



# Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

## Hicks Departs from FSIS: Two Decades of Food Safety

Effective Oct. 11, Ron Hicks will become the deputy administrator for International Services at FSIS' sister agency, APHIS.

Hicks has worked with FSIS for nearly 18 years and has been a member of the senior executive team since 1997. He started his career in October 1991, as the director of labor relations. His most recent position was acting deputy under secretary for the Office of Food Safety.

A native of Washington, D.C., Hicks graduated from Anacostia High School. He then attended Catholic University of America on a basketball scholarship where he captained the team in 1973. Hicks graduated with a Bachelor of Science in political science and went on to earn his law degree from Catholic University, Columbia School of Law, in 1976.

Over the years, Hicks has seen many changes to food safety, including the implementation of HACCP, progress on PHIS and more diversity on the senior management liaison team. "Diversity only makes our decision making better and stronger and addresses the needs of more people," said Hicks.

In his new position, he will be responsible for 300 foreign service officers around the world, making sure food exported to the United States is in compliance. He believes his experience at FSIS will bring improved coordination between the two agencies.

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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:

### Kazakhstan

Complete information can be found at [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_&\\_Policies/Export\\_Information/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Export_Information/index.asp).

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## Hicks Departs from FSIS ...

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Hicks leaves FSIS Sept. 25 with a departing message thanking the employees for their support both professionally and personally. "I've really received the ultimate support from the workforce here. Don't lose the dedication and hardworking values that make us so unique and different."

## FSIS Posts Quarterly Report on Salmonella Testing

On Sept. 25, the agency posted to its Web site the second quarterly progress report of calendar year (CY) 2009 on *Salmonella* testing of selected raw meat and poultry products.

This report provides preliminary data from April to June 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 June 2009, of all establishments in all product classes, 82 percent are in Category 1, which illustrates no change from first quarter CY09.

From 174 broiler establishments, 2,114 samples were analyzed with a 5.2 percent positive rate, down from a positive rate of 9 percent in first quarter CY09. This table lists percentages of broiler establishments by category as of June 2009.

Plant Category	Category 1	Category 2T	Category 2	Category 3
Percentage of Broiler Establishments	82	8	8	2

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 [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Quarterly\\_Salmonella\\_Results/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Quarterly_Salmonella_Results/index.asp).

## 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. To find the answers to your questions and receive automatic updates, subscribe at <http://askfsis.custhelp.com/>.

### Recently posted topics include:

#### Using RSS Feeds in *AskFSIS*

[http://askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std\\_adp.php?p\\_faqid=1305](http://askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=1305)

#### FSIS Internet site search

[http://askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std\\_adp.php?p\\_faqid=1302](http://askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=1302)

#### Searching PDF documents in Acrobat Reader

[http://askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std\\_adp.php?p\\_faqid=1303](http://askfsis.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/askfsis.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=1303)

## FSIS Contractor to Continue Collecting Enhanced Plant Profile Information

FSIS inspectors-in-charge have been working with a contractor since January to collect and record additional plant profile information needed for the agency's new Public Health Information System (PHIS).

As planned, work by Dynamac Corporation to collect data in establishments across the rest of the country will begin next month. So far, information has been collected in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York.

In order to collect this additional data and maximize time for inspection personnel to focus on more immediate in-plant verification activities, FSIS contracted with Dynamac.

Before Dynamac employees began collecting information, they successfully completed an FSIS identity proofing and registration process. They also had to comply to requirements established by Congress and managed by the Office of Personnel Management. In addition to the necessary clearances, Dynamac employees were required to sign a confidentiality and non-disclosure statement.

FSIS is developing PHIS in an ongoing effort to improve the data infrastructure needed for a science-based food safety inspection system. For more information, contact Murray Penner, Labeling and Program Delivery Division, Office of Policy and Program Development at (301) 504-0879, or by e-mail at [Murray.Penner@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:Murray.Penner@fsis.usda.gov).

## Register for Codex Public Meeting on Nutrition and Foods

The Office of Food Safety and the FDA will sponsor a public meeting to receive comments on agenda items and draft U.S. positions for discussion at the 31st session of the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU).

The meeting is scheduled for Oct. 8 from 1 to 4 p.m. in the auditorium (1A003) of the Harvey Wiley Federal Building, 5100 Paint Branch Pkwy., College Park, Md. Pre-registration is required. For more information, contact Nancy Crane at (301) 436-1450 or [Nancy.Crane@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Nancy.Crane@fda.hhs.gov).

Documents related to the 31st session of the CCNFSDU will be accessible on the Codex Alimentarius Web site at <http://www.codexalimentarius.net/current.asp>.

## Tips to Prevent Foodborne Illness During Severe Weather

Severe weather events can mean power outages, floods and other problems that can affect the safety of food. Knowing what to do before and after a weather event can help you reduce your risk of illness.

FSIS offers tips to keep food safe, even when the weather isn't. Check them out at [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Preparing\\_for\\_Weather\\_Emergency/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Preparing_for_Weather_Emergency/index.asp).

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## Recent Policy Updates

FSIS issues notices and directives to protect public health. The following policy updates were recently issued:

**Notice 64-09**, *Intensified Verification Testing and "For Cause" Food Safety Assessments in Response to Ready-To-Eat Testing Results*

**Directive 5100.4**, *Prioritized Scheduling of Food Safety Assessments (FSAs)*

All notices and directives are available at [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_&Policies/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/index.asp).

## FSIS to Host Web Outreach Seminars

To promote a uniform understanding of FSIS regulations, the agency launched a six-part series of Web outreach seminars for plant owners and operators—especially those of small and very small plants.

The agency will host the fourth seminar, "In-Plant Validation of Food Safety Interventions in Poultry Products," on Oct. 7.

This seminar will illustrate methods of determining the effectiveness of food safety interventions in small and very small poultry establishments.

Three 90-minute sessions will be offered via net conferencing at 11 a.m., 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. (ET) to accommodate plant owners and operators nationwide.

To register, go to [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News\\_&Events/Regulatory\\_Web\\_Seminars/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&Events/Regulatory_Web_Seminars/index.asp). E-mail questions about upcoming outreach seminars to [FSIS.Seminars@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:FSIS.Seminars@fsis.usda.gov).



## New Podcasts: Renew Your Subscription!

Effective Sept. 16, the agency switched to a new digital format for consumer and industry podcasts to provide listeners with the highest quality of audio and video.

To continue automatically receiving podcasts, renew your subscription. For assistance, e-mail [podcast@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:podcast@fsis.usda.gov).

This week, FSIS released this podcast helpful to plant owners and operators.

### Industry: BSE Risk Assessment

Listen to this new podcast and renew your subscription at [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/news\\_&events/Podcasts/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/news_&events/Podcasts/index.asp).