USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

1400 Independence
Avenue, SW.
Washington, D.C.
20250

August 30, 2017

Dear Industry Stakeholder:

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is announcing its plan to provide industry access to the Public Health Information System (PHIS) Export Component (Export) for testing purposes.

The PHIS Export is a web-based system that supports a comprehensive, timely and reliable approach to FSIS export certification procedures. PHIS Export will enable FSIS to respond to industry's requests for export certification and foreign country's requirements for a verifiable and secure certification system.

PHIS Export will streamline the export program by converting what is now solely a paper-based system to an automated one. The automated system covers all functions of the system, including establishment applications for approval for export, applications for export certificates and the issuance of export certificates. The system will enable an automated edit-check capability to ensure that the products to be exported meet a defined set of foreign country's import requirements.

FSIS is providing access to the Export functionality to ensure industry has sufficient testing and development time prior to the Export implementation. Beginning on June 29, 2018, FSIS intends to provide automated export documentation to Afghanistan, Andorra, Australia, Bahamas, Bolivia, Burundi, Cape Verde, Cook Islands, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Mozambique, New Zealand, Paraguay, San Marino, Tanzania, Uganda, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Establishments that export to one or more of the first 19 countries, mentioned above, *and only these* 19 countries, should complete the requests detailed in this document to prepare for testing PHIS Export. These actions are necessary for the successful participation in PHIS Export testing. FSIS will follow-up with a second memorandum that identifies your assigned testing dates and the URL for the Export test site. Note: The Agency plans to implement countries in a staggered approach, of which testing schedules will coincide and be provided accordingly.

This upcoming first phase of testing will only test the batching function. A PHIS Export environment will be available for industry testing of computer-to-computer processing of XML batch files and upload of XML batch files while logged into PHIS as an Export Applicant or Export Broker. Industry can test computer-to-computer file submission during this first phase. Industry can test XML upload at the user interface during phase two of testing, which will happen at a later date.

Conference Call

As announced on July 6, 2017, FSIS has scheduled a conference call to share how and when FSIS will make the test site available for testing. This conference call will take place on September 12, 2017, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. ET. The conference call phone number is toll free 1-877-369-5243 or 1-617-668-3633 and the access code is 0598769#. This information along with more details on how to connect to the call is provided along with this letter. During the call, FSIS will share information about batch file submissions of export applications, instructional guides and test scripts. Questions will also be addressed during this time.

FSIS needs to distribute industry's access to the test environment over the entire period of Phase 1. To ensure this happens, establishments will be grouped for test site access. FSIS will construct the groups as FSIS receives requests for test site access.

System Requirements

In order to use PHIS, your computer must have the following software installed:
- One of the following Web browsers:
    - Internet Explorer 11
    - Firefox 51 (Windows) or later
- Adobe Acrobat Reader or compatible portable document format viewer

The supported operating systems are Windows 7 and 10.

Acquire Level 2 eAuthentication

A Level 2 eAuthentication account is the way for industry personnel to interact with USDA website portals and applications. The USDA eAuthentication system controls access to PHIS. A Level 2 eAuthentication account is necessary to log in to PHIS and the PHIS Export test environment. Each individual requiring access to the Export test site must have USDA's Level 2 eAuthentication credentials. The USDA, not FSIS, controls the credentialing process and account maintenance. USDA eAuthentication accounts are individual user accounts, not corporate accounts, and must be created and maintained at the individual level. The USDA's Help Desk handles all eAuthentication credentials and account maintenance questions. To begin the Level 2 credentialing process, visit the USDA eAuthentication Home page. If a tester already has an active USDA Level 2 eAuthentication account, the tester should use their current account. Testers should not sign up for another USDA Level 2 eAuthentication account.

There are two parts to creating an eAuthentication Level 2 account—(1) account creation and (2) identity verification:

1. **Account Creation:** This component involves providing your basic details (name, address, valid email address, contact information, etc.) and creating a username and password online.

2. **Identity Verification:** This component occurs after successful account creation. There are two options for identity verification:
   - *Online Digital Identity Verification:* This option requires a U.S. Social Security Number and sufficient/U.S.-based background and identity information for the identity verification service to generate a questionnaire. Experian®—a provider of credit reports and credit scores—independently supplies this service. For additional information, see USDA's [eAuthentication Frequently Asked Questions](#), section 2.10 (page 10).
   - *Physical Identity Verification:* This occurs offline and requires presenting a valid and accepted photo ID to a Local Registration Authority (LRA), usually by visiting a USDA Service Center. To find the LRA nearest to you visit the eAuthentication Home page and click on [Find an LRA](#) (top right corner of the page).

Establish Users and Assign Roles

User authentication and authorization is the foundation of PHIS' role-based access. PHIS is a role-based system, and industry must assign PHIS roles to establishment personnel. When users access the industry test environment, the functionality and data to which they have access is dependent on their assigned PHIS roles and establishments. Each user's privileges and the scope of data accessed is set by the Establishment Administrator role.

> **NOTE:** You will receive a follow-up letter with the PHIS Export test environment URL and the dates the test site is available for your testing. Industry will have to establish employee access and PHIS roles in the Export test environment. Setting up PHIS accounts in the test environment will not carry over to the live environment, and setting up accounts in the live PHIS environment will not provide access to the Export test environment. Industry must establish PHIS accounts and assign PHIS roles in both environments.

Industry must have at least one person assigned the role Establishment Administrator. You can assign up to three users per establishment the Establishment Administrators. The industry role of Establishment Administrator controls industry personnel access to the PHIS production site. An Establishment Administrator is solely responsible for managing users who will have the Plant Manager, Establishment Administrator, Export Applicant and Export Broker roles. The Establishment Administrator must also remove access for personnel who no longer require access. This function—assigning PHIS roles—is the responsibility of Industry.

> NOTE: Industry users may advance technical concerns with PHIS account access to the FSIS Service Desk. During the testing, the Service Desk will be staffed from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET, Monday thru Friday.

Identify Your Export Test Environment Users

FSIS requests the following information for each industry person to be given access to the Export test environment:
- First, last name, and position title
- The same valid email address used for the eAuthentication account
- Work hours, including time zone
- Establishment number (associated with testing)
- Business phone number where they can be reached during work hours
- PHIS role(s) to be assigned (especially the Establishment Administrator role)

FSIS requests this individual contact information to facilitate communication and support for inquiries and to know how many testers are using the site. FSIS recommends no more than three testers per establishment. This number is to include individuals testing the Export Broker role. At least one tester should be familiar with the technical aspects of batching as it relates to your establishment's software. Please e-mail the above bulleted information as it relates to your list of testers to PHISTechnicalQA@fsis.usda.gov by September 5, 2017.

Industry's testing of the PHIS Export will prepare industry and FSIS for the June 28, 2018, PHIS Export implementation date. Industry's contributions to these final stages of PHIS Export implementation are crucial to its success.

We encourage you to visit the FSIS website for PHIS – Export information routinely, as we will use it as a means to share updated information. For questions concerning the XSD/XML templates, design, troubleshooting and performance, please send an email to the PHISTechnicalQA@fsis.usda.gov. For questions on PHIS access, contact the FSIS service desk at 1-800-473-9135. For export policy questions, please visit askFSIS at https://askfsis.custhelp.com.

Thank you for your collaboration as we coordinate efforts to ensure the PHIS Export is a success.

Sincerely,

William C. Smith
FSIS Office of Field Operations, Assistant Administrator