



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food Safety and  
Inspection Service

Volume 10, Issue 48  
December 12, 2008



# FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

## FSIS Issues Notice for Melamine Testing of Retail Meat and Poultry Products

In light of recent disclosures of melamine found in certain imported food products, FSIS has determined that it is prudent to conduct sampling to assess any reasons for concern about the presence of this chemical in meat and poultry products.

Since FDA's import alert issued on November 12, the Agency has developed a validated testing methodology and issued a notice to investigators that will collect the samples.

Investigators from the Compliance and Investigations Division of the Office of Program Evaluation, Enforcement and Review, will collect certain types of products at retail stores and send samples to FSIS laboratories to test for the presence of melamine.

The Agency will focus on meat and poultry products that contain milk-derived ingredients such as non-fat dried milk, casein, whey, evaporated milk and milk powder.

FSIS intends to begin random retail sampling in the next two weeks, with a total of 45 samples per week over a 12-week period.

To review this notice in detail, visit [www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISNotices/97-08.pdf](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISNotices/97-08.pdf).

## FSIS Updates

### *E. coli* O157:H7 Reports

FSIS has updated *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) O157:H7 testing data to include information through December 9, 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.

*Continued on page two*

### **Inside this Issue**

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| "How to" Workshops .....          | 2 |
| FSIS Omaha Offices Relocate ..... | 3 |
| FSIS Issues Directives .....      | 4 |

## Export Requirement Updates



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

**Hong Kong**

**Japan**

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



## E. Coli Testing Reports ...

*Continued from page one*

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

| <b>Raw Ground Beef</b>   |                        |                 |                  |                        |                 |                  |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Source   | As of December 9, 2007 |                 |                  | As of December 7, 2008 |                 |                  |
|  | Number Analyzed        | Number Positive | Percent Positive | Number Analyzed        | Number Positive | Percent Positive |
| Federal Plants   | 11,335                 | 26              | 0.23             | 10,631                 | 50              | 0.47             |
| Retail Stores  | 170                    | 0               | 0.00             | 349                    | 0               | 0.00             |
| Imports  | 62                     | 0               | 0.00             | 38                     | 1               | 2.63             |
| <b>Raw Ground Beef Components</b>  |                        |                 |                  |                        |                 |                  |
| Source   | As of December 9, 2007 |                 |                  | As of December 7, 2008 |                 |                  |
|  | Number Analyzed        | Number Positive | Percent Positive | Number Analyzed        | Number Positive | Percent Positive |
| Federal Plants   | 838                    | 3               | 0.36             | 2,184                  | 18              | 0.82             |
| Imports  | 0                      | 0               | 0.00             | 493                    | 3               | 0.61             |
| The above information is based upon data in the FSIS electronic data system as of December 9, 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](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/2008_Ecoli_Positive_Results/index.asp).

## FSIS Offers "How to" Workshops for Small and Very Small Plants

In 2006, FSIS' Center for Learning regional trainers gathered in College Station, Texas, to prepare for their role in conducting regulatory educational seminars to support the Agency's small and very small plant outreach initiative.

Since then, the Agency has hosted various outreach sessions to review basic regulatory principles with small and very small plant owners and operators and to provide them with information to enhance the design and implementation of their food safety systems. Topics have included FSIS' Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point, rules of practice, food defense strategies, *E. coli* O157:H7, and FSIS Notices 65-07, 66-07 and 68-07.

*Continued on page three*

## Preparing Ground Beef for Safe Consumption

Beef can be safe and juicy, regardless of color.

Eating a ground beef patty without first verifying that the safe temperature has been reached is a significant risk factor for foodborne illness.

When preparing ground beef products, consumers should only eat meat that has been cooked to a safe internal temperature of 160°F with the use of an accurate food thermometer.

Thermometer use to ensure proper cooking temperature is especially important for those who cook or serve ground beef patties to people most at risk for foodborne illness, especially young children, seniors and those with compromised immune systems.



Learn more about basic food safety principles through FSIS' facts sheets at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/index.asp).

## “How to” Workshops ...

*Continued from page two*

Starting January 2009, FSIS will hold a series of “how to” workshops to provide practical tools and methods for proper application and compliance. These outreach workshops will cover various information such as developing controls for *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*, establishing effective sanitation practices, developing food defense plans, ensuring humane handling of livestock and conducting product recalls.

Look to future issues of *FSIS' Constituent Update* for workshop dates and registration details.

## 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 hours with phone and email service by Monday, December 22. Phone numbers and other contact information at PDD's new location will remain the same. 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>.

## What Are Egg Products?

The term “egg products” refers to eggs that are removed from their shells for processing. The processing of egg products includes breaking eggs, filtering, mixing, stabilizing, blending, pasteurizing, cooling, freezing or drying and packaging.

Safe storage and handling is necessary for all egg products to prevent bacterial contamination. Here are some recommendations from USDA:

- You can store frozen and unopened egg products for up to one year. Check to be sure your freezer is set at 0 °F or lower. After thawing, do not refreeze.
- Thaw frozen egg products in the refrigerator or under cold running water. Do not thaw on the counter.
- If the container for liquid products bears a “use-by” date, observe it. Follow the storage and handling instructions provided by the manufacturer.

Check out other suggestions about the safe handling and storage of egg products through FSIS’ facts sheets at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Egg\\_Products\\_and\\_Food\\_Safety/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Egg_Products_and_Food_Safety/index.asp).

## FSIS Issues Directives

On December 8, FSIS issued Directive 7000.4, *Verifying Certain Transferred Labeling* which supplements the instructions for performing the 04B04 general labeling verification procedure in FSIS Directive 7000.1.

This document adds procedures for inspection program personnel to follow when one establishment (the transferring establishment) has transferred to another establishment (the receiving establishment) labeling with official marks and its own pre-printed establishment number. This directive will not be implemented until January 12, 2009.

In addition, Directive 7530.1 Revision 1, *Handling Process Deviations and Abnormal Containers of Thermally Processed* was issued on December 11.

This directive provides inspection program personnel at thermal processing plants with updated procedures to follow when an abnormal container is found by either inspection program personnel or the plant, or there is a process deviation during the production of thermally processed commercially sterile (shelf stable) canned products.

This also supplements but does not replace FSIS Directive 7530.2, *Verification Activities in Canning Operations that Choose to Follow the Canning Regulations*, which delineates the verification responsibilities of inspection program personnel during production of thermally processed commercially sterile canned product.

To review all FSIS directives, visit [www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_&\\_Policies/Directives/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Directives/index.asp).

