



Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

PHIS Dry-Run Training Results in Positive Feedback

Approximately 50 FSIS employees in various positions throughout the United States spent the last two weeks in Philadelphia, Pa., participating in the third dry-run training for the Public Health Information System (PHIS).

Over the course of the training, participants had the opportunity to perform several hands-on activities and engage in real-world scenarios in order to get a practical understanding of how to use the system. Trainers pointed out a variety of refinements and changes made to the system based on feedback from participants in the last dry-run training. The changes were well-received and appreciated.

FSIS Administrator Al Almanza visited with the participants on the last day of training and announced that implementation of PHIS would be delayed 30 days. "Based on the valuable feedback we have received and the information from the last training conducted, I have determined that there are some refinements that still need to be made in order to provide the best tool to protect public health," he said. In addition, he stated, "We will also implement the export piece all at once after all circuits are on line."

Almanza is confident the delay will allow a smooth transition to the new system. For more information on PHIS, go to www.fsis.usda.gov/PHIS/index.asp.

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Inside this Issue

FSIS Update on Beef Trim Prevalence	2
Industry Progress on New <i>Salmonella</i> Standards	2
Dr. Hagen Discusses Humane Handling of Livestock	3
Codex Public Meeting	4
Get Answers at <i>AskFSIS</i>	4

Export Requirement Updates



The Library of Export Requirements has been updated to reflect changes in export requirements for the following countries:

Egypt Switzerland

Complete information can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Export_Information/index.asp.

FSIS Constituent Update is prepared by the Congressional and Public Affairs Office.

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FSIS Provides an Update on Beef Trim Prevalence

FSIS has updated the report, *Nationwide Microbiological Baseline Data Collection Program for Raw Ground Beef Components: Domestic Beef Trimmings*.

The report, originally posted in May 2008, was revised to include a calculation for the National Prevalence Estimate for *E. coli* O157:H7 and *Salmonella*.

FSIS released the new document, titled *National*

Prevalence Estimate of Pathogens in Domestic Beef Manufacturing Trimmings (Trim) which includes the methods used to calculate the pathogen estimates and provides additional information on the statistical procedures used in the study.

For more information, go to www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Baseline_Data_Domestic_Beef_Trimmings_Rev.pdf.

New Salmonella Standards: A Weekly Industry Progress Update

FSIS recently announced that it is tracking industry performance to see if 90 percent of poultry slaughter establishments would have met updated and tightened *Salmonella* standards for 2010 if they had been in effect. (See the Dec. 17, 2010, issue of the *Constituent Update* at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Const_Update_121710/index.asp.)

The President's Food Safety Working Group set the goal of having 90 percent of poultry establishments to meet tightened *Salmonella* standards as a tool to reduce human illness caused by *Salmonella*.

The final count for 2010 will include sample sets that started no later than Dec. 31, 2010, and complete no later than March 31, 2011. The table below shows progress as of this week and projects a final "best-case" possible total.

Product Class	Percentage Complete and Passed as of Jan. 1, 2011	Percentage That Could Complete and Pass by March 31, 2011
Young Chickens	86.7	90.2
Young Turkeys	90.9	96.9

Continued on page three

PHIS Previews: Just Posted! PHIS 101: The Basics

The agency is currently refining PHIS, taking into account the useful suggestions received through user-testing and training dry-runs.

In anticipation of the launch, FSIS developed a video, *PHIS 101: The Basics*. It provides a comprehensive overview of the system and the advantages it will deliver.

Watch it on FSIS' website at www.fsis.usda.gov/PHIS/index.asp. Also, be sure to take a look at the *PBIS and PHIS Side-by-Side Comparison* factsheet.

Keep reading future issues of the *Constituent Update* for more information on PHIS.



AskKaren.gov

...Industry Progress Update

Continued from page two

For young chickens, this represents a drop of “Completed and Passed Sets” from 87.3% to 86.7% compared to last week. This results in a decrease in a “best case scenario” from 91.4% to 90.2% for this product class. There was no change for young turkeys.

Under Secretary Shares Insight on the Humane Handling of Livestock

As a public health agency, FSIS is responsible for ensuring that America's supply of meat and poultry products are produced both safely and humanely.

As a result, Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Elizabeth Hagen discussed agency actions and developments to enforce the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act.

Changes in policy made Dec. 22 will now close a loophole that once allowed elderly or sick animals to be processed as food, after resting or receiving veterinary care.

These animals will now be humanely euthanized. Through a variety of solutions, ranging from extensive employee training to clearer guidance on existing rules, the agency is taking concrete steps to address outstanding humane handling issues.

To review these new measures discussed by the Under Secretary, visit the USDA Blog at <http://blogs.usda.gov/2011/01/07/under-secretary-for-food-safety-shares-some-insight-on-the-humane-handling-of-livestock/>.

Updates on FSIS Testing for *E. coli*

Weekly updates for the agency's raw beef *E. coli* sampling program are posted to the FSIS website.

For comparative previous and current year results, go to www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Ground_Beef_E.coli_Testing_Results/index.asp.

USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline

Food safety experts are available year-round from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET to answer questions in English and Spanish about safely preparing and cooking foods.

The toll-free number is 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854). Recorded messages are available 24 hours a day.

Have a Question? Ask Karen in Spanish Too.

Pregúntele a Karen is a virtual food safety representative with information for consumers about preventing foodborne illness, safe food handling and storage, and the safe preparation of meat, poultry and processed egg products.

As available in English, customers can also chat live in Spanish, and obtain food safety information. To access *Pregúntele a Karen*, go to pregunteleakaren.gov/.

USDA Announces Public Meeting to Seek Comments on Methods of Analysis and Sampling

The Office of Food Safety and the Food and Drug Administration are sponsoring a public meeting to receive public comments and draft U.S. positions that will be discussed at the 32nd Session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS) to be held in Budapest, Hungary.

The public meeting will be held on Feb. 9, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at the Harvey Wiley Bldg., Rm. 2B047, 5100 Paint Branch Pkwy., College

Park, MD. To participate via teleconference dial (866) 859-5767 and enter the passcode 2225276.

Documents and agenda items related to the 32nd Session of the CCMAS are accessible at www.codexalimentarius.net/current.asp. Written comments may also be submitted through this website.

For more information contact Marie Maratos at *marie.maratos@fsis.usda.gov* or (202) 690-4795.

Get Answers at AskFSIS

AskFSIS is a web-based technology and policy question-and-answer forum on topics such as exporting, labeling, inspection, programs and procedures.

In addition, *AskFSIS* offers Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds that link back to the Q&As. Visit <http://askfsis.custhelp.com/> to find the answers to your questions. Recently posted topics include:

Generic Labeling Approval – Foreign Language

http://askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=1464