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FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

FSIS Seeks Comments on Draft Risk Assessment for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

FSIS is seeking public comments on a draft quantitative food safety risk assessment for highly pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). The risk assessment was conducted in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services' Food and Drug Administration, and USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

The risk assessment was designed to evaluate the relative effectiveness of strategies to reduce or prevent exposure to HPAI from consumption of poultry meat, shell eggs and egg products. It may also be used to target risk communication messages, identify and prioritize research needs as well as provide a framework for coordinating efforts with stakeholders.

The risk assessment has been externally peer reviewed by several universities and research organizations, consistent with the requirements in the Office of Management and Budget's *Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review*. It has also been reviewed by various federal government agencies.

FSIS intends to review and evaluate all public comments and make modifications to the assessment as appropriate. The draft risk assessment is available on FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Risk_Assessments/index.asp.

Comments must be received by February 2, 2009, and can be sent to Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture-FSIS, 1400 Independence Avenue S.W., South Building Room 2534, Washington, D.C. 20250. Submissions may also be received through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov.

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Export Requirement Updates



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

Canada

Egypt

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

FSIS Resources

Tune in and subscribe to podcasts that offer helpful information on the selection, handling and preparation of meat and poultry products to reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

Visit www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Multimedia/index.asp to view informative food safety podcasts.

Risk Assessment ...

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All submissions received must reference the Food Safety and Inspection Service and include docket number FSIS-2007-0001. For further details on the risk assessment, contact Neal J. Golden, Office of Public Health Science, at (202) 690-6419 or at Neal.Golden@fsis.usda.gov.

FSIS Updates

E. coli O157:H7 Reports

FSIS has updated *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) O157:H7 testing data to include information through December 2, 2008.

Beginning January 2009, testing results for *E. coli* O157:H7 will be posted on the Agency's Web site instead of in *FSIS' Constituent Update*. Look to future issues for more information.

Results from Analysis of Raw Ground Beef and Raw Ground Beef Component Samples for *Escherichia coli* O157:H7

Raw Ground Beef						
Source	As of December 2, 2007			As of November 30, 2008		
	Number Analyzed	Number Positive	Percent Positive	Number Analyzed	Number Positive	Percent Positive
Federal Plants	11,073	24	0.22	10,363	50	0.48
Retail Stores	167	0	0.00	333	0	0.00
Imports	62	0	0.00	38	1	2.63
Raw Ground Beef Components						
Source	As of December 2, 2007			As of November 30, 2008		
	Number Analyzed	Number Positive	Percent Positive	Number Analyzed	Number Positive	Percent Positive
Federal Plants	781	3	0.38	2,128	17	0.80
Imports	0	0	0.00	483	3	0.62
The above information is based upon data in the FSIS electronic data system as of December 2, 2008. Results are from FSIS routine and follow-up sampling programs.						

Individual positive results from the raw ground beef sampling programs for 2008 are reported on FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/2008_Ecoli_Positive_Results/index.asp.

FSIS Issues Directives and Notices

FSIS issues directives and notices to enhance the Agency's efforts in protecting public health.

The following directive and notice were recently published:

Directive 5000.2, Revision 2 - *Review of Establishment Testing Data by Inspection Program Personnel*;

Directive 12,700.1 - *Documentation of Non-Compliances in Egg Product Plants*;

Notice 88-08 - *Importation of Canadian Cattle, Bison, Sheep and Goats Into the United States*;

Notice 89-08 - *Operations Occurring Outside Approved Hours*;

Notice 91-08 - *Pesticide Survey*;

Notice 92-08 - *Verifying Data in the In Commerce System*; and

Notice 94-08 - *Cancellation of FSIS Directive 8070.1 Review of State Meat and Poultry Compliance Programs*

To view all directives and notices, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/index.asp.

Acting Under Secretary Beth Johnson Departs USDA

December 5, Acting Under Secretary Beth Johnson departs USDA after accepting a new position as Executive Vice President of Public Affairs for the National Restaurant Association.

"It has been an incredible honor and privilege to serve the Department of Agriculture and the American people for the last seven years. I am grateful to have worked with an outstanding team of USDA colleagues, whose professionalism, public service and friendship I deeply value," said Johnson.

Johnson became Acting Under Secretary of Food Safety on October 1. In this position, Johnson was responsible for overseeing the policies and programs of FSIS, and she chaired the U.S. Codex Steering Committee, which provides guidance to U.S. delegations to the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Johnson most recently served as Chief Assistant to Deputy Secretary Chuck Conner and Deputy Chief of Staff since May 2005. A registered dietitian, Johnson joined USDA in 2002, having served more than a decade advising government and the private sector.

FSIS Offices in Omaha to Relocate: Closed December 18 and 19

FSIS offices located at the Landmark Center in Omaha, Nebraska will be closed on December 18 and 19 to move to the Edward Zorinsky Federal Building located at 1616 Capital Avenue, Omaha, Nebraska.

Minimal amount of down-time is anticipated as the offices plan to be operating under normal business with phone and email service by Monday, December 22. Some Omaha units of FSIS from the following program areas will be affected:

- Office of Policy and Program Development's Policy Development Division (formerly the Technical Service Center);
- Office of Program Evaluation, Enforcement, and Review; and
- Office of Public Health Science.

The AskFSIS Web-based system will be operational during the move and can be found at <http://askfsis.custhelp.com>.

In the event of an emergency December 18 or 19, contact your local District Office.