



September is Food Safety Education Month

U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue issued a proclamation this month, naming September National Food Safety Education Month. This month is dedicated to educating consumers on safe food handling practices, including how to properly handle, cook and store food to avoid foodborne illness. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) foodborne illness will cause 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths each year.

While not all bacteria present in food products is harmful (in fact, bacterial species are essential in production of fermented sausage products), some have the potential to cause severe illness in certain individuals. Hand washing is a major factor in preventing foodborne illness and is a critical step to avoid getting sick. In fact, a recent observational study showed that 97 percent of the time people did not properly wash their hands, thereby contaminating other parts of their kitchen. FSIS recommends that you wash your hands for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food and be sure to follow these steps:

- Wet hands with clean, warm running water, turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- Lather hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of hands, between your fingers, and under nails.
- Scrub hands for at least 20 seconds. Rinse hands well under clean, warm running water.
- Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

If you would like to learn more about the symptoms, causes of food poisoning and the prevention strategies please visit: <https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2017/08/28/are-you-sure-it-wasnt-food-poisoning>. You can also contact the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline.

In This Issue

- 1 September is Food Safety Education Month
- 1 Export Requirements Updates
- 2 Webinar: Reporting of Whole Genome Sequencing Results in Quarterly Establishment Information Letters
- 2 Policy Updates
- 3 Disasters Happen: Prepare Now. Learn How.

Export Requirements Updates

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

Barbados
New Caledonia
Republic of Korea
South Africa
Taiwan
Western Samoa

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

Webinar: Reporting of Whole Genome Sequencing Results in Quarterly Establishment Information Letters

FSIS will begin reporting whole genome sequencing (WGS) results for *Listeria monocytogenes* (Lm) in the agency's quarterly establishment information letters. In the [Dec. 15, 2017 Constituent Update](#) (CU), FSIS announced that effective Jan. 15, 2018, the agency was suspending Pulse Field Gel Electrophoresis (PFGE) analysis for Lm and would be generating pathogen characterization through WGS only. In the [May 11, 2018 CU](#), FSIS announced its intention to include WGS information generated for Lm isolates in quarterly establishment information letters in the future.

In August, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) made the Multilocus Sequence Typing (MLST) codes also called the 'allele designations' available to FSIS and the PulseNet laboratories. These codes or allele designations allow for comparisons between isolates to be made. FSIS has decided to include the MLST codes in the quarterly establishment information letters. The first set of quarterly establishment information letters that will include WGS for Lm isolates and the CDC MLST codes will be available in September 2018.

FSIS intends to conduct a webinar for industry on Thurs. Sept. 13, 2018 from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. ET to further discuss, in part, the WGS MLST approach and codes as well as related WGS topics. To access the webinar, visit <http://ems8.intellor.com/login/808482> and follow the on-screen instructions. Use the following information when logging on: meeting number: 1-877-369-5243 or 1-617-668-3633 and access code: 0278558. Please be sure to log on as a participant. The webinar will be recorded and posted on the FSIS website upon availability. For questions about the webinar, contact Buck McKay at (202) 720-0284 or by email at: buckley.mckay@fsis.usda.gov

FSIS anticipates a similar transition from PFGE to WGS when CDC releases the MLST designation codes for *Salmonella*, Shiga Toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) and *Campylobacter* in the upcoming fiscal year.

Policy Updates

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 46 -18 - *Analysis for Salmonella of all Imported Beef Products Sampled for Shiga Toxin-Producing Escherichia coli (STEC)*

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
Roxanne Smith

Editor
Veronika Pfaeffle

Disasters Happen: Prepare Now. Learn How.

This September, National Preparedness Month's overarching theme is, "Disasters Happen. Prepare Now. Learn How." Similar to a natural disaster, a food defense incident is unexpected and can cause devastating impacts to both your establishment and public health. Planning to prevent or prepare for a food defense incident — the intentional contamination or adulteration of food products where there is an intent to cause public health harm or economic disruption — is the first step in preparing your establishment. One of the most important steps in planning to prevent or prepare for a food defense incident is to develop a food defense plan. This plan can help you identify important food defense measures that can be implemented to prevent or lessen the impact from intentional contamination of your product. Food defense practices identified in the plan do not have to be complex to be effective. These practices can be as simple as locking your doors to prevent unauthorized access, securing chemicals or other hazardous materials, performing background checks on potential new employees, and ensuring visitors and vendors are escorted in the facility at all times.

Developing a food defense plan and implementing the measures in the plan are a simple step you can take to protect your product, facility, and employees from a food defense incident. Remember, you never know when a food defense incident is going to happen, but you can plan ahead for it.

Information on food defense tools and resources is available at: www.fsis.usda.gov/fooddefense.

In addition, FSIS tools and resources for emergency preparedness and response can be found at: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fooddefense/food-defense-defense-and-emergency-response/emergency-response>. If you have any questions about food defense, contact the FSIS Food Defense Assessment Staff at FoodDefense@fsis.usda.gov.