

National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection

Issue Paper for consideration by Sub-Committee

Training and Outreach

Purpose:

Over the past two years, FSIS has issued numerous policies to strengthen public health, including those addressing *Listeria monocytogenes*, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), *E. coli* O157:H7, and fecal contamination. These changes have had a significant impact on the FSIS workforce as well as implications for changes in industry practices. Thus, FSIS was faced with the challenge of training its workforce and for providing updates to industry, states, and academia, so that the policies and changes in food safety verification activities were widely understood and implemented appropriately.

To address this challenge, FSIS training and outreach staffs collaborated to work hand-in-hand to transfer the training that was used to update our workforce on emerging policies into the hands of industry, states, and other partners in food safety and public health. A variety of efforts were undertaken to ensure that the message FSIS delivered both inside and outside the Agency was consistent. To date, this approach has been well received.

Discussion:

- In addition to the Federal Register notices, new regulations and the supporting directives, notices, and compliance guidelines were posted on the FSIS web site.
- Training was provided to the FSIS workforce upon issuance of the policy change or update in the form of an interactive, narrated CD-Rom which contained flow charts, illustrative video clips, copies of Agency issuances (regulation, directive, notice, compliance guideline), a summary of the directive, and quizzes.
- Outreach was conducted with a series of workshops scheduled at strategic locations throughout the U.S. to share information with owners and operators of small and very small plants, states, and other partners in food safety and public health. Notices of these workshops were announced in letters to establishments, posted on the FSIS web site, and published in the Agency's weekly Constituent Updates with instructions for registration. Agency subject matter experts presented information at the workshops with question and answer periods.
- Materials were provided to workshop participants in the form of workbooks which contained the regulations, directives, notices, supplemental guidance materials, and PowerPoint presentations. The CD-Rom, used to train the FSIS workforce, was also included with the workbook.
- Web cast technology was used at some workshops to reach a wider audience of participants.

- The workshops were well attended, and the participants actively engaged in the question and answer session with FSIS subject matter experts.
- Q&A's from the public outreach meetings were transcribed and posted on the FSIS web site.
- Overwhelmingly, the reaction to the workshops has been very positive.
- Copies of the workshop workbooks and training CD-Rom were sent to State Directors of meat and poultry inspection programs.
- FSIS has plans for additional policy updates to improve public health protection in 2005. Therefore, the need to conduct training and outreach activities will continue to be significant.

Questions:

1. Are there other ways in which FSIS can efficiently and effectively share information through outreach and training with our constituent groups?
2. The Agency is dedicated to effective and targeted outreach and training. How can we improve our outreach to external groups, establishments, states and constituents? What additional training should we offer or engage in with constituents?

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