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FSIS Constituent Update

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FSIS Posts FY 2013 Dioxin Report

FSIS is announcing the posting of the publication, DIOXIN FY 2013 Survey: *Dioxins and Dioxin-Like Compounds in the U.S. Domestic Meat and Poultry Supply*. The publication was produced in conjunction with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, the Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency and provides the latest version of the "Dioxin Survey" which outlines efforts to detect and identify possible sources of dioxin in the food supply. This survey is part of the Agency's effort to monitor dioxin in FSIS-regulated products as a prudent public health practice. This survey provides insight on changes in human exposure to dioxin-like compounds (DLC) through dietary components.

The Toxic Equivalent (TEQ) values for the slaughter classes appear to have decreased in the last five years. The TEQ values are toxicity potency factors established by the World Health Organization (WHO) to characterize the relative potency of each DLC. From 2008 to 2013, the median TEQs had decreased about 9.5 percent for beef, 31 percent for pork, 33 percent for chickens, and 35 percent for turkeys, respectively. FSIS will continue to observe and report the decline of dioxin levels in meat and poultry products. These results will be used to inform future rulemaking and to assess the economic impact of FSIS regulations.

The document is available at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/data-collection-and-reports/chemistry/dioxin-related-activities>.

FSIS Hosted CIS Program Webinar

On Sept 23, 2015, FSIS hosted a webinar on the Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) program for state-inspected meat and poultry plants. The webinar provided an overview of CIS and other USDA resources available (e.g., USDA grants and loans) to small-scale meat and poultry processors under USDA's "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" national initiative. The webinar described firsthand experiences with CIS from a participating state meat and poultry inspection (MPI) program director and a poultry processing company owner from Wisconsin.

Both Wisconsin representatives spoke positively of their CIS experience and its success in expanding regional markets for Wisconsin products. The Wisconsin MPI program pursued CIS as a result of grassroots interest from state-inspected establishments. The state is expecting to double the number of participating establishments from 7 to 13 in the near future.

Approximately 110 guests participated in the webinar including small-scale owners/operators and state MPI program representatives, doubling the number of participants from the first CIS webinar held in 2014.

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Export Requirement Updates



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

Egypt
Honduras
Peru
Republic of Macedonia
Ukraine

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

...CIS Webinar

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Elaine Hite, a staff officer for the FSIS Small Plant Help Desk, provided an overview of CIS basics, including the participation criteria for interested establishments, the overall requirements, and available FSIS funding.

Elanor Starmer, senior advisor to the Secretary of Agriculture, highlighted the growing consumer demand for local and regionally-produced food and specifically for meat and poultry. Under CIS, state-inspected plants can ship their product in interstate commerce, expanding into regional markets to meet this increasing consumer demand, without dramatic changes in the plant's day-to-day operations.

A recording of the webinar will soon be available on the FSIS CIS program website at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/inspection/state-inspection-programs/cis>. In the interim, requests for the webinar can be submitted to the FSIS Small Plant Help Desk at infosource@fsis.usda.gov.

For more information on USDA's "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" initiative and available resources, please visit <http://www.usda.gov/knowyourfarmer>.

The CIS program promotes the expansion of market opportunities for state-inspected meat and poultry establishments. Twenty-seven states operate their own meat and/or poultry inspection programs and are subsidized by FSIS. Participants in the CIS program can sell their products interstate and in the export market while state-inspected plants are limited to trading within their borders even if the neighboring state is across a highway or river.

Safely Preparing for Hurricane Joaquin

As Hurricane Joaquin approaches the East Coast of the United States, FSIS is issuing food safety recommendations for those who may be impacted by the storm. A hurricane watch for the East Coast of the U.S. could be established as early as tonight and into the weekend. Be aware that flooding from heavy rain, damaging winds and tidal flooding will be possible. FSIS recommends that consumers take the following steps to reduce food waste and the risk of foodborne illness during severe weather events:

Steps to follow in advance of losing power:

- Keep appliance thermometers in both the refrigerator and the freezer to ensure temperatures remain food safe during a power outage. Safe temperatures are 40° F (4.4° C) or lower in the refrigerator, 0° F (-17.7° C) or lower in the freezer.
- Freeze water in one-quart plastic storage bags or small containers prior to a storm. These containers are small enough to fit around the food in the refrigerator and freezer to help keep food cold. Remember, water expands when it freezes, so don't overfill the containers.
- Freeze refrigerated items, such as leftovers, milk and fresh meat and poultry that you may not need immediately—this helps keep them at a safe temperature longer.
- Know where you can get dry ice or block ice.

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We Want to Hear From You

The *Constituent Update* Content and Technical Review Committee seeks feedback from its readers. Please let us know what you think about the *Constituent Update* and send comments and suggestions regarding content to FSISUpdate@fsis.usda.gov. If you aren't regularly receiving the *Constituent Update*, you can sign up for it at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/newsroom/meetings/newsletters/constituent-updates>.

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...Hurricane

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- Have coolers on hand to keep refrigerator food cold.
- Group foods together in the freezer—this 'igloo' effect helps the food stay cold longer.
- Keep a few days' worth of ready-to-eat foods that do not require cooking or cooling.

Steps to follow if the power goes out:

- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. A refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if the door is kept closed. A full freezer will hold its temperature for about 48 hours (24 hours if half-full).
- Place meat and poultry to one side of the freezer or on a tray to prevent cross contamination of thawing juices.
- Use dry or block ice to keep the refrigerator as cold as possible during an extended power outage. Fifty pounds of dry ice should keep a fully-stocked 18-cubic-foot freezer cold for two days.

Steps to follow after a weather emergency:

- Check the temperature inside of your refrigerator and freezer. Discard any perishable food (e.g., meat, poultry, seafood, eggs or leftovers) that has been above 40° F (4.4° C) for two hours or more.
- Check each item separately. Throw out any food that has an unusual odor, color or texture or feels warm to the touch.
- Check frozen food for ice crystals. The food in your freezer that has partially or completely thawed may be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is 40° F (4.4° C) or below.
- Never taste a food item to decide if it's safe.
- When in doubt, throw it out!

Food Safety After a Flood:

- Do not eat any food that may have come into contact with flood water including raw fruits and vegetables, cartons of milk or eggs.
- Discard any food that is not in a waterproof container if there is any chance that it has come into contact with flood water. Food containers that are not waterproof include those packaged in plastic wrap or cardboard, or those with screw-caps, snap lids, pull tops, and crimped caps. Flood waters can enter into any of these containers and contaminate the food inside. Also, discard cardboard juice/milk/baby formula boxes and home canned foods because they cannot be effectively cleaned and sanitized.
- Inspect canned foods and discard any food in damaged cans. Damage is shown by swelling, leakage, punctures, holes, fractures, extensive deep rusting, or crushing/denting severe enough to prevent normal stacking or opening with a manual, wheel-type can opener.

FSIS will provide relevant food safety information as the storm progresses from its Twitter feed @USDAFoodSafety and on Facebook at [Facebook.com/FoodSafety.gov](https://www.facebook.com/FoodSafety.gov).

FSIS' YouTube video "Food Safety During Power Outages" has instructions for keeping frozen and refrigerated food safe. The publication "A Consumer's Guide to Food Safety: Severe Storms and Hurricanes" can be downloaded and printed for reference during a power outage. FSIS also has an infographic (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/40986460@N02/17427621352/in/album-72157646312506036/>) covering what to do before, during and after a power outage.

FSIS Policy Updates

FSIS notices and directives on public health and regulatory issues are available at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulations>. The following policies update were recently issued:

Notice 64-15, *Use of FSIS Government-Furnished Equipment*

Directive 2620.1, *FSIS Records Management Program*

Food Recalls and Alerts

Stay up-to-date on FSIS' food recall alerts by visiting FSIS' Current Recalls and Alerts Web page at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/recalls>.

You can also receive e-mail notifications when public health alerts and recalls are issued. Register at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/subscribe>.