



Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

FSIS Posts First 2009 Quarterly Report on *Salmonella* Testing

On July 17, the agency posted to its Web site the first quarterly progress report of calendar year (CY) 2009 on *Salmonella* testing of selected raw meat and poultry products.

This report provides preliminary data from January to March 2009 on all establishments eligible for *Salmonella* testing that have completed at least two sampling verification sets since June 2006.

FSIS's goal is to have 90 percent of all establishments eligible for *Salmonella* testing in Category 1 by 2010. As of March 2009, of all establishments in all product classes, 81 percent are in Category 1, which illustrates no change from fourth quarter CY08.

From 177 broiler establishments, 1,519 samples were analyzed with a 9 percent positive rate, up from a positive rate of 7 percent in fourth quarter CY08. The table lists percentages of broiler establishments by category as of March 2009.

Plant Category	Category 1	Category 2T	Category 2	Category 3
Percentage of Broiler Establishments	81	9	9	1

FSIS continues to post monthly the names of broiler establishments demonstrating variable or inconsistent process control. FSIS highlights performance for the broiler class because of its negative impact on foodborne illness. Turkey establishments are exempt from posting because this product class meets the criteria of at least 90 percent of all establishments in Category 1 and no establishments in Category 3.

The complete report and program details are at www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Quarterly_Salmonella_Results/index.asp.

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United States
Department of
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Food Safety and
Inspection Service

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Export Requirement Updates



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

China
Costa Rica
Russia
St. Lucia
United Arab Emirates

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

FSIS Constituent Update is prepared by the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs (CPA).

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Deputy Under Secretary Addresses House Agriculture Committee on Food Safety Issues

The House Agriculture Committee held a hearing July 16, to review current issues regarding food safety.

Newly appointed Deputy Under Secretary Jerold Mande, testified before the committee with other officials from USDA and FDA. Other panelists included representatives from industry and consumer advocacy groups.

Mande spent the bulk of his testimony addressing the president's Food Safety Working Group and ideas for FSIS modernization. He commended President Barack Obama and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack for taking on the "difficult and challenging" issue of food safety. He recognized the administration and the working group committee members' dedication to improve the food safety system. He also outlined key findings of the working group, stating that the "most important conclusion agreed upon is the critical importance of prevention."

Mande pointed to the need for requisite "tools in place" to improve and "achieve a virtual single food safety system." The deputy under secretary identified measures such as the need to set new and to revise current performance standards, streamlining inspection instructions and sampling bench trim for *E. coli* O157:H7.

He stressed the need for "21st century laws to run a 21st century food safety system," and reported that USDA is "seeking to modernize its food safety statutes." Mande concluded his testimony by stating that USDA is open to suggestions from the House Agriculture Committee and other stakeholders to revamp its food safety policies.

FSIS Issues Policy Updates

FSIS issues directives and notices to protect public health. The following directives and notices were issued this week:

- Directive 5930.1, *Custom Exempt Review Process*
- Notice 50-09, *Using the Kidney Inhibition Swab Test to Detect Antimicrobial Drug Residues in Cattle in Selected Establishments*

All directives and notices are available at www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/regulations_directives_&_notices/index.asp.

FSIS Launches Ask Karen Chat Feature!

Consumers with food safety questions can get answers anytime, but sometimes they need that extra bit of live assistance.

Live chats are a way to get answers the first time and drive customer satisfaction. It will bridge the gap between Web self-service and assisted service from FSIS food safety experts, delivering that extra touch to ensure a quality customer experience.

“We began working on the project last October,” said Tina Hanes, application administrator. “We’re happy we can now offer another avenue for consumers to obtain food safety information.”

Live chat is now available Monday through Friday from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. Eastern Time. Access live chat from the tab in the “Ask Karen” Web self-service screen <http://askkaren.custhelp.com>.

Ask Karen



Register for Conference on Prevention of *E. coli* O157:H7

FSIS’ Office of Outreach, Employee Education and Training is partnering with the North American Meat Processors Association to host a conference on the prevention of *E. coli* O157:H7 on Aug. 18 and 19 in Chicago.

The conference will bring together experts from academia, government and industry to discuss requirements, options and technologies to control *E. coli* O157:H7.

Discussions will include information for producers of ground, blade-tenderized, marinated and injected products in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

For more information about the conference and registration information, go to www.namp.com/images/namp/2009newformatEColi_Update.pdf.

FSIS to Hold Meat and Poultry Inspection Seminars for International Government Officials

The agency will host the second of three meat and poultry inspection seminars for international officials in Puerto Rico, from Aug. 10 to 21.

The seminars will familiarize international government officials with U.S. inspection regulations and procedures used by USDA to assure that the nation’s meat, poultry and egg products are safe, wholesome and properly labeled.

Seminars will cover issues from farm to table, including the hazard analysis and critical control point/pathogen reduction (HACCP/PR) rule, animal production, import and export procedures, and the roles of the Food and Drug Administration and state and local inspection agencies.

The session, to be held at the River Inn Training Facility in Washington, D.C., will focus on verification and enforcement of HACCP/PR regulations.

Fluency in English is a prerequisite. Participation is limited to 35 individuals.

For more information regarding the seminars, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/2009_Meat_&_Poultry_Inspection_Seminars/

FSIS to Hold Regulatory Education Workshop

The agency will host a regulatory education workshop in Peabody, Mass., for owners and operators of small and very small plants.

The workshops will cover a variety of topics and prerequisite programs, including hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP), sanitation performance standards, sanitation standard operating procedures, rules of practice, food defense strategies and *E. coli* O157:H7.

The July 28 session, focusing on *E. coli* O157:H7, will be held at the Springhill Suites - Boston Peabody, 43 Newbury St., Peabody Mass., from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Registration forms and information about upcoming sessions can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Registration_Regulatory_Ed_Sessions/index.asp. Pre-registration is encouraged but not required.



CFL Launches New Series of Web Outreach Seminars

To promote a uniform understanding of FSIS regulations, the agency offers resources such as regulatory education workshops and Web seminars, to plant owners and operators – especially those of small and very small plants. FSIS continues to streamline access to important regulatory information and improve communication to these owners and operators.

The FSIS Center for Learning has launched a new series of Web outreach seminars that address issues like microbiological testing, effective manufacturing practices, food safety interventions and record keeping.

The first seminar in this series, *Issues Regarding Effective Microbiological Testing for E. coli O157:H7 for Small and Very Small Plants*, will be held July 29.

This Web seminar will focus on the development of effective microbiological testing programs. Discussions will include N60 testing methods; how microbiological testing programs fit into food safety systems; limitations of microbiological testing; interpretations of test results and product handling pending test results.

All sessions are 90 minutes and will be offered three times that day via net conferencing to accommodate plant owners and operators nationwide. Web seminars are scheduled for:

- 11 a.m. ET
- 2 p.m. ET
- 5 p.m. ET

To register for this seminar, go to www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Regulatory_Web_Seminars/index.asp. E-mail questions about upcoming outreach seminars to FSIS.Seminars@fsis.usda.gov.

USDA to Host 2010 Food Safety Education Conference

USDA and NSF International are hosting the 2010 Food Safety Education Conference, *Advancements in Food Safety: Trends, Tools and Technologies*, March 23-26 at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta.

Food safety educators and other professionals worldwide will have the opportunity to discover the latest advancements in food safety education, including trends, tools and technologies.

For more information, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/Atlanta2010.



USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline

Food safety experts are available year-round from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern Time 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 also available 24 hours a day.

Updates on FSIS Testing for *E. coli* O157:H7

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

For comparative 2008 and 2009 results, go to www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Ground_Beef_E.Coli_Testing_Results/index.asp.

July Risk Assessment Meeting Transcripts Now Available

FSIS co-sponsored a public meeting with the Food and Drug Administration on June 23, to present information on a recently initiated interagency risk assessment of *Listeria monocytogenes (Lm)* in some ready-to-eat foods that are sliced, prepared or packaged in retail facilities.

The meeting's was to streamline the effect on public health where current practices and potential interventions reduce or prevent *Lm* contamination in ready-to-eat foods.

To review transcripts and meeting materials for this public meeting, go to www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/past_events/index.asp.



FSIS Posts New Podcasts

Tune in and subscribe to podcasts on selecting, handling and preparing of meat and poultry products to reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

This week, FSIS released podcasts helpful to consumers as well as plant owners and operators.

Food Safety at Home: Is it Done Yet? (Spanish)

Food Defense: Emergency Response, Flooding Part 5 of 5

Check out these new podcasts at www.fsis.usda.gov/news_&_events/Podcasts/index.asp. Spanish-language consumer podcasts are available at www.fsis.usda.gov/En_Espanol/Podcasts_SP/index.asp.