



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety
and Inspection
Service

Washington, D.C.
20250

DEC 02 2010

Dear Industry Representative:

I would like to provide you an update on our progress as the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) continues to develop the new Public Health Information System (PHIS). We continue to work diligently and expect to launch this system in the Spring of 2011. PHIS has been developed as part of our effort to collect, consolidate, and analyze data and to enable FSIS to protect public health more efficiently, effectively, and rapidly than under previous data systems. (See the attached backgrounder as well as our Web site for more information.)

PHIS is a user-friendly, Web-based application that will consolidate and replace many existing FSIS systems, such as the Performance Based Inspection System (PBIS) and the Automated Import Information System (AIIS). PHIS will integrate our paper-based business processes and individual automated systems into one comprehensive and fully automated data-driven system.

As an FSIS-regulated establishment, company, or import or export broker conducting business with FSIS, you will have the option to access PHIS over the Internet using a secure account. This access will allow your business to interact electronically with FSIS in performing a wide variety of operations, such as submitting export applications and other information, scheduling incoming shipments, reading reports, and responding to and appealing noncompliance records.

All PHIS users are required to have a Level-2 USDA eAuthentication (eAuth) account to access the system. If you are interested in this opportunity, you can initiate the process by establishing a USDA Level 2 eAuth account. Follow these steps to obtain an account:

1. Log onto www.eauth.egov.usda.gov, complete the on-line application for approval, and submit it. Within a few minutes, you will receive an e-mail message with instructions on how to proceed.
2. You are required to have a Licensed Registration Agent (LRA) verify your identity in person. You must do this before you can receive a password for your eAuth account. Go to the eAuth Web site at www.eauth.egov.usda.gov and click on "Find an LRA" at the top right corner of the screen. Then find an agent in your area using the map provided.
3. It is important that you maintain your eAuth password in a secure location and that you not share it with others; it is unique to you as an individual.

If you need assistance or have questions about eAuth, contact the USDA eAuth service desk at eAuthHelpDesk@ftc.usda.gov or 1-800-457-3642.

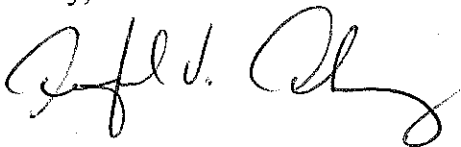
In addition to each individual user having an eAuth account, each establishment must have an "invitational key" from FSIS, which the establishment will receive in an additional mailing from FSIS. Assign the invitational key to the one person you are designating as your PHIS system

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administrator. This individual will have the authority to assign and remove permissions of other individuals granted authority by you to conduct business with FSIS through PHIS. The key, similar to your eAuth password, is unique to you as an individual establishment representative and, like your eAuth password, should be kept in a secure location and not shared. For security purposes, PHIS will allow the key to be used only once—the first time your PHIS system administrator logs on. It will be disabled after this one use. Users at this establishment will need only their eAuth username and password for all future access.

Please see the attached backgrounder for basic information about PHIS. Additional PHIS information is available on the FSIS Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/phis, and more will be provided as the launch date approaches. In the meantime, I encourage you to begin your application for a USDA eAuth account.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alfred V. Almanza". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Alfred V. Almanza
Administrator

Attachment