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FSIS Publishes Final Rule to Modernize and Streamline Export Regulations

FSIS is announcing a final rule that amends existing regulations to provide for an electronic export application and certification system. Developed as part of the existing Public Health Information System (PHIS), this streamlined online component will provide FSIS inspection personnel and exporters with improved efficiency, controls and communications associated with the certification and exportation of meat, poultry, and processed egg products.

By integrating and automating the Agency's paper-based export application and certification process into one comprehensive and automated data-driven system, the PHIS export component will allow the Agency to more easily maintain a digital record of all export certificates and will provide automatic electronic recordkeeping of the number and types of exporters, types of products exported to various countries, and the number of applications and certificates issued.

The PHIS Export Component also will help resolve potential documentation problems electronically before the product arrives at the port and, as a result, products will likely move through ports faster than they do currently. Thus, storage costs to exporters will be reduced, and the product will reach its destination more quickly.

The electronic system is expected to reduce the workload and paperwork burden of exporters and FSIS inspection personnel while continuing to ensure safe exported meat and poultry products. In the future, the component will facilitate the electronic government-to-government exchange of export applications and certifications, which will assist in the resolution of allegations of fraudulent transactions such as false alterations and reproductions.

The electronic export application and certification system will be available one year after publication of the final rule in the *Federal Register*. FSIS is developing a comprehensive phased-in implementation plan for the PHIS Export Component. The Agency will conduct formal outreach to ensure that foreign governments and U.S. exporters have every opportunity to understand the benefits of the export component.

Using online credentials, exporters will be able to electronically submit, track, and manage their applications for export certificates. Foreign governments that register for Level 2 eAuthentication accounts will also be able to view and confirm the validity of all export certificates for product intended for their country through the PHIS Export Component's Foreign Country Log-in feature. In addition to streamlining the export process, the PHIS Export Component will provide automatic-electronic recordkeeping of the number and types of exporters, types of products exported to various countries, and the number of applications and certificates issued through PHIS.

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Export Requirement Updates

The Library of Export Requirements has been updated for the following countries:

Mexico

For a complete list of countries, visit *http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/international-affairs/exporting-products*.

...FSIS Publishes Final Rule

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In order to support the costs associated with the new services provided by the PHIS Export Component, FSIS has developed a formula to determine the fee charged to exporters per application. This fee will be adjusted and published annually based on the formula detailed in the final rule. While this modernization effort is expected to reduce or eliminate the burden of physical handling and processing of paper applications, exporters can continue to submit paper applications free of charge by email, fax, or mail, although paper applications will be processed more slowly than electronic applications.

The final rule also amends the regulations to provide flexibility in the requirements for official export inspection marks to accommodate recent and future technological advancements. Exporters will be permitted to mark securely enclosed pallets within the consignment, or closed means of conveyance transporting the consignment (truck, rail car, or ocean container) with the USDA export stamp, provided that the stamp links to the corresponding export certificate. This provision will take effect 60 days after publication in the *Federal Register.* Through the final rule, FSIS will also allow exporters to use a unique identifier, such as an alphanumeric sequence, to uniquely identify the shipment and link it to the export certificate. The unique identifier provision will take effect one year after publication in the *Federal Register*. While FSIS is offering these flexibilities, exporters must still meet any stamping requirements of the importing foreign country, and FSIS will update the Export Library to reflect countries' stamping requirements.

Finally, the rule streamlines and clarifies the export regulations making egg product export regulations consistent to those for meat and poultry products, clarifying terminology, and deleting obsolete regulatory requirements. The final rule can be found online at h*ttp://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulations/federal-register/interim-and-final-rules*. More information about the PHIS Export Component will be shared in the *Constituent Update* and posted to the FSIS website throughout implementation.

FSIS to Post Categories for Young Chicken and Turkey Carcasses Tested for *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*

On June 20, 2016, FSIS will publicly post for the first time the category status for all individual establishments producing young chicken and turkey carcasses.

As FSIS announced in the Feb. 11, 2016 *Federal Register* Notice, establishments producing carcasses subject to FSIS sampling and testing category determinations are based on a minimum number of *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* sample results available from a 52-week moving window, with the first moving window having begun in May 2015.

The *Constituent Update* issued on April 29, 2016 invited comments on the Agency's proposed format for posting establishment categories but no comments were received. One minor change is that "Establishment Name" will be listed instead of "Company Name" since individual establishments and not companies are being posted.

An example of how the Agency intends to post the category results for poultry carcasses follows:

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FSIS *Constituent Update* is prepared by the Congressional and Public Affairs Staff
Office of Public Affairs
and Consumer Education

Assistant Administrator
Carol Blake

Deputy Assistant Administrator
Aaron Lavallee

Director
Alan Lang

Editorial Staff

Editor
Veronika Medina

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Josh Stull

Content & Technical Review Committee
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Food Recalls and Alerts

For information regarding recalls, please contact the Congressional and Public Affairs Staff at (202) 720-9113. You can also receive e-mail notifications when public health alerts and recalls are issued. Register at *http://www.fsis.usda.gov/subscribe.*

...FSIS To Post

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FSIS *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* Categorization of Individual Establishments using the Moving Window for All Poultry Product Categories 1 (Month Date, Year - Month Date, Year)

Establishment Number	Company Name	City	State	Product Class	*Salmonella* Category	Campylobacter Category
Px	Poultry, Inc			Young Chicken carcasses	1	2
Pxx	Chickens, LLC			Young Chicken carcasses	2	3
Pxxxx	XYZ Poultry Co., Inc			Young Chicken carcasses	N/A	NA
Pxxxxx	A-1 Turkeys, Inc.			Young Chicken carcasses	1	2
Pxxxxxx	Turkeys, LLC			Young Chicken carcasses	3	3

1 Establishments that produce less than 1,000 lbs of product per day are not included.
NA: FSIS did not collect or analyze the minimum number of samples to categorize the establishment and the establishment has not exceeded the maximum number of positives allowed under the standard.

As the *Federal Register* outlines, category definitions for carcasses are as follows:

Category 1 – Consistent Process Control: Establishments that have achieved 50 percent or less of the *Salmonella* or *Campylobacter* maximum allowable percent positive during all completed 52-week moving windows over the last three months.

Category 2 – Variable Process Control: Establishments that meet the *Salmonella* or *Campylobacter* maximum allowable percent positive for all completed 52-week moving windows, but have results greater than 50 percent of the maximum allowable percent positive during any completed 52-week moving window over the last three months.

Category 3 – Highly Variable Process Control: Establishments that have exceeded the *Salmonella* or *Campylobacter* maximum allowable percent positive during any completed 52-week moving window over the last three months.

The table will be viewable on the screen and sortable with data available in both Excel and PDF formats for download.

In the future the Table will provide a "*" to designate a change in category status. Previous monthly postings provided as a link will allow a search to review the nature of the status change. FSIS will pull sampling result data for categorization approximately on the 11th of each month to allow for all available samples to be processed into a database. The final list of individual establishments and their category status will be posted to the Agency's website approximately on the 20th of every month.

Refer questions regarding an individual establishment's posted category status to the Risk, Innovations, and Management Staff through askFSIS using the "General Inspection Policy" product field from the drop-down menu, and the "Sampling – *Salmonella*" category field, or by telephone at 1-800-233-3935.

Sign Up for Siluformes Fish Inspection Email Updates

Want the latest news and information about Siluriformes fish inspection? FSIS' email subscription service is an easy way to keep up with Agency news. You can receive e-mail notifications when new Siluriformes fish inspection information is posted. You can add or delete your subscription updates at any time and you have the option to password protect your account. For more information, visit *http://www.fsis.usda.gov/*

FSIS Announces 2016 Residue Sampling Plans (Blue Book)

FSIS is announcing the posting of the United States National Residue Program for Meat, Poultry and Egg Products – 2016 Residue Sampling Plans (Blue Book). The publication is the latest version of the "Blue Book" which outlines the residue sampling plans for FY 2016. The publication describes the FY 2016 National Residue Program using a three-tier sampling system initiated in 2012 that identifies the various production classes and compounds FSIS is analyzing, provides access to current methodology and explains the fiscal year reporting cycle. The Blue Book posting is done to provide transparency on U.S. residue sampling of meat, poultry and egg products. For more information, visit *http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/data-collection-and-reports/chemistry/blue-books.*

IFSAC Analysis Improves Understanding of Foodborne Illness Attribution

Scientists from the Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration (IFSAC) recently published "Comparing Characteristics of Sporadic and Outbreak-Associated Foodborne Illnesses, United States, 2004–2011," a paper in Emerging Infectious Diseases that compared some characteristics of outbreak and sporadic (non-outbreak) human illnesses caused by *Salmonella*, *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) O157, *Listeria monocytogenes*, and *Campylobacter*. The analyses help assess the usefulness of outbreak data in estimating which major food categories are linked to foodborne illnesses.

Using data collected by the CDC's Foodborne Diseases Active Surveillance Network (FoodNet), the study compared outbreak illnesses with sporadic illnesses. The results of the analysis provide evidence that:

- *Campylobacter*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, and *E. coli* O157 outbreak illnesses are not significantly different from sporadic illnesses with respect to patients' illness severity, gender, and age.
- *Salmonella* outbreak illnesses are not significantly different from sporadic illnesses with respect to illness severity and gender. For age, the percentages of outbreak and sporadic illnesses that occur among older children and adults are also similar. However, the percentage of outbreak illnesses in the youngest age category (0-3 years) was substantially lower compared with the other age groups.

FoodNet data includes only a portion of reported U.S. illnesses (about 15% of the U.S. population); therefore, the number of outbreaks and illnesses available for analysis was limited. For example, fewer *Campylobacter* illnesses were associated with outbreaks compared with the other three pathogens, which limits the strength of conclusions about *Campylobacter* attribution.

This study's finding that outbreak and sporadic illnesses have similar characteristics, indicates that using outbreak data to estimate which foods are most often linked to specific foodborne illnesses is reasonable for most age groups among the pathogens examined in this analysis. Analyses, such as this study, help us better understand the relationship between sporadic foodborne illnesses and those that are identified as a part of an outbreak. Such analyses are essential to advancing scientific progress in this field. IFSAC also developed a research brief on the article.

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...IFSAC Analysis

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IFSAC was created in 2011 by three federal agencies — the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)— to improve coordination of federal food safety analytic efforts and address cross-cutting priorities for food safety data collection, analysis, and use. IFSAC activities currently focus on foodborne illness source attribution, defined as the process of estimating the most common food sources linked to specific foodborne illnesses. More information about IFSAC and our work is available at h*ttp://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/ifsac/?source=govdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery*.

Enforcement of Required Recordkeeping for Raw Beef Grinding

In response to a request by the National Grocers Association, FSIS is announcing that it will delay enforcement of the final rule "Records To Be Kept by Official Establishments and Retail Stores That Grind Raw Beef Products" (Dec. 21, 2015, 80 FR 79231). The rule goes into effect on June 20, 2016. FSIS will begin enforcing it on Oct. 1, 2016. To assist official establishments and retail stores in complying with the rule, FSIS is planning additional outreach activities and materials for the Summer and Fall of 2016. To date, FSIS has presented the final rule's requirements via webinars and at food safety and industry conferences, and by answering questions from stakeholders through askFSIS. FSIS is currently developing a compliance guide and responses to common questions, which will be published on FSIS' website. We are also scheduling several in-person and web presentations for the coming months.

UPDATE: FSIS Testing for *E. coli*

FSIS posts bi-weekly updates of the Agency's raw ground beef *E. coli* sampling program. Included are testing results of raw ground beef component samples for *E. coli* O157:H7 and STECs from FSIS routine and follow-up sampling programs. Also, featured is data for non-O157 STECs by each non-O157 STEC serogroup.

Between June 4, 2012 and June 12, 2016, FSIS laboratory services analyzed a total of 13,839 beef trim samples (11,899 domestic and 1,940 imported), 3,448 routine follow-up samples (3,334 domestic and 114 imported), and 326 non-routine follow-up/traceback samples. One-hundred and sixty-one samples were found to be positive; 93 were domestic trim samples, five were imported trim samples, 59 were domestic follow-up samples, and four were non-routine follow-up/traceback samples. To date, three samples have been positive for both O157:H7 and at least one non-O157 STEC strain, and nine samples have been positive for two different non-O157 O-groups.

To review testing results, visit the *E. coli* data tables at *http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/data-collection-and-reports/microbiology/ec.*

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