



# Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

## Two Public Meetings Scheduled to Address Proposed Catfish Regulations

FSIS announced this week that it will hold two public meetings to hear public comments on the proposed regulation for a mandatory inspection program of catfish and catfish products. (Visit [www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/2008-0031.pdf](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/2008-0031.pdf) to review the proposed rule.)

The first meeting is scheduled for May 24 from 9 a.m. to noon in the Jefferson Auditorium of USDA's South Building, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250.

The second meeting will be held in Stoneville, Miss., May 26 from 9 a.m. to noon (Central Time) at the Charles Capp Center at the Delta Research and Extension Center of Mississippi State University, 82 Stoneville Rd., Stoneville, MS 38776.

To register and review agenda items, visit [www.fsis.usda.gov/News/Meetings\\_&\\_Events/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News/Meetings_&_Events/). For those who wish to participate via teleconference, call (800) 369-1722 and provide the passcode CATFISH. In addition, anyone wishing to make a public comment by teleconference or in person must indicate so during the registration process. Pre-registration is highly recommended.

Comments for the proposed rule must be received on or before June 26 through the Federal *eRulemaking* Portal at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) or to: USDA, FSIS Docket Clerk, Room 2-2127, Mailstop 5272, George Washington Carver Center, 5601 Sunnyside Ave., Beltsville, MD 20705. Submissions can also be made through e-mail at [fsis.regulationscomments@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:fsis.regulationscomments@fsis.usda.gov). All comments must identify the docket number FSIS-2008-0031.

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## Export Requirement Updates



There are no updates reflected in this week's Export Library Requirements.

Complete information can be found at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_&\\_Policies/Export\\_Information/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Export_Information/index.asp).

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**Office of Public Affairs  
and Consumer Education**

*Acting Assistant Administrator*  
Lisa Wallenda Picard

**Executive Staff**  
Carol Blake, CPA Director  
Greg DiNapoli, Deputy Director

**Editor**  
Ndidi A. Mojay

**Assistant Editor**  
Alexandra Tarrant

**Editor-at-Large**  
Joan Lindenberger

## Agency to Suspend *E. coli* Testing Program for Certain RTE Products

FSIS has announced that it will suspend analyses of dry and semi-dry fermented sausages and fully cooked meat patties for *E. coli* O157:H7.

Throughout the 9 years of this program, over 10,000 samples of these products have been tested and no regulatory positive results have been found. After reviewing these results, the agency has determined that the effectiveness of the testing program for *E. coli* O157:H7 in dry and semi-dry fermented sausage products for verifying process controls for these products should be reassessed.

Laboratory resources will be diverted to increase testing for *E. coli* O157:H7 in raw products that pose a more immediate public health impact.

For more information about FSIS testing programs, go to [www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Microbiology/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Microbiology/index.asp).

## NACMCF Subcommittee to Hold Public Meetings

A subcommittee of the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF) will hold a public meeting from June 7-9.

The subcommittee on Control Strategies for Reducing Foodborne Norovirus Infections will discuss what controls can be used to reduce the transmission of foodborne Human Noroviruses (HuNoV). The public meeting will be used to assess the current state of knowledge on HuNoV and consider the incidence of infection, attribution in foods, detection methodology and the most effective control practices and/or interventions.

The meetings will take place at the Aerospace Building, 901 D St., S.W., Room 369, Washington, D.C., on Tues., June 7, from 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Wed., June 8, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Thurs., June 9, from 8:30 a.m. to noon.

To attend, contact Karen Thomas-Sharp at (202) 690-6620 or [karen.thomas-sharp@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:karen.thomas-sharp@fsis.usda.gov). All persons wishing to attend must RSVP in advance.

## ***Mobile Ask Karen, Food Safety on Your Smartphone***

FSIS recently launched *Mobile Ask Karen*, a web-based smartphone application that instantly answers food safety questions. The application is a mobile version of the existing *Ask Karen* website, a virtual food safety representative who offers advice about properly handling, storing and preparing food to prevent illness.

In the mobile format, people can “take” *Karen* with them to the grocery store, barbecue grill, farmers market and kitchen. Anywhere mobile devices can access the Internet, at any time of day, consumers can get immediate answers to questions such as, “Is food safe if left out overnight?” or “Should I use a wooden cutting board or a plastic one?”



To start using *Mobile Ask Karen* now, go to [m.AskKaren.gov](http://m.AskKaren.gov) on your phone’s browser, or scan the above QR code for *Mobile Ask Karen* into your smartphone using a QR reader app.

## **Food Safety Tips for Storm-Impacted Areas**

Severe weather events can mean power outages, floods and other problems that can affect the safety of food. Knowing what to do before and after a weather event can help you reduce your risk of illness.

“Particularly during times of emergency, food safety can be a critical public health risk,” said FSIS Administrator Al Almanza. “In areas impacted by severe weather, the American public should be aware that information is readily available to help them protect their food supply.”

FSIS offers tips to keep food safe, even when the weather isn’t. Check them out at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Emergency\\_Preparedness\\_Fact\\_Sheets/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Emergency_Preparedness_Fact_Sheets/index.asp).

Learn about other basic food safety principles by reviewing our fact sheets at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/index.asp).

## **Canceled: Inspection Seminars Designed for International Government Officials**

FSIS has canceled meat and poultry inspection seminars for international officials due to budget constraints.

The seminars were designed to provide an in-depth review of FSIS verification of HACCP and sanitation requirements.

For more information, visit [www.fsis.usda.gov/News\\_&\\_Events/2011\\_Meat\\_&\\_Poultry\\_Inspection\\_Seminars/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/2011_Meat_&_Poultry_Inspection_Seminars/index.asp).

### **Updates on FSIS Testing for *E. coli***

Weekly updates for the agency’s raw beef *E. coli* sampling program are posted to the FSIS website.

For comparative previous and current year results, go to [www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Ground\\_Beef\\_E.coli\\_Testing\\_Results/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Ground_Beef_E.coli_Testing_Results/index.asp).

## Check Out the PHIS Resource Page

Information about the dynamic, user-friendly data analytics system, called the Public Health Information System (PHIS), is available on the FSIS website at [www.fsis.usda.gov/PHIS](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PHIS).

FSIS is developing PHIS as an effort to collect, consolidate and analyze data. This public health-based approach is in line with the core principles of the President's Food Safety Working Group.

## Get Answers at AskFSIS

*AskFSIS* is a web-based technology and policy question-and-answer forum on topics such as exporting, labeling, inspection, programs and procedures.

In addition, *askFSIS* offers Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds that link back to the Q&As. To view recently posted topics, visit <http://askfsis.custhelp.com/>.

### Multiple Legend

[http://askfsis.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/1556](http://askfsis.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/1556)

### Egg Product Production Codes

[http://askfsis.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/1557](http://askfsis.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/1557)



## New Podcasts

Tune in to podcasts on selecting, handling and preparing meat and poultry products to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. FSIS released these podcasts helpful to consumers.

### What is Botulism? (English and Spanish)

Check out these podcast at [www.fsis.usda.gov/news\\_&\\_events/Podcasts/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/news_&_events/Podcasts/index.asp). Spanish language consumer podcasts are available at [www.fsis.usda.gov/En\\_Espanol/Podcasts\\_SP/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/En_Espanol/Podcasts_SP/index.asp). Video-casts in American Sign Language are available at [www.fsis.usda.gov/news\\_&\\_events/SignFSIS/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/news_&_events/SignFSIS/index.asp).