

Briefing

FSIS Recall Readiness and Response

National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection November 5-6, 2003

Purpose

- To emphasize FSIS's commitment to public health protection and enhance its readiness to respond quickly to public health emergencies and other food adulteration incidents through an expedient and science based recall process.
- To highlight the Agency's recent actions to streamline the recall process and strengthen its policies to ensure public health protection.

Main Points

- FSIS has enhanced its readiness and response time in notifying headquarters and field personnel prior to and during product recalls, epidemiologic investigations, outbreaks and other emerging issues relating to meat, poultry and egg products through the following:
 1. FSIS operates the recall process on a 24/7 basis through immediate notification using wireless communication, e-mail, telephones, pagers and fax systems to all involved personnel. FSIS clarified 24/7 accountability for recall readiness and response across agency program areas.
 2. FSIS has recently developed a system for tracking *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 Positive Suppliers (STEPS). The STEPS database captures laboratory positive results data of *E. coli* O157:H7 in ground beef used to notify the suppliers. This database also contains an early warning system for FSIS about repeat offenders.
 3. FSIS uses the Biological Information Transfer Electronic System (BITES) to notify establishments and field management personnel when presumptive positive samples for pathogens occur. Over 90% of these presumptive positive samples subsequently confirm positive. This reduces the response time establishments need to gather important product information if a product confirms positive and must be recalled.
 4. FSIS employs the Laboratory Email Application for Results Notification (LEARN) system to enable inspection personnel to track sample receipt and progress (potential, presumptive and confirmed results).

- The Recall Management Division came under the Office of Field Operations in August, 2002, as a result of the recent FSIS reorganization.
- Revised the FSIS Recall Directive 8080.1 Rev. 3 to reflect public input from the December 12, 2002, Recall Public Meeting.
- Revised the Recall Effectiveness Check process to incorporate risk based verification principles.

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