FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

FSIS Contractor to Collect Enhanced Plant Profile Information for Public Health Information System

In an ongoing effort to support a science-based, data-driven food safety inspection system, FSIS is developing the Public Health Information System (PHIS). PHIS will be a user-friendly, Web-based application that will replace many of the Agency's current systems and automate many business processes.

One component of PHIS is predictive analytics. This function will support a data-driven approach to inspection, auditing and sampling by monitoring data from FSIS domestic and international inspection activities in real time to provide alerts and tailor future inspection activities to previous inspection findings and establishment characteristics.

As part of the data-driven approach the predictive analytics function of PHIS will utilize enhanced establishment profile data which will include a significant amount of detail about each establishment's food safety systems, operations and demographics.

In order to collect this data and maximize the time for inspection personnel to focus on more immediate in-plant verification activities, FSIS has contracted Dynamac Corporation. Dynamac employees will be working with each Inspector-in-Charge (IIC) to collect additional plant profile information needed for PHIS.

This pilot is scheduled to begin early in January 2009 with approximately 50 establishments through the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area. Dynamac will be contacting IICs to schedule meetings to begin recording the data. IICs and establishments involved in the test will receive letters providing more detailed instructions.

Inside this Issue

The Library of Export Requirements has been updated to reflect changes in export requirements for the following:

French Polynesia (Tahiti)

Republic of Korea

Complete information can be found at *www.fsis.usda. gov/Regulations_&_Policies/ Export_Information/index. asp*.

Public Health Information System...

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Following the pilot, the effort will continue in two phases starting in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania during 2009, and then expand out to the rest of the country in 2010. FSIS chose Pittsburgh for the test because it represents a good cross-section of establishment types and sizes within easy commuting distance.

Before Dynamac employees begin to collect information, they will have successfully completed an FSIS identity proofing and registration process. They will also need to comply with identity proofing requirements established by Congress and managed by the Office of Personnel Management. In addition to obtaining the necessary clearances, Dynamac employees will be required to sign a confidentiality and non-disclosure statement.

Additional information will be provided in upcoming FSIS publications as well as Agency podcasts. For more information, contact Murray Penner, Labeling and Program Delivery Division, Office of Policy and Program Development at (202) 205-0623 or *murray.penner@fsis.usda.gov*.

USDA Hosts Codex Public Meeting on Fats and Oils

USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services' Food and Drug Administration announced a public meeting to discuss information and receive public comments on agenda items to draft U.S. positions that will be discussed at the 21st Session of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO) of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, to be held in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia.

The public meeting will be held on Monday, January 26, 2009 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the back conference area of the South Agricultural Building's cafeteria located at 1400 Independence Avenue S.W., Washington, D.C.

Documents and agenda items related to the 21st Session of the CCFO will be accessible at the Codex Web site at *www.codexalimentarius. net/current.asp*.

For further information about the public meeting, contact Syed Ali at (202) 205-7760 or *Syed.Ali@fsis.usda.gov*.

FSIS Offices in Omaha Have a New Address

Recently, the Agency relocated its Omaha offices formally at the Landmark Center to the Edward Zorinsky Federal Building.

Phone numbers and other contact information such as email at the new location will remain the same. However, all mail should be forwarded to 1616 Capital Avenue, Room 260, Omaha, Nebraska, 68102-5908.

Omaha units of FSIS from the following program areas will be affected:

•Office of Policy and Program Development's Policy Development Division (formerly the Technical Service Center);

•Office of Program Evaluation, Enforcement and Review; and

•Office of Public Health Science.

Use *askFSIS*, if you want to ask about inspection, exporting or labeling procedures.

askFSIS
http://askfsis.custhelp.com

FSIS Updates
E. coli O157:H7 Reports

FSIS has updated *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) O157:H7 testing data to include information through December 16, 2008.

Beginning January 2009, testing results for *E. coli* O157:H7 will be posted on the Agency's Web site instead of *FSIS' Constituent Update*. Visit *www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/ground_beef_e.Coli_Testing_results/index.asp* to review weekly updates on FSIS testing on E. coli O157:H7.

Results from Analysis of Raw Ground Beef and Raw Ground Beef Component Samples for *Escherichia coli* O157:H7

Raw Ground Beef						
	As of December 16, 2007			As of December 14, 2008		
Source	Number Analyzed	Number Positive	Percent Positive	Number Analyzed	Number Positive	Percent Positive
Federal Plants	11,661	27	0.23	10,915	52	0.48
Retail Stores	182	0	0.00	355	0	0.00
Imports	62	0	0.00	38	1	2.63

Raw Ground Beef Components						
	As of December 16, 2007			As of December 14, 2008		
Source	Number Analyzed	Number Positive	Percent Positive	Number Analyzed	Number Positive	Percent Positive
Federal Plants	885	3	0.34	2,242	18	0.80
Imports	0	0	0.00	499	3	0.60

The above information is based upon data in the FSIS electronic data system as of December 16, 2008. Results are from FSIS routine and follow-up sampling programs.

Individual positive results from the raw ground beef sampling programs for 2008 are reported on FSIS' Web site at *www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/2008_Ecoli_Positive_Results/index.asp*.

FSIS Offers "How to" Workshops for Small and Very Small Plants

In 2006, FSIS' Center for Learning regional trainers gathered in College Station, Texas, to prepare for their role in conducting regulatory educational seminars to support the Agency's small and very small plant outreach initiative.

Since then, the Agency has hosted various outreach sessions to review basic regulatory principles with small and very small plant owners

FSIS Issues New Notices

FSIS issues notices to enhance the Agency's efforts in protecting public health. The following notices were published this week:

•Notice 98-08, *Thermally Processed Commercially Sterile Canned Foods Equipment Survey*; and

•Notice 99-08, *Reiteration of Policy Regarding the Removal of Lingual and Palatine Tonsils from Beef Tongues and Beef Market Heads*.

To view all notices, visit *www. fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_ &_Policies/FSIS_Notices_ Index/index.asp*.

Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill

Clean: When preparing food, wash hands and surfaces often.

Separate: Don't cross-contaminate.

Cook: Cook food to a safe minimum internal temperature as checked with a food thermometer.

Chill: Promptly refrigerate or freeze leftovers.

For more helpful tips to prepare a safe holiday meal, go to *www.fsis.usda.gov/ Fact_Sheets/Focus_On_ Holiday_or_Party_Buffets/ index.asp*.

"How to" Workshops ...
Continued from page three

and operators and to provide them with information to enhance the design and implementation of their food safety systems. Topics have included FSIS' Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point, rules of practice, food defense strategies, *E. coli* 0157:H7, and FSIS Notices 65-07, 66-07 and 68-07.

Starting January 2009, FSIS will hold a series of "how to" workshops to provide practical tools and methods for proper application and compliance. These outreach workshops will cover various information such as developing controls for *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*, establishing effective sanitation practices, developing food defense plans, ensuring humane handling of livestock and conducting product recalls.

Look to future issues of *FSIS' Constituent Update* for workshop dates and registration details.

FSIS Posts Second Quarterly Progress Report on *Salmonella* Testing of Raw Meat and Poultry Products

On December 19, FSIS posted to its Web site the 2008 second quarterly progress report which provides preliminary data on *Salmonella* testing results of selected raw meat and poultry products.

In this report, FSIS is announcing several changes to how the Agency will be providing future aggregate data on the *Salmonella* verification testing program.

Beginning with this report, establishments will be placed in Category 1, 2 or 3 only after completing two *Salmonella* sets. In addition, establishments having a current *Salmonella* set at or below 50% of the performance standard or guidance for their product class but a prior set in Category 2 or 3 will be identified as 2T (defined as a Category 2 plant that is in transition to Category 1). In this manner, FSIS is acknowledging those establishments working to achieve consistent process controls. These changes will align the quarterly reports with the monthly posting of names of broiler establishments in category 2 and 3.

The Agency will also lower the number of acceptable positives for Category 1 status in those product classes that have an odd number of acceptable positives to meet the performance standard or guidance.

Salmonella Second Quarterly Report ...
Continued from page four

This will affect three product classes: turkey, ground beef and ground turkey.

FSIS recognizes that an establishment with highly consistent process control should strive to operate over time at a relatively low level of *Salmonella* positive samples if it is to maintain its category 1 status. The Agency views this more stringent policy (i.e., rounding down) as a necessary and important incentive to improve performance in controlling *Salmonella*.

FSIS has also removed approximately 1,000 very low volume producing ground beef (<1,000 pounds/day) establishments from the traditional set-based *Salmonella* verification testing program and is sampling these establishments for *Salmonella* when these establishments are also tested for *E coli* O157: H7. The Agency can better allocate testing resources towards higher risk (e.g. higher volume) establishments.

The quarterly report is available on FSIS' Web site at *www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Quarterly_Salmonella_Results/index.asp*.

FSIS Discontinues Technical and Policy Questions Electronic Mailboxes

This week, the Agency issued Notice 07-08 titled *Using askFSIS*, announcing its intent to discontinue service to the *techcenter@fsis.usda.gov* and *FSIS.labeling@fsis.usda.gov* mailboxes.

In its place, FSIS encourages the use of *askFSIS*, a user-friendly tool to assist with technical and policy-related questions 24 hours a day.

This resource is an interactive tool that will allow users to find answers, submit new questions, track responses and request notification of updates.

If users want to ask about inspection, exporting or labeling procedures - *askFSIS* is available. For more details about this feature, visit *http://askfsis.custhelp.com* or send an e-mail to *askFSIS@fsis.usda.gov*.

**The *FSIS Constituent Update*
will not publish December 26 or January 2, and will resume publishing on January 11.**

The staff wishes you a happy holiday and healthy New Year.