

Module 10: Technical Advice and Assistance

Host

As FSIS moves into the twenty-first century, the agency has adopted a more scientific approach toward meat and poultry inspection. Because of this, the need for technical information grows daily. The need for swift and current information exchange is greater than ever.

As part of the inspection team, you'll be called upon to make decisions based on sound scientific principles. What are the resources available to you to help you make these decisions?

DISTRICT MANAGER, DAVID GREEN, DISCUSSING VARIOUS RESOURCES – YOURSELF, SUPERVISOR, CIRCUIT SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT OFFICE

Host

To address the need for accurate and consistent distribution of information, the agency has created the Technical Service Center. The TSC, as it's known, consolidates the agency's technical resources from more than thirty different offices located throughout the country into one central location.

The TSC provides consistent technical advice and guidance to inspectors, supervisors, and district personnel. By correlating the execution of inspection procedures and requirements, the TSC ensures this consistency. The TSC also leads the implementation of new and modified inspection programs and procedures.

PAUL THOMPSON

As field inspection personnel, you know how essential it is to get accurate advice on technical issues. The TSC is the reference library for the agency. We provide the information you need to make informed decisions in red meat and poultry slaughter, processing, import/export, and egg product operations.

Host

Traditionally, Supervisors have served as the primary source of technical information. Of course you will still want to discuss technical issues with your supervisor, but with the TSC in operation, you now have a wider range of resources from which to get this information. This is especially important if you're unable to contact your supervisor.

Your circuit supervisor can be a valuable resource because of his or her unique position of seeing a variety of operations. They regularly handle questions concerning policies, procedures, and the associated standards. They'll be able to handle many of the routine questions that you may have.

There are as many HACCP plans as there are plants in operation. Because of this variety, decisions are sometimes not as clear cut as in the old command and control days. Individuals who are in the position to make decisions should have available the necessary resources to perform competently, confidently, and consistently. The TSC provides these resources. TSC services are available to all inspection personnel, from food inspectors to District Office personnel. We'll tell you later in the program specifically how to contact the TSC.

Another important function of the TSC is the review process. The TSC will review domestic, foreign, and state inspection operations. The primary recipients of these services are management officials in the Office of Field Operations and the Office of Policy, Program Development and Evaluation. Others who will benefit from this service are State and Foreign Government officials.

PAUL THOMPSON

With the new scientific approach to inspection, reviews are more critical than ever. Consistency within the HACCP system is vital to its success. The TSC ensures that reviews are conducted consistently. Reviews are conducted in federal, state, and foreign plants to assure that equivalency, "equal to", and consistency requirements are met.

Host

One of the most important missions of the TSC is to develop and deliver training and education to FSIS personnel, state and foreign inspection officials, and industry personnel. The Human Resource Development Staff stands ready to do this with a variety of delivery systems and settings.

PAUL THOMPSON

I 'm here at the FSIS Training Center, the physical symbol of our training and education activities. In today's HACCP environment, it's more important than ever for the agency to provide you with training and educational opportunities. The TSC is committed to providing this training to help you continue to do your job well. In today's world of science-based inspection, it's important to keep up to date on technical issues. Through these facilities in College Station, Texas, we are responsible for the design, development, delivery and evaluation of the training programs that you receive. The training can be delivered in traditional ways, like the classrooms here, by videotape programs like those that you're watching now, or in written form like the workbooks that you're used to reading (hold up a guide). We're also beginning to use innovative ways to bring you training. Some of these new forms of training are based on computers, like information available over the Internet, including the HRDS Website. Other computer-based programs (hold up a CBT disc) allow you to study at a training station or on your own computer. This one, for example, provides information about (NAME OF PROGRAM). Other new technology methods of training include video conferencing and satellite broadcasts. All of these training and educational activities are designed to

improve job performance and mission accomplishment through encouraging career long learning for employees and supervisors.

Host

The TSC is committed to providing service that meets the needs of Inspection personnel throughout the agency. You should submit your inquiries to the TSC by HPDesk or other approved agency e-mail. You should copy your inquiry to your supervisor so they'll know about it. If you don't have access to e-mail, the TSC will provide extended hours of operation, in order to be available by telephone to inspection personnel across the country for as many hours a day as possible. In- person coverage is from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Central Time, Monday through Friday. At other times your inquiry will be recorded by voice mail for processing the next business day. Of course, the TSC can be contacted by fax twenty-four hours a day, but responses will be processed during operating hours. Here's how to reach the TSC:

For HPDesk, use "Tech Center"

Toll-free phone: (800) 233-3935
Phone: (402) 221-7400
Fax: (402) 221-7438

Remember – e-mail first with a copy to your supervisor, then phone or fax. Also, watch for changes in this information as the TSC moves into its permanent home and staffing reaches full strength.

Besides inspection personnel, industry has access to the TSC. This includes trade groups as well as plant owners and operators. The TSC provides information exchange and guidance between industry and FSIS. By encouraging this exchange, we enhance the productivity of the HACCP system. Because of the centralized functions of the TSC, consistent information about the development and implementation of inspection programs is distributed throughout industry.

It's important to note that the TSC will not resolve disputes or rule on appeals. These remain line management responsibilities. The TSC will, however, provide all parties the information they need to make decisions.

Other groups taking advantage of TSC services include State inspection officials, other government agencies, and foreign government officials.

That just about wraps up this module. . As we've seen, the most important resources are human ones—yourself, supervisors, IIC's, District personnel, and TSC personnel. The TSC functions to offer technical advice, guidance, and correlation to review domestic, state, and foreign plants; and to train inspection personnel. Here again is the contact information for the TSC:

For HPDesk, use "Tech Center"

Toll-free phone: (800) 233-3935

Phone: (402) 221-7400

Fax: (402) 221-7438

Once again, here's Dr. Paul Thompson.

PAUL THOMPSON