



## Secretary Perdue Announces FSIS Key Leadership

Today, Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced the appointment of Carmen Rottenberg and Paul Kiecker to key leadership positions within the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). Rottenberg has been named the Administrator of FSIS and Kiecker the Deputy Administrator. For more information about the announcement, please visit: <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2018/05/11/secretary-perdue-announces-fsis-key-leadership>.

## FSIS Proposes to Eliminate Redundant Hog Carcass Cleaning Regulation

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is announcing in the *Federal Register* a proposal to eliminate a redundant regulatory requirement for hog slaughter establishments to clean hog carcasses before incising.

Establishments are required to have a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system that identifies potential biological, chemical or physical hazards, and the controls to prevent, reduce or eliminate those hazards at specific points in the process. Because establishments are required to operate under HACCP regulations and apply HACCP principles, this command-and-control regulatory requirement is no longer necessary to ensure food safety; its objectives are met by other regulations, including HACCP regulations.

Since 1997, when FSIS began to take science-based approaches to food safety, establishments have been required to address hazards in their HACCP plans, Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (Sanitation SOPs) or prerequisite programs and these advancements have made the outdated regulation redundant. Currently, establishments are required to address hog carcass processing and associated hazards to prevent the adulteration of meat products prepared for human food. This regulation is no longer needed because other regulations require the sanitary handling and preparation of carcasses, organs and parts. In addition, this regulation has required hog carcass cleaning to be done at a certain point in the process instead of allowing establishments to clean the carcass at the point that makes the most sense based on the configuration of the establishment.

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### Export Requirements Updates

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

- European Union
- Japan
- Mexico
- People's Republic of China
- Turkey

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

## ... FSIS Proposes to Eliminate

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Under this proposal, FSIS inspectors will continue to verify that establishments' HACCP plans are effective in controlling, reducing, or eliminating hazards at all control points in the production process.

FSIS is requesting public comment on the proposed rule to remove this redundant regulation. There will be a 60-day period for comment once the rule is published in the *Federal Register*.

To view the proposed rule and information on how to comment on the rule, visit the FSIS website at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulations/federal-register/proposed-rules>.

## FSIS Launches Outreach Initiative for Small and Very Small Plants

A vast majority of the meat and poultry industry in the United States is made up of small and very small businesses. In fact, more than 90% of the approximately 6,000 plants inspected by FSIS are small and very small.

These businesses play an integral role in feeding communities across America and FSIS is dedicated to helping them put safe food on consumers' tables. As such, outreach to these businesses is critically important – ensuring they have the tools, guidance, and resources needed to comply with FSIS regulations and ultimately deliver products that are safe and wholesome.

To enhance its existing outreach resources, FSIS is launching an initiative to prioritize outreach to small and very small establishments in each of the [10 districts](#) throughout the country. Leading this initiative will be FSIS' Enforcement, Investigation, and Analysis Officers (EIAOs), technical experts adept in food safety regulations. The EIAOs will be dedicating 25% of their time to outreach activities and will work directly with owners and operators from small and very small establishments to discuss food safety and regulatory compliance, review available tools and resources, and respond to inquiries. Direct outreach activities may include one-on-one discussions, regional workshops, conferences and roundtable discussions.

This outreach initiative complements the numerous FSIS resources available to provide support to small and very small establishments, including the [Small Plant Help Desk](#) (SPHD) established in December 2009. The SPHD provides direct access to knowledgeable staff dedicated to answering questions and providing assistance to small and very small establishments. Additionally, information on [Industry Support and Resources](#) is available on the FSIS website.

Together, these resources are available to answer questions regarding HACCP, humane handling, labeling, the Public Health Information System (PHIS), and other critical food safety topics.

EIAOs will be reaching out to small and very small establishment owners and operators to offer their assistance. FSIS is also encouraging owners and operators to take advantage of this resource by contacting their nearest FSIS district office.

*FSIS Constituent Update* is prepared by the Congressional and Public Affairs Staff, Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Education

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# FSIS Posts Next Set of Establishment Specific Datasets

As announced in the *Federal Register* on July 14, 2016, FSIS is preparing to publish the next set of establishment specific datasets on raw turkey carcass sampling results on July 6, 2018 (Docket No. FSIS-2014-0032). Prior to publishing these datasets, FSIS is making sample datasets available. The sample dataset and corresponding data dictionary on raw turkey carcasses sampling results can be found at: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/ffsis/topics/data-collection-and-reports/data/datasets-laboratory-sampling>.

Please visit <http://www.regulations.gov/> to comment on the turkey carcass sampling results sample dataset and data dictionary and follow the online instructions at that site for submitting comments to Docket FSIS-2014-0032 by June 22, 2018. Additional details can be found in the [FSIS Establishment-Specific Data Release Strategic Plan](#).

## FSIS Posts Updated Dataset on Import Refusals

On May 15, 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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/ffsis/topics/data-collection-and-reports/data>.

## *Listeria monocytogenes* Testing Update

Effective Jan. 15, 2018, FSIS suspended pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) analysis for *Listeria monocytogenes* and is now generating pathogen characterization through whole genome sequencing (WGS). As a result, PFGE analysis is no longer needed. WGS information is being generated for each isolate; however, the information is not yet available for inclusion in the quarterly establishment information letters. FSIS intends to include the WGS results and information on potential harborage or cross-contamination based on those results in the next quarterly establishment information letter.

### Policy Updates

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

**Notice 26-18 - FSIS Sampling for Labeling Claims Verification**

# Reminder: FSIS Comment Period on Petition on Beef and Meat Labeling Requirements Ends May 17

FSIS extended the comment period for the petition submitted by the U.S. Cattlemen's Association (USCA) requesting that the Agency exclude products not derived directly from animals that have been raised and slaughtered from the definition of "beef" and "meat." The petition, which is dated Feb. 9, 2018, was posted on the FSIS petitions webpage on Feb. 16, 2017. The petition is available at: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/e4749f95-e79a-4ba5-883b-394c8bdc97a3/18-01-Petition-US-Cattlement-Association020918.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>.

FSIS' regulations permit interested persons to submit comments on petitions filed with the Agency and provide for posting these comments on the FSIS website (9 CFR 392.7). The regulations also state that comments on a petition should be submitted within 60 days of the posting date of the petition (9 CFR 392.7(b)). The comment period for the USCA petition was scheduled to close on April 17, 2018. However, the petition has generated significant interest from stakeholders and on April 10, 2018, FSIS received a request to extend the comment period. Therefore, FSIS extended the comment period for an additional 30 days to May 17.

In addition, to facilitate submission and public posting of comments on the petition, interested persons may submit comments online via the federal eRulemaking portal at: <http://www.regulations.gov>; by mail sent to Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mailstop 3758, Room 6065, Washington, D.C. 20250-3700; or by hand or courier delivery to 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 6065, Washington, D.C. 20250-3700.

All comments submitted by mail or electronic mail must include the Agency name and identification number FSIS-2018-0016. Comments on the petition should be submitted by May 17, 2018.

## UPDATE: FSIS Testing for *E. coli*



FSIS posts biweekly updates of the Agency's raw ground beef *E. coli* sampling program, which includes testing results of raw ground beef component samples for *E. coli* O157:H7 and Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STECs) from FSIS routine and follow-up sampling programs. Data are also presented for non-O157 STECs by each non-O157 STEC serogroup.

Between June 4, 2012 and April 22, 2018, FSIS laboratory services analyzed a total of 22,783 beef trim samples (18,731 domestic and 4,052 imported), 4,755 routine follow-up samples (4,641 domestic and 114 imported) and 380 non-routine follow-up/traceback samples. 213 samples were found to be positive; 128 were domestic trim samples, 11 were imported trim samples, 70 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 11 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>.