Plant NEWS

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## Small Plant NEWS

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## New Office Established for Small Plant Outreach and Training



**Under Secretary Richard Raymond announces new office. (USDA photo)**

*By Michael Califa and Keith Payne*

**U**nder Secretary for Food Safety, Dr. Richard Raymond proudly announced on March 7, in Dallas, Texas, the new Office of Outreach, Employee Education and Training before a crowd of industry, U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) employees and media. FSIS' newest office is the result of several years of hard work by agency employees and the International HACCP Alliance led by Dr. Kerri Harris in changing the agency's approach to serving your needs as a small plant owner, operator or employee.

The genesis of this new office actually goes back to 2005 when many in the industry questioned whether FSIS took the needs of small and very small establishments into consideration when

the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system was first implemented.

FSIS responded quickly to address the issue and held listening sessions across the Nation to get input from small and very small plants on how the agency could serve their needs better. Using this input, Dr. Harris' International HACCP Alliance hosted a meeting with FSIS, academic and industry personnel in December 2005 to discuss these needs further and formulate a plan to address them.

From that meeting, FSIS formed an intra-agency task force that developed the *Strategic Implementation Plan for Strengthening Small and Very Small Plant Outreach*, which was announced May 2006 in College Station, Texas. With this plan, FSIS wanted to make sure that all federally and State inspected establishments have the training and resources necessary to produce the safest food possible, no matter the size of the plant or the type of product produced.

"This task force made a lot of progress," said Raymond. "But, we realized that for long-term success, we needed to make the important functions of training and outreach for small and very small plants a formal part of the agency."

Therefore, FSIS' next step was to create the Office of Outreach,

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FSIS inspection of systems for sanitation. (USDA Photo)

## Food Safety Resources

By Mary Gioglio

*Meeting the Requirements for Federal or State Meat Inspection: SSOP and HACCP Basics* is a resource that provides information on Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOP) and the HACCP system in English, Spanish and Hmong all on the same CD. The CD contains text files along with sample forms in all three languages and audio files in Spanish and Hmong.

Developed by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Dairy and Food Inspection Division, in partnership with FSIS, the following topics are presented:

- Basic Facts about SSOPs;
- HACCP Plans for Meat Processors; and
- Inspection of Meat and Poultry Products.

To request this item or any other food safety resource, fax the order form found on the Food Safety Resources brochure to (202) 690-6519, or complete an online version of the form and send it to [FoodSafetyResources@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:FoodSafetyResources@fsis.usda.gov). The online form can be found at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/HACCP\\_Resources\\_Order\\_Form/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/HACCP_Resources_Order_Form/index.asp).

## How You Can Develop a Recall Plan

By Jeff Tarrant, LCDR

U.S. Public Health Service

In the last edition of *Small Plant News*, we tackled the issue of how to prevent food recalls from occurring in your establishment. This month, we take this subject one step further—how to develop a recall plan.

To prepare for such an event affecting your operations, FSIS recommends that you develop your own recall plan. “In fact, we strongly encourage all owners and operators to prepare and maintain a detailed, written recall plan that describes step-by-step procedures the establishment will follow in the event it becomes necessary to recall a food product,” said Lisa Volk, director of FSIS’ Recall Management Staff.

Throughout history, food product recalls have tested the long-term economic sustainability of U.S. companies. Some have weathered the storm. Others have not. But, history has also shown us that those who develop and regularly test recall plans are more likely to “ride out” any economic instability that may be associated with recalls.

Therefore, it’s extremely important for all establishments to prepare for such an event.

So, where do you begin? The most important step is to read FSIS Directive 8080.1, Revision 4. After reviewing the directive, you should start by identifying one individual as your company’s recall coordinator to prepare for, and coordinate, all activities related to recalls. The recall coordinator should be knowledgeable about every aspect of your operations, including purchasing, processing, quality assurance, distribution and consumer complaints. This individual should select individuals from your establishment to form a recall team and be authorized to make decisions in carrying out a recall. In addition, the recall coordinator should periodically brief your company’s management on recall preparedness activities.

In order to evaluate the plan’s effectiveness, you should test your recall plan by conducting periodic simulations. This should involve the selection of at least one lot of product that has been distributed in commerce. Simulations can be simple (e.g., one contaminated lot) or complex (e.g., contaminated ingredient in multiple products). It’s up to you. Just make sure you test your establishment’s recall plan regularly.

By developing and exercising your recall plan, you can go a long way toward identifying strengths and weaknesses in your establishment’s response procedures. These tests allow your establishment the opportunity to revise recall procedures before an actual event takes place and help your employees become familiar with the procedures. And, if nothing else, proactively preparing makes good business sense.

For more information on how to develop your own recall plan, visit FSIS’ Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov) or call (202) 690-6389. To download FSIS Directive 8080.1, Revision 4, visit [www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISDirectives/8080.1Rev4.pdf](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISDirectives/8080.1Rev4.pdf).



# Export Your Product in Seven Easy Steps

By Karlease Kelly

Are you thinking about exporting product from your plant to a foreign country? If so, it's important to become familiar with the regulatory requirements. To understand the regulatory process, it may be helpful to review the information about export certification on FSIS' Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations\\_&\\_policies/Export\\_Checklist/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/Export_Checklist/index.asp). At this site



Loaded ship at dock. (USDA Photo)

you'll find a handy checklist with seven easy steps to follow.

The first step is to become familiar with the requirements of the country to which you want to export. Most countries accept product from all federally inspected establishments, but some countries require that plants be pre-certified. If a country is not listed, it should be assumed that nothing is known about that country's import requirements, and the agency will issue FSIS Form 9060-5, "Meat and Poultry Export Certificate of Wholesomeness," without any additional information provided in the "Remarks" section. For a country that is not listed, exporters are advised to work closely with the importer for information regarding eligibility of the product, certification requirements, and the existence of a valid import permit for the product.

At the second step, you need to check if pre-certification is required. Then for step three, obtain a copy of FSIS Form

9060-6, "Application for Export Certificate," from the inspector at your plant. After you receive this form, you'll need to complete it, sign it and present it to the inspector, which is the fourth step. The inspector will perform export re-inspection according to FSIS Directives 9000.1 and 9040.1 and sign the application, as well as provide a blank export certificate or the certificate's serial number.

The fifth step is to stamp the certificate's serial number on each

shipping container with the export stamp, which is required by regulation. Step six is to present the export certificate for signature to the appropriate FSIS signing official along with any other certificates required by the country. Most certificates may be signed by the FSIS inspector, but some countries might require the signature of the FSIS Public Health Veterinarian. The country requirements will indicate when the signature of the FSIS Public Health Veterinarian is required.

For the last step, the original copy of the certificate is provided to the exporter and must be provided to the importing country with the shipment. Although FSIS Form 9060-5 is the generic export certificate issued for most countries, some countries require a dedicated certificate.

If you have any questions about the export certification process, call FSIS' Office of International Affairs at (202) 720-3473.

## Briefs *By Sheila Johnson*

### Avian Influenza

The United States is the world's largest producer and exporter of poultry meat and the second-largest egg producer. The total U.S. poultry production is valued at \$29 billion yearly. The U.S. Government's anti-smuggling efforts are critical in ensuring that birds smuggled into the United States are seized. Seizure of these birds and bird products helps reduce any risk of introducing a foreign poultry disease into this country, and any devastating effect on U.S. poultry production.

As part of the Federal Government's anti-smuggling efforts, the U.S. Department of

Agriculture, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of the Interior, and the Department of Health and Human Services are working together on a global surveillance and enforcement network aimed at keeping contagious diseases, such as highly pathogenic avian influenza, out of the United States.

More information on this subject is available in a brochure titled *Avian Influenza, Protecting U.S. Agriculture*. To obtain this brochure or get more information on the Federal Government's efforts to prevent and control highly pathogenic avian influenza from affecting the domestic U.S. poultry population, call (202) 690-6498.

### Upcoming Exhibition

FSIS will have agency representatives and information available in its exhibit booth at the upcoming 69<sup>th</sup> American Convention of Meat Processors & Suppliers' Exhibition in Cincinnati, Ohio, July 24-26, 2008. Hosted by the American Association of Meat Processors, this convention targets U.S., Canadian and foreign operators of small and very small firms in the meat, poultry and food business. FSIS will be there to answer your questions and provide up-to-date information on agency policies and initiatives affecting small and very small plants. For more information, call (202) 690-6520.

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Employee Education and Training, a dedicated staff and resources to provide consistent delivery of key agency outreach and training services on current and future food safety and food defense issues.

“A very important thing to note here is that the creation of this new office took *no* new dollars and *no* new full-time employees,” added Raymond. “It was simply a consolidation of our resources for better efficiencies in our daily work, and there are no longer three offices within FSIS sharing the same responsibilities for small and very small plants.”

Heading up the new office is Dr. Karlease Kelly who has been instrumental in leading the consolidation of outreach, training and State program liaison into a unified effort within the agency. Her motivation stems from her prior personal experience in helping small businesses.

“Ensuring that small plants get the exact resources they need to comply with any regulatory requirements is a true passion of mine,” said Kelly. “I’m looking forward to furthering FSIS’ goal of improving its outreach and training services for plant and agency personnel alike.”

The content that FSIS uses to train its employees will be shared with you and other food safety partners. A more

consistent message will be disseminated by the new program area, thus fortifying the agency’s position that outreach to small and very small plants is a priority and increasing the understanding and application of the agency’s public health regulatory policies.

“I’m very excited about the opportunities this new office creates for me to do my job more effectively and efficiently in training industry and employees alike,” said Kathleen Leddy, who is one of the new office’s trainers.

And what can you expect to see in the near future from this office?

“We have several goals which include creating an updated strategic implementation plan for small and very small plants; providing in-depth workshops on how to comply with agency regulations and policies; and helping owners and operators of small and very small plants become aware of the variety of resources we can offer to them,” said Kelly.

To get the latest information on how FSIS can assist you to do your job better, visit the Small and Very Small Plant Web page at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Small\\_Very\\_Small\\_Plants/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Small_Very_Small_Plants/index.asp). Or contact the Office of Outreach, Employee Education and Training directly for more information at (800) 336-3747.

## Helpful Resources You Can Turn to on Humane Handling

By Carol Romeo and Keith Payne

In the March 2008 issue of *Small Plant News*, you learned about the commitment from FSIS and other food safety partners to ensure the humane handling and slaughter of food animals. Here, we provide you with some important resources you can refer to on the humane care, handling, transportation and slaughter of food animals.

### FSIS Humane Interactive Knowledge Exchange

In a continuing effort to enhance and improve the knowledge and understanding of humane handling and slaughter laws, regulations, directives and notices, FSIS implemented an online service titled the Humane Interactive Knowledge Exchange (HIKES) among agency field personnel. See what guidance is shared with inspectors to ensure humane handling and slaughter is enforced by visiting the HIKES Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/FSIS\\_Employees/HIKE/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/FSIS_Employees/HIKE/index.asp).

Comments on the HIKES can be sent to [hike@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:hike@fsis.usda.gov).

### Dr. Temple Grandin

Dr. Temple Grandin is a designer of livestock handling facilities and a Professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University. She has also developed an objective scoring system for assessing the handling of cattle and pigs at meat plants, which is being used by many large corporations to improve animal welfare. Dr. Grandin has a Web page to educate people throughout the world about modern methods of livestock handling. Visit [www.grandin.com](http://www.grandin.com).

### American Meat Institute

The American Meat Institute offers a comprehensive list of resources and publications on food animal welfare. Visit [www.meatami.com](http://www.meatami.com) and click on the Animal Health/Welfare tab at the top of the page to access information on recommended animal handling practices. From this site, you can also access the

American Meat Institute Foundation’s *Recommended Animal Handling Guidelines & Audit Guide*. Call (202) 587-4200 for assistance.

### National Chicken Council

The National Chicken Council, working with industry experts and poultry scientists, has developed Animal Welfare Guidelines and an Audit Checklist to ensure the proper care, management and handling of broiler chickens and broiler-breeder flocks. Visit [www.nationalchickencouncil.com/aboutIndustry](http://www.nationalchickencouncil.com/aboutIndustry) to obtain these resources or call (202) 296-2622.

### Animal Care Guidelines for the Production of Turkeys

The National Turkey Federation has published the *Animal Care Best Management Practices for the Production of Turkeys* guidelines. This resource is available at [http://www.usapeec.org/p\\_documents/newsandinfo\\_280404094832.pdf](http://www.usapeec.org/p_documents/newsandinfo_280404094832.pdf) or call (202) 898-0100 for assistance.