UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

# FSIS DIRECTIVE	5010.1 Rev. 1	12/21/11

FOOD SAFETY RELATED TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION DURING WEEKLY MEETINGS

I. PURPOSE

FSIS has determined that inspection program personnel (IPP) and Import Inspection Personnel should discuss topics at the weekly meeting with establishment management that are pertinent to an establishment's food safety system and that could affect public health. Accordingly, FSIS issued this directive to stress the importance of the weekly meetings and the need for those meetings to address any pertinent topics related to food safety. To assist IPP and Import Inspection Personnel, this directive provides a general list of food safety related topics that they should consider discussing with the establishment during weekly meetings.

KEY POINTS:

- *Describes the purpose of the weekly meeting*
- *Describes Due Process*
- *Provides a list of possible topics of discussion*
- *Addresses the preparation of the Memorandum of Interview (MOI)*
- *Addresses the responsibilities of Supervisory Personnel*

II. [RESERVED]

III. [RESERVED]

IV. REASON FOR REISSUANCE

This directive is being reissued to include information related to conducting weekly meetings in establishments operating under the Public Health Inspection System (PHIS), to include as possible topics for discussion during the weekly meeting: 1) establishment pathogen test results and 2) issues of concern to establishments also under Food and Drug Administration (FDA) jurisdiction; to update information links and modify Section VII regarding the preparation of the Memorandum of Interview (MOI); and to add a section addressing Supervisory responsibilities.

V. REFERENCES

FSIS PHIS Directive 5000.1, Verifying an Establishment's Food Safety System
FSIS Directive 5000.2, Review of Establishment Testing Data by Inspection Program Personnel

VI. WEEKLY MEETING

A. The purpose of the weekly meetings is to provide an opportunity for IPP and Import Inspection Personnel to bring matters that bear on the establishment's on-going compliance with FSIS requirements to the attention of establishment management. These meetings should benefit both IPP and the establishment. However, discussion of issues during the weekly meeting is not intended to replace documentation of noncompliance. Moreover, the fact that an issue is not discussed at the weekly meeting would not mean that the issue could not become the subject of a noncompliance record.

B. As set out in FSIS PHIS Directive 5000.1, Chapter 1, VIII, IPP and Import Inspection Personnel conduct weekly meetings with establishment management to discuss topics that could affect food safety and the establishment's ability to meet regulatory requirements.

C. These weekly meetings are an opportunity for establishments to share information regarding their operations, such as facility improvements and changes to their food safety systems. Weekly meetings also afford FSIS an opportunity to inform establishments of topics of discussion that could include trends regarding repetitive noncompliances, or findings that are not regulatory noncompliances but which could, over time, become noncompliances.

D. A wide variety of topics can be discussed at the meetings, including individual noncompliances, developing trends of noncompliance, and findings by IPP and Import Inspection Personnel that do not represent regulatory noncompliance but that need to be brought to the attention of the establishment. For example, discussion of information from external sources, such as customer or consumer complaints, can provide information to alert plant management about a safety risk or about other information that is relevant to the establishment's food safety system.

E. The list in paragraph F, below, provides some examples of topics that IPP and Import Inspection Personnel may find appropriate for discussion at the weekly meetings. Given the range of the issues confronting FSIS-regulated establishments, it may be difficult to discuss all of the topics that either FSIS or the establishment wishes to address during any one weekly meeting. Therefore, these topics should be discussed as they arise.

NOTE: The list is not all-inclusive and is not intended to be a checklist (in which all topics would need to be covered). What is most important is that IPP and Import Inspection Personnel communicate with the establishment about any topics involving the establishment that relate to food safety issues and that could affect public health.

F. Possible topics for discussion include:

1. In-plant observations, including, but not limited to:

    a. Individual Noncompliance Records (NR);

    b. Developing trends of noncompliance (i.e., noncompliances that are somehow associated with or indicate a trend of noncompliance);

    c. FSIS findings that do not rise to the level of noncompliance but that warrant discussion (e.g., less than perfect conditions that may, if not addressed, become noncompliances);

    d. Humane handling issues, including those that do not rise to the level of noncompliance but warrant discussion; and

    e. Issues related to the implementation and verification of Less Than Daily Sanitation procedures.

2. Issues and information that the establishment wishes to share;

3. Agency issuances, for example, but not limited to:

    a. Policy clarifications published in askFSIS;

    b. New, revised, or amended FSIS Directives, FSIS Notices, FSIS Compliance Guides; and Import policies; and

    c. New Policy Points PowerPoint presentations that promote a uniform understanding of FSIS issuances.

4. Information regarding FSIS sampling:

    a. Results received through STEPS and LEARN;

    b. *E.coli* O157:H7 results, also available through the Constituent Update, posted on the Microbiological Testing Program for *E*.coli O157:H7 website;

    c. *Salmonella* results, also available through the Constituent Update, posted on the Salmonella Verification Testing Program: Monthly reports for Establishments by Performance Category website;

    d. Notification through LEARN of violative residue sample results, or import port of entry sample violations and information posted on the FSIS Residue Repeat Violator List for Use by FSIS Personnel and the Residue Repeat Violator List for Use by Livestock Markets and Establishments; and

e. Notification that Routine Risk Based Listeria monocytogenes (RLm) and Intensified Verification Testing (IVT) testing will be conducted as a result of a positive Listeria monocytogenes sample in Ready- to-Eat product.

5. Information related to the establishment's food safety system, for example, but not limited, to:

   a. Establishment testing results, observed in accordance with the instructions in FSIS Directive 5000.2, Review of Establishment Testing Data by Inspection Program Personnel, that indicate possible changes (e.g., an increase in the presence of enteric pathogens of human health concern such as *Listeria* spp., *Salmonella* spp., *E. coli* O157:H7, or *Campylobacter*)

   b. Implementation of, and changes to, any of the establishment's prerequisite programs (e.g., Allergen controls, Specified Risk Materials, Certificates of Analysis) that are in place to support food safety decisions;

   c. Changes to the establishment's food safety or production practices, including changes to the product line, processing methods used, or other changes such as product flow, sanitation measure, equipment configuration, or treatment of product, that could impact the establishment's food safety system;

   d. New Technology Summaries (i.e., "No Objection" letters), available through the FSIS Intranet, that may help the establishment improve food safety. This discussion would include a mutual understanding of specific process parameters or critical limits that are part of these "no objection" letters;

   e. Changes in in-plant regulatory waivers or new technology trials; and

   f. Changes to facility or equipment.

6. Information from external sources such as:

   a. Complaints from consumers or establishment customers (e.g., institutions such as hospitals or nursing homes, restaurants, schools, grocery stores, distributors, or wholesalers), if available; and

   b. Current Recalls, including those that have involved product received by the establishment, product similar to product produced by the establishment, or product held for re-inspection by FSIS at an import establishment. Further areas for discussion may include:

      i. Any required follow-up FSIS testing or increased or intensified testing on imported products;
      ii. Any establishment testing of imported products;

iii. Any planned actions associated with the recalled product that has been received by the establishment; and

iv. Discussion with plant management regarding how it can use information from recalls of products similar to those produced at the establishment as a mechanism to improve its own operation.

7. Discussion of FSIS' role in Dual Jurisdiction Establishments (DJE) as addressed in FSIS Directive 5730.1, Responsibilities In Dual Jurisdiction Establishments. Further areas for discussion with DJEs may include:

   a. Recalls of Food and Drug Administration (FDA) products that may affect FSIS regulated product (e.g., by being used as an ingredient);

   b. Positive Listeria monocytogenes sample results of FDA regulated products that may affect FSIS regulated product and visa versa; and

   c. Allergen issues related to FDA regulated product that may affect FSIS regulated product.

8. Discussion of issues related to changes in operating schedules.

VII. PREPARING THE MEMORANDUM OF INTERVIEW (MOI)

A. The FSIS employee who attends the weekly meeting is to take notes of the meeting and is to document those notes in a Memorandum of Interview (MOI) in accordance with the instructions in FSIS PHIS Directive 5000.1, Section VIII.

NOTE: In the event that no issues are identified for discussion at the weekly meeting, IPP are to document that fact on the MOI and provide a copy of the MOI to plant management.

B. Plant management is not obligated by regulation to attend or participate in weekly meetings. If, after notification by IPP that FSIS will be conducting weekly meetings at a mutually agreed to time and location, plant management refuses to attend or to participate, IPP are to document that fact on the MOI and provide a copy of the MOI to plant management. IPP are also to notify their immediate supervisor of the establishment's decision not to meet.

C. In multi-inspector/multi-shift plants, it is the responsibility and duty of the Inspectors-in-Charge (IIC) to conduct and document weekly meetings. IIC are to ensure that any potential regulatory concerns that arise on any shift are discussed at the meeting. IIC may delegate the conduct of the meeting, or may run the weekly meeting and include IPP in the meeting with plant management; however, the MOI is to be signed by the IIC. The IIC is to ensure that all IPP on all establishment shifts are made aware of regulatory concerns that are discussed at weekly meetings.

D. IPP and Import Inspection Personnel are to maintain a copy of the MOI in the official government file and provide a copy to the plant management.

E. IPP are to advise the establishment that if they object to the content of the MOI, they may inform the inspector, either orally or in writing, or can bring their objections to other agency officials in the supervisory chain. IPP are to document the objection, if presented verbally, on the MOI, or if written, attach the objections to the MOI. IPP are to reference the attachment in the MOI and provide a copy to plant management.

VIII. SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES

NOTE: For the purposes of this directive, "Supervisory Personnel" refers to any OFO or Office of International Affairs (OIA) personnel who have supervisory responsibilities of in-plant IPP or Import Inspection Personnel.

A. The supervisory personnel play a key role in ensuring that decisions made by IPP are consistent with FSIS statutory authority and Agency policy, and that duties are performed in accordance with the information and procedures addressed in this directive.

B. Supervisory personnel are to discuss the key points identified in this directive with IPP and are to clarify any issues of concern.

C. Supervisory personnel are to ensure that IPP are:

- Conducting the weekly meetings in accordance with the instructions in FSIS PHIS Directive 5000.1;

- Addressing relevant issues such as those listed in Part VI, Paragraph F of this directive; and

- Properly documenting the meeting in an MOI. Supervisory personnel are to review the MOIs when they become available.

D. Supervisory personnel are to refer to the current version of the FSIS Guide for Conducting In-Plant Performance System (IPPS) Assessments for additional guidance and instructions.

Refer questions regarding this directive to the Policy Development Division through askFSIS or by telephone at 1-800-233-3935 or to the appropriate Regional Field Import Supervisor.

Assistant Administrator
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