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FSIS Constituent Update

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FSIS Releases Final Rule Establishing Inspection Program for Fish & Fish Products Under the Order Siluriformes

Last week, FSIS released a final rule establishing an inspection program for fish and fish products under the order Siluriformes, including catfish. The final rule, which applies to both domestically-raised and imported Siluriformes fish and fish products was developed in order to implement provisions required by the 2008 and 2014 Farm Bills. The rule will become effective in March 2016, 90 days after it published in the *Federal Register*.

"FSIS is committed to a smooth and gradual introduction to the new inspection program," said Al Almanza, USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Food Safety. "The agency will conduct extensive outreach to domestic industry and international partners so that they fully understand FSIS' requirements prior to full implementation."

The March 2016 effective date of the rule begins an 18-month transitional implementation period for both domestic and international producers. On the March 2016 effective date, all Siluriformes fish and fish products including catfish, will be under the regulatory jurisdiction of FSIS and no longer regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

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Export Requirement Updates



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

Cuba
French Polynesia
Hong Kong
Pakistan
Qatar
Turks & Caicos Islands

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

Deputy Under Secretary Speaks at Next Level Summits Food Quality Symposium

This week, Deputy Under Secretary Al Almanza spoke at the Next Level Summits Food Quality Symposium in San Antonio, Texas. Almanza spoke during a Town Hall Session called "An Open Conversation with Key Regulators," which was an interactive question and answer session with government officials from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency). Almanza spoke about modernization, data collection, collaboration and provided a few Agency updates. During the panel, Almanza said, "Modernization means that we need to think about new ways for government to work together to make our nation's food the safest it can be."

...Final Rule

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Before the effective date of the final rule, countries currently exporting product to the United States that wish to continue doing so must provide a list of establishments that currently export, as well as written documentation of their regulatory authority and compliance with existing FDA import requirements.

During the transitional period, FSIS will conduct inspection during all hours of operation at domestic establishments that slaughter and process Siluriformes fish, similar to inspection provided at meat and poultry slaughter and processing facilities, while also providing the establishments with close guidance to ensure that they understand FSIS' requirements. During this time, inspection program personnel will also be assigned to visit domestic Siluriformes fish processing establishments at least once per quarter.

During the 18-month transitional period, FSIS will re-inspect and conduct species and residue sampling on imported Siluriformes fish shipments at least quarterly at U.S. import establishments on a random basis. Also, during the transitional period, countries wishing to continue exporting product to the United States after the transitional period must apply for an equivalency determination. Applications for equivalency must be complete by the end of the 18-month transitional period. FSIS will assist countries with their equivalency applications. Countries that submit completed documentation demonstrating equivalency by the 18-month deadline will be able to continue exporting to the United States while the agency conducts a full equivalency evaluation, which includes an on-site audit. If additional information is required, FSIS will request that the foreign country respond or resubmit complete equivalence documentation within 90 day of receiving FSIS' request.

Following the 18-month transitional period, inspection program personnel will continue to be assigned to conduct inspection during all hours of operation at domestic slaughter and processing establishments, and at least once per shift at processing-only establishments, which is similar to requirements for other food products that FSIS regulates. Also, beginning at the end of the 18-month transitional period, FSIS will re-inspect and conduct species and residue tests on all incoming shipments.

Regulations applying to the Siluriformes fish and fish products industry are adapted under the Federal Meat Inspection Act as required by law under the 2008 and 2014 Farm Bills.

The final rule can be found online at: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulations/federal-register/interim-and-final-rules>.

Reminder: Final HACCP Systems Goes Into Effect

Earlier this year, FSIS published a *Federal Register* notice announcing the availability of its final revision of the Compliance Guideline for Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) systems validation. The guideline includes information to aid small and very small establishments in meeting the initial HACCP system validation requirements in 9 CFR 417.4. The guidance is available at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/a70bb780-e1ff-4a35-9a9a-3fb40c8fe584/HACCP_Systems_Validation.pdf?MOD=AJPERES.

As a reminder, on Jan. 4, 2016, FSIS will begin verifying that large establishments meet all validation requirements. FSIS will begin verifying that small and very small establishments meet all validation requirements on April 4, 2016.

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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FY2016 Sampling Plan Available

FSIS recently posted its Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Annual Sampling Plan that lays out the sampling activities the Agency intends to undertake in the upcoming year. This plan continues a tradition, started by FSIS for FY 2012, of providing transparency on how the agency conducts sampling activities and manages its resources.

This FY2016 plan describes FSIS' major activities related to microbiological and chemical residue sampling in domestic and import establishments as well as in-commerce facilities in FY2015. It also describes the agency's overall strategy for directing its sampling resources in FY2016.

Again this year, the report focuses on the number of samples FSIS plans to analyze, rather than the planned number of samples scheduled, reflecting new operational abilities provided through FSIS' Public Health Information System (PHIS). PHIS allows the agency to adjust the number of samples scheduled on a monthly basis to better target them.

The report is available at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/ffsis/topics/data-collection-and-reports/ffsis-data-analysis-and-reporting/data-reporting/ffsis-data-analysis-and-reporting#samplingprograms>.

The direct address is <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/99b43489-0e14-40c0-b13e-53163d68bf1f/Sampling-Program-Plan-FY2016.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>.

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>.

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 Nov. 29, 2015, FSIS laboratory services analyzed a total of 11,622 beef trim samples (9,925 domestic and 1,697 imported), 3,024 routine follow-up samples (2,910 domestic and 114 imported) and 284 non-routine follow-up/traceback samples. 139 samples were found to be positive; 74 were domestic trim samples, four were imported trim samples, 57 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 eight 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/ffsis/topics/data-collection-and-reports/microbiology/ec/>.

Follow Us On Twitter

Find food safety information for at-risk people, along with tips and resources to keep consumers and other interested groups informed of the latest agency news and events. Follow FSIS on Twitter at

www.twitter.com/USDAFoodSafety.

FSIS Policy Updates

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

Notice 72-15 - *Special Provisions for the End of the Leave Year*

Directive 7120.1 Revision 31 - *Safe and Suitable Ingredients Used in the Production of Meat, Poultry, and Egg Products*

Docket No. 2008-0031 - *Mandatory Inspection of Fish of the Order Siluriformes and Products Derived from Such Fish*