Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

Focus on Import Safety

FSIS Administrator Al Almanza joined nine federal agencies in Dulles, VA, to focus on a critical element of food safety: protecting the public from unsafe import products.

The agencies took part in the Interagency Import Safety Conference, organized by the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection, to bring agencies together, improve cooperation and build collaboration. The goal of these efforts was to ensure the continued health and safety of the American consumer.

"Today marks us as one step closer to achieving our goal by focusing on food import safety cooperation," said Almanza as he expressed his gratitude to those working to prevent foodborne contamination and protect consumers. "I would also like to thank our import inspection personnel who are working hard everyday on the front lines at keeping harmful imports from reaching the American public."

Last December, the Commercial Targeting and Analysis Center (CTAC) opened its doors in Washington, D.C., to provide agencies with shared resources, analysis and expertise necessary to improve the safety of imports. A memorandum of understanding was signed during the conference to improve targeting and enforcement efforts of the CTAC.

This, among other initiatives proposed by the Food Safety Working Group, will provide an appropriate forum to address the concerns expressed by consumers about the safety of the food they're serving their families.

Inside this Issue

FSIS Releases
Second Quarter *Salmonella* Report

Today, the agency posted to its website the second quarterly progress report of calendar year (CY) 2010 on *Salmonella* testing of selected raw meat and poultry products.

This report provides preliminary data from April to June 2010 on all establishments eligible for *Salmonella* testing that have completed at least two sampling verification sets since June 2006.

As of June 2010, of all establishments in all product classes, 83 percent are in category 1, which illustrates no change from first quarter CY10.

From 172 broiler establishments, 3,368 samples were analyzed with a 5.5 percent positive rate, down from a positive rate of 7 percent in first quarter CY10. This table lists percentages of broiler establishments by category as of June 2010.

Plant Category	Category 1	Category 2T	Category 2	Category 3
Percentage of Broiler Establishments	83	8	7	2

FSIS continues to post monthly the names of broiler establishments demonstrating variable or inconsistent process control. The agency highlights performance for the broiler class because of its negative impact on foodborne illness. Since April 2008, FSIS has been posting category 2 and category 3 broiler carcass establishment names. FSIS has not been posting names for turkey carcass establishments because, until now, 90 percent of establishments met the current performance standard, and there were no establishments in category 3. Based upon results accumulated during recent quarters, FSIS has begun to post category 2 turkey carcass establishments within the *Salmonella* Verification Testing Program.

FSIS will continue to post monthly the names of poultry establishments demonstrating variable or inconsistent process control.

The complete report and program details are at *www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Quarterly_Salmonella_Results/index.asp*.

PHIS Updates: Refinements

Based on user and performance testing feedback, the PHIS development team is refining some of the areas that weren't working as well as they could. Therefore, it is anticipated the system will be completed by Spring 2011.

FSIS is doing everything it can to make PHIS the best possible tool for protecting public health.

For more information on PHIS, go to *www.fsis.usda. gov/PHIS*.

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. Visit *askfsis.custhelp.com/* to find the answers to your questions. Recently posted topics include:

Registration of Meat and Poultry Handlers

askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/ askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std_ adp.php?p_faqid=1429

Have a Question?
Ask Karen in Spanish Too.

Pregúntele a Karen is a virtual food safety representative with information for consumers about preventing foodborne illness, safe food handling and storage, and the safe preparation of meat, poultry and processed egg products.

As available in English, customers can also chat live in Spanish, and obtain food safety information. To access *Pregúntele a Karen*, go to *pregunteleakaren.gov/*.

AskKaren.gov

Comment on Codex Activities

The Office of Food Safety is inviting comments on standard-setting activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex). Codex activities announced in the June 4, 2010, *Federal Register* notice include: phytosanitary standard-setting activities, commodity standards, guidelines, codes of practice and revised texts.

For more information, go to *www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/ FRPubs/2009-0033.htm*. Documents pertaining to Codex standard-setting activities are accessible at *www.codexalimentarius.net/ current.asp*.

Comments must be submitted by May 31, 2011, through the Federal *eRulemaking* Portal at *www.regulations.gov* or to the FSIS Docket Clerk, USDA, Room 2-2127, George Washington Carver Center, 5601 Sunnyside Ave., Mailstop 5474, Beltsville, MD 20705.

All items submitted by mail or e-mail must include the agency's name and docket number FSIS-2009-0033. Comments received in response to the docket will be made available for public review.

Updates on FSIS Testing for *E. coli*

FSIS has resumed the reporting of weekly updates on raw beef *E. coli* verification sampling program testing results.

The temporary suspension of results was due to internal computer upgrades that resulted in some incompatibility in the conversion of data fields. Go to *www.fsis.usda.gov/science/Ecoli_Positive_ Results/index.asp* for previous and current year results.