



## FSIS Monitoring Evolving COVID-19 Situation

FSIS takes its responsibility of ensuring a safe food supply very seriously. The agency is closely monitoring COVID-19 and actively following CDC guidance and best practices. We encourage employees and stakeholders to refer to [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus> for up-to-date information.

We have updated our human pandemic preparedness plan and are prepared to follow the plan should a situation arise that may have an effect on our daily operations. The agency will closely monitor and track any employee absenteeism to plan for and minimize impacts to operations. The agency will also work to prioritize inspection at establishments based on local conditions and resources available.

Currently there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 by food or food packaging and there have not been any cases of COVID-19 in the United States associated with imported goods. However, it is always important to follow good hygiene practices (i.e., wash hands and surfaces often, separate raw meat from other foods, cook to the right temperature, and refrigerate foods promptly) when handling or preparing foods.

Additionally, we are aware that a number of regulated establishments have instituted health screening questionnaires and have requested FSIS inspectors respond before they can enter the premises. USDA Office of General Counsel's (OGC) has issued the below guidance on the issue below and has asked FSIS to share it with our employees and industry.

**"We are aware and share your concerns about the health and safety of your plant/facility and the general public, as well as your desire to solicit information from our employees. Due to privacy-related laws and regulations covering our employees, OGC is advising FSIS employees not to complete and sign questionnaires about their medical conditions or attest to their medical conditions. However, USDA has taken the following actions to address the spread of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19):**

**All United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) managers and employees have received guidance from the agency on protocols, preventative measures and mitigation guidelines regarding COVID-19. USDA guidance is consistent with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidance. The agency continues to provide additional guidance to all managers and employees.**

**All USDA employees are required to follow USDA guidance and policy."**

FSIS is committed to its core mission and will continue to monitor the situation closely.

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### Export Requirements Update

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

- Australia
- Canada
- European Union
- Japan
- Philippines

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

# FSIS Announces Leadership Changes

On March 12, Paul Kiecker was sworn in as FSIS Administrator. Most recently, he served as FSIS Deputy Administrator. He also served as the agency's Acting Administrator from May of 2018 until January of 2019. Throughout his 30 years with FSIS, Paul has been committed to a strong public health vision that has guided him to overcome obstacles, identify opportunities for improvement, manage resources efficiently, and achieve food safety objectives to prevent foodborne illness.

Since joining FSIS in 1988 as a food inspector, Paul has served in a number of roles at the agency, to include: Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Office of Field Operations; Executive Associate for Regulatory Operations; District Manager in Springdale, Ariz, and Madison, Wis.; and Deputy District Manager in Madison, Wis. Paul's experience with FSIS also includes work with the Office of Investigation, Enforcement, and Audit, where he served as a Compliance Investigator and as a Supervisory Compliance Officer.

Terri Nintemann will be assuming the role of Acting Deputy Administrator. Terri has been with FSIS since 2003, and has held various leadership positions throughout the agency, most recently serving as Assistant Administrator of Policy and Program Development (OPPD). She graduated from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science and a minor in Ag Economics.

Rachel Edelstein will be taking on the role of Acting Assistant Administrator of OPPD. She has been serving as the Deputy Assistant Administrator of OPPD since 2012. Rachel has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English from the College of William and Mary and a Master of Arts Degree in English from the University of Virginia.

April Regonlinski will become the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for OPPD. She is currently the Director of the Policy Analysis Staff in OPPD. April holds a B.A. in Government and Economics with a minor in Mathematics from St. Lawrence University. She also earned a J.D. from Syracuse University College of Law.

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

On March 20, 2020, 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>.

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

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# FSIS Creates Webpages for Foodborne Outbreak Investigations

FSIS has created three webpages to share information about the response actions and prevention outcomes of foodborne outbreak investigations. The new webpages are:

- [www.fsis.usda.gov/OutbreakOutcomes](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OutbreakOutcomes), which provides an overview of response actions and prevention outcomes resulting from outbreak investigations and contains links to the two pages below.
- [www.fsis.usda.gov/OutbreakResponse](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OutbreakResponse), which contains information about selected FSIS outbreak investigations and their short-term outcomes, such as recalls and public health alerts of FSIS-regulated products linked to illnesses. The webpage also contains links to after-action review reports that have been published for some outbreak investigations, describing lessons learned that can help prevent future illness and improve response.
- [www.fsis.usda.gov/OutbreakPrevention](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OutbreakPrevention), which contains long-term actions FSIS has taken to apply lessons learned from outbreak investigations, including policy improvements, industry guidance, consumer education, food safety research promotion, and efforts to strengthen outbreak response in collaboration with public health partners.

FSIS will update these webpages as new information becomes available. Other resources regarding FSIS foodborne illness investigations can be found at [www.fsis.usda.gov/PHPartners](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PHPartners).

## FSIS Posts Updated Dataset on Import Refusals

On March 16, 2020, FSIS will update the publicly posted dataset on import refusals for products that the agency regulates. Federal law requires every commercial shipment of imported meat, poultry, and egg products to be re-inspected prior to product entering U.S. commerce. FSIS re-inspects each shipment to verify labeling, proper certification, general condition, and 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, or issued a replacement certificate).

This dataset is updated around the 15th of each month and contains each shipment with product that was refused entry. To access these datasets or view more information about them, please visit the FSIS Datasets page at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/data-collection-and-reports/data>.

# Reminder on Signing Paper Export Certificates for China

As announced in the February 21 [Constituent Update](#), the deadline for when FSIS Public Health Veterinarians (PHVs) can sign paper export certificates generated outside of PHIS is March 21, 2020. To ensure adequate time for processing and notifying China of all outstanding paper certificates by March 21, 2020, industry will need to present accurate and complete export certificates to FSIS PHVs for signature no later than March 17, 2020. FSIS PHVs will continue to send all complete and signed China export certificate packages to the [ChinaExportCertificate@usda.gov](mailto:ChinaExportCertificate@usda.gov) mailbox until midnight (EDT) on March 18, 2020.

After March 17, 2020, any paper certificates generated outside of PHIS presented to FSIS will not be signed. The export applicant will need to submit a new export application in PHIS and the product will need to also be re-stamped/re-labeled with the number from the new application. FSIS will not issue replacement certificates for unsigned paper export certificates for China.

After March 18, 2020, FSIS PHVs will no longer email meat and poultry export certificate packages to the [ChinaExportCertificate@usda.gov](mailto:ChinaExportCertificate@usda.gov) mailbox for advanced notification to China. China will receive advanced notification of each export certificate package—including FSIS Forms 9060-5, 9295-1 and, if applicable, 2630-9—through PHIS.

For export policy questions, please go to <https://askfsis.custhelp.com>. For technical questions concerning the XML schema development, please contact the FSIS Service Desk at 800-473-9135, select prompt 1, followed by prompt 3. Other questions concerning the PHIS export can be submitted to [PHISTechnicalQA@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:PHISTechnicalQA@fsis.usda.gov).

FSIS encourages all users who are not familiar with the [PHIS Export Component](#) to use the Industry Test Environment (ITE) opportunity to test their export application process. FSIS also has PHIS export information available on the PHIS Export Component page of the FSIS website.

## 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:

**Docket No. FSIS-2020-0008** - Notice of Request To Renew an Approved Information Collection: In-Home Food Safety Behaviors and Consumer Education: Annual Observational Study