FSIS Posts FY 2019 Annual Plan

FSIS has posted to the agency's website its fiscal year (FY) 2019 Annual Plan, which is aligned with FSIS' 2017-2021 Strategic Plan and details the ways the agency will achieve its strategic goals over the next fiscal year. In FY 2019, the agency will be working toward building on the past year's accomplishments, while also rolling out new science-based and customer focused initiatives. Modernizing FSIS' inspection systems and processes will continue to be a major focus for FSIS this year, as the agency works to finalize its proposals to strengthen swine slaughter and egg products inspections. FSIS will continue to strengthen its information technology (IT) infrastructure, enhance the Public Health Information System (PHIS) with new functionality, improve training resources, and explore innovative tools to pilot in the field. By embracing the latest science and technology, FSIS is working to arm our workforce with the information and tools to make timely and informed public health decisions. Having operationalized whole genome sequencing (WGS) at FSIS laboratories last year to help monitor and track foodborne illnesses, in FY 2019, FSIS will continue to strengthen WGS capabilities, broaden its use to inform inspection and enforcement decisions, and enhance collaboration and data-sharing with our public health partners.

The FY 2019 Annual Plan is available at: *https://www.fsis.usda.gov/AnnualPlanFY2019.*

FSIS Welcomes New Assistant CIO

Bajinder Paul has joined FSIS as the agency's new Assistant Chief Information Officer (ACIO). Bajinder comes to FSIS after more than 20 years of experience leading information technology organizations in both public and private sectors. Previously, he held CIO positions at the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, U.S. Department of the Treasury, the Federal Trade Commission, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. During his service in the federal government, Bajinder has provided strategic and operational leadership in the management of IT infrastructure, software application development, IT security, budget, and governance, and managed large national staffs in delivering mission critical IT services to agency workforces nationally and globally. In addition to the agencies listed above, Bajinder also held a position with the Federal Reserve System, in which he provided oversight of IT of the 12 federal reserve banks and a national IT infrastructure with an annual IT budget of $1.4B. Bajinder is a graduate of Cornell University with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering and he earned a Master of Science in Computer Science from Johns Hopkins University.

FSIS Announces PHIS Export Component's Second Country Group

FSIS is announcing the second group of countries that will be included in the Public Health Information System (PHIS) export component, FSIS' electronic export application and certification system. On March 4, 2019, FSIS will begin issuing FSIS Export Certificates of Wholesomeness for Meat and Poultry (FSIS Form 9060-5) and Siluriformes Fish (FSIS Form 9060-5S) for the following countries through the PHIS export component on FSIS-controlled security paper: Angola, Antarctica, Aruba, Bhutan, Botswana, Bouvett Island, Brunei Darussalam, Christmas Island, Comoros, Eritrea, Falkland Islands, Faroe Islands, French Southern and Antarctic Islands, Greenland, Guernsey, Heard Island and McDonald Islands, Isle of Man, Jersey, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, and Vietnam.

FSIS implemented the PHIS export component on June 29, 2018, with 16 countries* that do not maintain export library requirements. FSIS is incrementally adding countries to the PHIS export component and has chosen to include one country with export library requirements in the second group: Vietnam. Vietnam will receive country-specific letterhead certificates listed in the export library with ink signatures, as is done currently, and 9060-5 certificates generated by PHIS with ink signatures – signatures on letterhead certificates and the 9060-5 will match. Other countries included in the second group that do not maintain export library requirements will receive the 9060-5 with a digital signature, as shown in FSIS' April 2018 World Trade Organization notification ([G/SPS/N/ USA/2954/Add.1](#)).

U.S. exporters that ship meat or poultry products to the countries in the second group should follow published FSIS guidance for submitting applications for export certification in the PHIS export component (PHIS Industry User Guide): *[https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/475cd9e6-50ca-44c4-8fa5-5f3c4cee02a1/PHIS_Industry_User_Guide_20180622.pdf?MOD=AJPERES.](#)*

More information and resources can be found on FSIS' PHIS export component web page at: *[https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/international-affairs/exporting-products/phis-export-component.](#)*

* Afghanistan, Andorra, Bahamas, Bolivia, Burundi, Cape Verde, Cook Islands, Ethiopia, French Guiana, Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Mozambique, San Marino, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Consumer Food Safety Education Conference to Be Held March 6-8, 2019

The Partnership for Food Safety Education will be holding its 2019 Consumer Food Safety Education conference from March 6-8, 2019, in Orlando, Florida. The conference, "From Consumers to Chefs: Food Safety Education Matters," will focus on take-away strategies for changing people's food safety knowledge and behaviors. More than 400 health and food safety educators are expected to attend to explore influences on consumers, how to effect behavior change, and discuss strategies to engage everyone in modeling proper food preparation and good hand hygiene practices. Information on how to register can be found at: *[https://cfsec2019.fightbac.org](#)/*.

FSIS Moves to WGS for *E. coli* and *Salmonella* Isolates and Discontinues PFGE as the Primary Characterization Tool

FSIS has been performing whole genome sequencing (WGS) and pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) in parallel for all bacterial pathogens isolated from FSIS testing programs since fiscal year 2017. Through this issuance, FSIS is announcing the suspension of routine PFGE analyses for Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) and *Salmonella* isolates and transitioning to use WGS as the primary tool for isolate characterization. The suspension of PFGE for STEC isolates will occur on Jan. 15, 2019. The suspension of PFGE for *Salmonella* isolates will occur on March 15, 2019. Although PFGE analysis is no longer used as the primary molecular characterization tool, the laboratories maintain this analytical capability. The action is being taken in coordination with federal and public health partners at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) PulseNet network and takes into account the progress made in deploying WGS capability among federal and state partners.

Fiscal Year 2018 Meat and Poultry Inspection Program Review Results Available

Today, FSIS released the results for fiscal year 2018 Annual State Review and Determination reports and the Summary Report on the State Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) program. FSIS has determined that all 27 state MPI programs met the "at least equal to" federal standard. The 27 states are: Alabama, Arizona, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming. These 27 state MPI programs provide inspection to approximately 1,600 small and very small establishments.

To view the complete report, visit: *https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/inspection/state-inspection-programs/state-inspection-and-cooperative-agreements/reviews-of-state-programs*.

Policy Update

FSIS notices and directives on public health and regulatory issues are available at: *https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulations*. The following policy update was recently issued:

Notice 66-18 - *Annual Leave Donations to the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program*

Export Requirements Updates

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

Australia
New Caledonia
South Africa
Western Samoa

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

FSIS Posts Updated Dataset on Imports

On Dec.17, 2018, FSIS will update the publicly posted dataset on import refusals for products regulated by FSIS. Federal law requires every commercial shipment of imported meat, poultry, and egg products to be inspected prior to product entering U.S. commerce. FSIS inspects each shipment to verify labeling, proper certification, general condition, any signs of tampering and to identify product adulterated by transportation damage. FSIS also performs additional activities on a random and/or for-cause basis such as physical product examination and laboratory sampling for pathogens and chemical residues.

Any product that does not meet FSIS requirements is refused entry, and the importer has up to 45 days (30 days for egg products) to have the product destroyed for use as human food, re-exported/returned to the foreign country, converted to animal food, or brought into compliance with FSIS requirements, if applicable (e.g., relabeled, remarked, replacement certificate).

This dataset is updated around the 15th of each month and contains each shipment with product that was refused entry. For more information, please visit: *https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/data-collection-and-reports/data.*

FSIS Posts Individual Category Status and Aggregate Results for Poultry Carcasses, Chicken Parts, and Comminuted Poultry Tested for *Salmonella*

On Dec. 20, 2018, FSIS will update the individual establishment *Salmonella* performance standard category information for raw poultry carcasses, raw chicken parts and comminuted poultry products at *https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/data-collection-and-reports/microbiology/salmonella-verification-testing-program/establishment-categories.*

Additionally, FSIS will post the aggregate sampling results showing the number of establishments in categories 1, 2, or 3 for establishments producing young chicken or turkey carcasses, raw chicken parts or not ready-to-eat (NRTE) comminuted poultry products at: *https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/data-collection-and-reports/microbiology/salmonella-verification-testing-program/aggregate-data.*