

National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection

Update on 2003 Cooperative Agreements Assisting Small and Very Small Plants

Purpose

The purpose of this briefing is to provide the Committee with an update on the status of its recommendations to the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), made on June 16-17, 2005, regarding how the New Technology Staff (NTS) can provide assistance and disseminate information to small and very small plants.

Background

The FSIS NTS receives information on many promising new technologies designed to improve the safety of meat, poultry and egg products. Many of these new technologies have resulted in significant improvements in the safety of meat, poultry and egg products in recent years. FSIS would like to see these advances continue.

The development of new technologies, much like new pharmaceuticals, usually requires large amounts of capital. The implementation of new technologies often requires extensive infrastructure. Many small and very small establishments do not have the resources or infrastructure to develop, purchase or implement many of the emerging new technologies.

Discussion

Each year since 2003, FSIS has entered into cooperative agreements with state, academic and research institutions to identify, develop and validate new technologies for small and very small establishments to help them improve their ability to meet food safety requirements. Cooperators have been asked, for example, to help determine which technologies are economically feasible for small and very small establishments. This information will foster adoption of new technologies.

NTS is posting the results of these cooperative agreements on the FSIS website as they are finalized. So far the 2003 cooperative agreements have resulted in 10 technologies that small and very small establishments can access and use. These include a carcass sanitizing spray system for beef and swine carcasses, post-processing pasteurization of beef snack sticks and natural casings for wieners to control *Listeria monocytogenes*, interventions for beef trim to be used in ground beef products.

The 2004 cooperative agreements have thus far resulted in four technologies that small and very small establishments can access and use. These include new interventions and validations for the control of pathogens in the processing of jerky; lethality of

commercial whole muscle beef jerky manufacturing processes against Salmonella; the feasibility of using household steam cleaners to control microbial quality of animal carcasses and antimicrobial intervention and process validation in beef jerky processing.

Based on the Committee's recommendations, NTS is using the following new means of disseminating 2003 and 2004 cooperative agreement information to small and very small plants. The following means are part of the FSIS implementation plan for enhancing outreach to small and very small plants.

- FSIS has posted to its website 14 easily understood summaries of work done under cooperative agreements. These summaries titled "Food Safety Technologies Applicable for Small and Very Small Plants" can be found at:

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Completed_New_Technology_Studies_FY2003

Full detailed reports on the specific cooperative agreements are available from the New Technology Staff.

- The NTS has sent letters to State agricultural directors, FSIS district managers, 4800 county extension agents, trade associations and land grant universities to make them aware of the website posting and other information pertaining to new technologies. This notification may also encourage the technology providers to continue to develop new technologies that can be utilized by small and very small plants. The NTS is in the process of sending letters to owners and operators of small and very small plants notifying them of information pertaining to new technologies posted on the FSIS website.
- In addition, in 2005, FSIS established an information resource list that provides a brief summary describing some of the new technologies that it has received and reviewed, and for which FSIS has had "no objection" or concern for use in FSIS establishments. These technologies may be applicable for small and very small plants.

This list "Food Safety and Inspection Service New Technology Information Table" list can be found at:

www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations/New_Technology_Table/index.asp

Contact Person

Dr. Shaukat H. Syed
Director, New Technology Staff
Office of Policy, Program and Employee Development
Phone: 202-205-0675
Email: FSISTTechnology@fsis.usda.gov