

As of January 3, 2002

## **Food Safety and Inspection Service HACCP Small and Very Small Plant Outreach Initiatives**

- FSIS recognized early on in the HACCP implementation process that both small and very small plants would need guidance and assistance that the large plants implementing in 1998 did not require. In order to meet these needs a number of outreach programs have been implemented. These programs were tailored to meet the specific needs of both small and this year, very small plants. In 1999 2373 federally inspected and 170 state inspected small plants implemented HACCP. In 2000 over 3400 federally inspected and 2300 state inspected plants will implement.
- FSIS established the Office of the HACCP National Small and Very Small Plant Coordinator in June 1998. The coordinator is responsible for building and maintaining an infrastructure and sustaining communication exchange of HACCP information, technical guidance, and assistance for small and very small plants. All the information, materials, guidance, and outreach efforts of FSIS are provided to federal and state plants at no charge.
- **Network of contact and coordinators.** There are contacts and coordinators in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, Washington D.C., and the Virgin Islands that small and very small plants can contact for guidance and assistance, where training is occurring, HACCP materials, assistance in plan development, etc. This network is composed of representatives from industry, academia, state-inspected programs, and extension offices. We are committed to maintaining this network and providing ongoing information to existing and new establishments.
- **Demonstration Workshops.** These workshops ran from 1997-1999 and provided technical guidance and assistance on HACCP principles and FSIS requirements. Over 190 workshops, serving over 4000 individuals from in excess of 2500 small and very small plants were conducted. Language assistance workshops were provided in selected locations in Spanish and Asian pacific dialects.

- **Materials.** These have been made available through the demonstration workshops, the FSIS Coordinators office and the contact/coordinator network. HACCP videotapes, software, HACCP workbooks, process control charting information and other manuals related to HACCP and food safety for the meat and poultry industry have been to small and very small plants. In addition all letters, correspondence and HACCP information provided to the small and very small plants are provided to the contacts and coordinators. In addition, we have provided a short HACCP instructional video specially geared to very small plants prepared by the University of Nebraska. We have also recently sent out a video and workbook on recordkeeping to all very small plants and are also beginning to provide this information to small and state plants.
- **Sponsor/mentor program.** FSIS acts as a conduit to provide small and very small plants with mentors that operate similar plants to answer questions about the real time applications, development, and validation of HACCP plans. The success of the large/small plant program paved the way for informal and very effective small and very small plant relationships.
- **Implementation meetings.** 20 meetings were conducted across the country prior to small plant implementation in 1999. These meetings explained the outreach programs available; the implementing FSIS Directives for HACCP; allowed Q&A exchange; and featured the HACCP Bowl (an interactive learning tool with audience participation). A meeting was videotaped and has been sent to all very small plants. Over 1700 people attended these meetings from small and very small plants. Meeting attendees were also provided with copies of the regulation and the implementing Directives as well as a pamphlet detailing the other outreach available. A video of one of these meetings was provided to all very small plants and is available in English, Spanish, and Chinese.
- **Generic Models and Guidebooks.** 13 generic models and HACCP guidebooks are available through the small and very small plant office to all requestors to assist in the development of HACCP plans for meat and poultry plants implementing HACCP. All of these models have been revised and are available in final form through our distribution source. FSIS is also sent copies of the 1997 NACMCF HACCP document and the draft Hazard Guide to all very small plants. Between January and

August of 1999 over 300 of these models were sent to requestors. We continue to supply this material.

- **Model HACCP plants.** 5 land grant universities are working with FSIS to utilize their meat and poultry inspected laboratories as model plants. These sites will be open to the industry to view a very small plant in action under HACCP. In addition these schools will be providing one on one assistance to very small plants with questions regarding their HACCCP plan development. The Universities are Penn State, Iowa State, Southern and A&M, Ohio State, and the University of Tennessee.
- **Correspondence and one to one interaction.** Letters from the Administrator were sent to plants approximately every 2 months, this year starting in March to remind plants about the upcoming implementation. A total of 7 letters were sent from March to January. These letters included suggested timelines for preparing a HACCP plan, list of the contacts/coordinators, helpful hints, a checklist for ordering materials, and other useful contact numbers such as NAS, HACCP Alliance, the HACCP Hotline, etc. In addition these letters provided information on the regulatory requirements that need to be met and practical examples of how this can be approached. FSIS Circuit supervisors, multi-IPPS supervisors met with every very small plant to assure that they received the materials being sent and determined the needs and readiness of each plant at designated tracking dates coinciding with the timeline. FSIS tracked plant progress to assure that follow up guidance and assistance was offered to plants in need as appropriate and to determine where we needed to focus our resources.
- **Self -Study Packages.** Starting in July FSIS began distributing self – study packages to all very small plants. The packages contain 2 videos, 2 pamphlets, a study guide and a poster. Completion of the material will constitute training as required in 417.7. Individuals received a letter of completion after notifying the contractor (HACCP WORKS and Pennsylvania State University) that all parts of the guide have been completed. Additionally, expertise is available to answer the questions of plant owners or operators as they pursue the material and work at developing their HACCP plan. The support for this effort will continue until March. At that time self-study packages will still be made available to new plants requesting a grant of inspection. These guides are available

in both English and Spanish. We continue to make this information available to plants upon request.

- **HACCP Hotline.** The Technical Service Center in Omaha operated a HACCP hotline to answer regulatory questions related to HACCP plan development and implementation. They have received over 27,914 calls since its inception.
- The materials and support mentioned will continue to be provided to establishments as available and we plan to update materials as regulations and policy changes are made. In addition, the FSIS WebPages contains numerous HACCP materials and are constantly updated to reflect all ongoing initiatives. We are examining new materials and information to continue our philosophy of technical guidance and support to small and very small federal and state plants.