FSIS DIRECTIVE	1050.1 Revision 5	5/26/20

REQUESTING PARTICIPATION AT NON-FSIS SPONSORED MEETINGS AND EVENTS

I. PURPOSE

This directive provides instructions to FSIS employees on how to request and obtain authorization to speak, participate, or attend meetings and other events sponsored by outside entities. FSIS has revised this directive to provide new instructions to FSIS employees about the Meetings Attendance System's (MAS) new location under the Human Resources General Support System (HR-GSS), along with the new internet site https://ohrportal.fsis.usda.gov/systems/meetings/ that employees are to use to access the system. FSIS employees are to use the MAS to request participation at a meeting or event outside FSIS. Approving officials are to approve or deny a meeting or event request using this system.

II. CANCELLATION

FSIS Directive 1050.1 Revision 4, *Requesting Participation at Non-FSIS Sponsored Meetings and Events*, 12/13/17

III. BACKGROUND

FSIS is committed to participating in meetings, conventions, and other events sponsored by outside entities when necessary to support its mission. The procedures in this directive will help ensure the efficient use of Agency resources and improve the process of responding to requests to participate in an event or meeting. Approving officials will be able to track meeting and event requests for their employees and have the ability to generate reports.

IV. GENERAL PROVISIONS

A. FSIS prioritizes its participation in these activities based on the volume of requests and the limitations on Agency resources.

B. Employees are to discuss all meeting or event requests with their supervisor before adding their requests into the web-based MAS.

V. MEETINGS ATTENDANCE SYSTEM ENROLLMENT PROCESS

All FSIS employees are automatically enrolled into the MAS. Employees are to have their level 2 eAuthentication activated to use the system.

VI. TYPES OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

A. The type of meetings or events held by outside entities that require approval includes:

    1. **Meetings and Other Events**

        a. Conventions;

DISTRIBUTION: Electronic; All Field Employees   **OPI**: OPPD

b. Workshops;

c. Fairs; and

d. Annual industry meetings.

2. **Outside Entities**

a. Trade Associations;

b. Consumer groups;

c. Federal, State, local government agencies (other than FSIS) or international organizations; and

d. Academia or Extension.

B. Employees do not have to submit a request for meetings or events that include:

1. Communications with elected officials, their staffs, and the media. Refer to FSIS Directive 1240.1, *Communicating with External Entities*, for provisions on communicating with the media and Congressional offices.

2. Participation in meetings and events for recruitment, training, and development. Refer to FSIS Directive 4410.1, *Employee Development*, for guidance on participation at these types of meetings and events.

VII. CRITERIA FOR AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION

The Agency's decision about an employee speaking or participating in a meeting or event is based on all of the following criteria:

1. Participation assists in the promotion of special Agency initiatives or furthers the program needs of the Agency;

2. Sufficient funds are available to cover the potential costs of participation. If travel expenditures cannot be funded, employees are to consider using other types of video or audio conferencing technologies (e.g., webinars); and

3. Participation has no conflict of interest or ethical issues. USDA's Office of Ethics self-help guide entitled, "Can I Attend This Event" *https://www.ethics.usda.gov/selfhelp.htm*, provides guidelines for employees attending outside events. Employees and supervisors who wish to consult directly with an ethics counselor for advice can send an e-mail request to: mailto: Ethics-FoodSafety@usda.gov.

VIII. OBTAINING AUTHORIZATION

A. Assistant Administrators (AAs) and District Managers (DMs) or their designee are to provide authorization for employees in their respective program area to speak at, or participate in, a meeting or event. The Office of Field Operations (OFO) AA provides authorization for the DMs . The FSIS Office of the Administrator (OA) is to provide authorization for AAs.

B. Employees are to obtain prior approval from their supervisor. Once approval is received, the employee is to submit a request directly into the MAS. The MAS:

1. Provides specific audio-visual guides and instructions for entering information on each screen;

2. Generates an e-mail to the employee to confirm receipt of the request.

C. AAs and DMs or their designee will receive a system-generated e-mail alerting them that an employee from their respective program area is requesting approval to attend a meeting or event. The OA will receive a system-generated e-mail message if the request is from an Assistant Administrator.

D. AAs and DMs or their designee are to monitor e-mails received from the MAS for employee requests. The AA or DM is to approve or deny the requests in the MAS.

E. The AA or their designee will receive an e-mail message informing them of the OA's decision. The DM will receive an e-mail message informing them of the OFO AA's decision.

F. FSIS employees will receive a generated e-mail message informing them of the approving official's decision.

G. Approving officials will be able to generate a report for meetings that employees attend for any time period using the MAS. The system will automatically archive meetings.

H. The Administrator may:

1. Review requests in the MAS at any time.

2. Consult with an AA or DM to approve or deny a request to attend a meeting or event.

IX. HOW TO REQUEST PARTICIPATION AT NON-FSIS SPONSORED MEETINGS AND EVENTS

A. Employees are to log onto the MAS using the updated web address at https://ohrportal.fsis.usda.gov/systems/meetings/ by using their level 2 eAuthentication credentials or their eAuthentication level 2 User ID and Password..

B. On the MAS's main page https://ohrportal.fsis.usda.gov/systems/meetings/, user guide videos are accessible by clicking on the "User Guides and Video" button.

X. QUESTIONS

For questions regarding this directive send an email to FSIS.Meetings@usda.gov. For assistance with the MAS, send an e-mail to HRSystemRequest@usda.gov.

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