



FSIS Releases Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Plan

FSIS released its Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Annual Plan on Friday, Dec. 1, 2017. The Annual Plan is directly aligned with the Agency's 2017-2021 Strategic Plan which outlines the ways FSIS will achieve its strategic goals over the next fiscal year. The Annual Plan serves as an operational guide for FSIS and in it, the Agency is held accountable to both new and continuing activities. FSIS continues to enhance how it measures its performance, and this year's Plan includes about 40 Strategic and Annual Plan measures that collectively work toward achieving our vision, mission and goals. This Annual Plan also shows how our work and accomplishments in FY 2017 carry in to what FSIS plans to achieve in FY 2018.

FSIS continues to work towards its goals while the number of establishments requiring inspection continues to increase, to approximately 6,400. The Agency anticipates a very busy and productive year in focusing on its outcomes to prevent product contamination and foodborne illness, modernize systems and approaches and enhance how we do business. Continuing priorities for FSIS include further implementation of the [New Poultry Inspection System](#) (NPIS) and [Siluriformes fish inspection](#), effectively using [Public Health Risk Evaluations](#) (PHREs) and pathogen reduction performance standards for *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* in poultry to drive compliance and prevent contamination and modernizing swine and egg products inspection systems. The Agency will also continue to increase its use of whole genome sequencing, further develop key informational tools and resources for inspectors and continue to work with public health partners to prevent *Listeria monocytogenes* in retail delicatessens. FSIS will also continue its focus on recruiting and retaining employees in hard-to-fill mission-critical positions, engaging and empowering employees, and implementing process enhancements in key areas. The Annual Plan can be accessed at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/88c7a056-3f26-41e1-8f03-d18b-c9e0fb05/Annual-Plan-FY2018.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>.

FSIS Identifies Additional Food Safety Research Priorities

While FSIS is not a research funding organization, the Agency recognizes the importance of keeping abreast of the latest scientific research and promoting research in areas important to the FSIS mission. FSIS offers a listing of its food safety research priorities and suggested studies associated with each priority. The list of studies has been recently updated at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/science/food-safety-research-priorities/food-safety-research-priorities>. Updates include one new research priority and seven priority associated studies. These priorities and study titles are presented as suggestions for food safety researchers and organizations that fund food safety research.

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Export Requirements Updates

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

- European Union
- Taiwan

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

FSIS to Host Webinar on *Listeria* Controls at Retail

FSIS will host a webinar on Dec. 14, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. ET to discuss how to control *Listeria* in the retail environment. A FSIS/Food and Drug Administration (FDA) interagency risk assessment found that over 80% of *Listeria* illnesses associated with ready-to-eat (RTE) meat or poultry products sold at delis (e.g. deli meat) were attributed to product sliced or otherwise handled at the retail store.

The webinar is specifically designed for state, U.S. territories and tribal officials and food safety professionals who oversee foodservice retail operations with in-house delicatessens (e.g., grocery stores, convenience stores) to discuss the Agency document, "FSIS Best Practices Guidance for Controlling *Listeria monocytogenes* (*Lm*) in Retail Delicatessens." The guidance was announced in the *Federal Register* (80 FR 33228) on June 11, 2015 and is posted online. The document provides specific recommendations for actions retailers can take in the deli area to control *Lm* contamination of RTE meat and poultry products.

In addition, the Agency will discuss the latest findings from its ongoing multi-year nationwide pilot project to assess whether retailers are using the recommendations in its "Best Practices Guidance for Controlling *Listeria monocytogenes* (*Lm*) in Retail Delicatessens." As part of the pilot project, FSIS Compliance Investigators are completing questionnaires on whether retailers are following specific recommendations from the guidance. The questionnaire is used to compare the practices observed in retail delis to the FSIS Retail *Lm* Guideline in the following areas: product handling, cleaning and sanitizing, facility and equipment controls and employee practices. Information from the pilot project is analyzed quarterly and the results are posted on FSIS' website.

Lm is a bacterium that is found in moist environments, soil and decaying vegetation and can persist along the food continuum. Transfer of the bacteria from the retail environment (e.g., deli cases, slicers and utensils), employees or raw food products is a particular hazard of concern in RTE foods, including meat and poultry products.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that *listeriosis*, a serious infection, causes about 1,600 illnesses, 1,500 hospitalizations and 260 deaths in the United States each year. While *listeriosis* is rare, the CDC estimates that *Lm* causes a high level of death compared to other foodborne pathogens.

During the webinar, FSIS officials will provide background information on *Lm* and *listeriosis*, discuss the updated controls for *Lm* in retail delis and findings from the multi-year nationwide pilot project and take questions.

For background, the guidance was developed based on key findings from:

- The FSIS/FDA "Interagency Risk Assessment—*Listeria monocytogenes* in Retail Delicatessens;"
- The available scientific knowledge;
- The 2013 FDA Food Code; and
- Lessons learned from controlling *Lm* in FSIS-inspected meat and poultry processing establishments.

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

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The guidance discusses practical steps that retailers can take to prevent certain RTE foods that are prepared or sliced in retail delis and consumed in the home, such as deli meats and deli salads, from becoming contaminated with *Lm*, and thus, a potential source of *listeriosis*.

FSIS encourages retailers and public health officials to review the guidance and evaluate the effectiveness of their retail practices and intervention strategies in reducing the risk of *listeriosis* to consumers from RTE meat and poultry deli products.

To participate in the webinar, you may either: 1) call in at 1-888-844-9904, passcode: 5277207, 2) visit: <https://www.connectmeeting.att.com>, meeting number: 1-888-844-9904, passcode: 5277207.

In order to participate in the webinar you must RSVP by sending an email to evelyn.arce@fsis.usda.gov. Capacity is limited.

If you have any concerns or questions, please feel free to contact Ms. Evelyn Arce at (202) 418-8903 by Dec. 6, 2017 or Jeff Tarrant at (202) 690-6497 from Dec. 11-14, 2017.

For more information on the FSIS Best Practices Guidance document and Interagency Risk Assessment, visit: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/29d51258-0651-469b-99b8-e986baee8a54/Controlling-LM-Delicatessens.pdf?MOD=AJPERES> or <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/c0c6dfbc-ad83-47c1-bcb8-8db6583f762b/Lm-Retail-Technical-Report.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>.

FSIS Announces Update to the Microbiology Laboratory Guidebook

The Microbiology Laboratory Guidebook (MLG) Appendix 1.08 Media and Reagents has been revised to include updated media heating instructions, media expiration and storage recommendations and an updated list of media recipes, media and reagents used in the Field Service Laboratories. The complete list of revisions can be found in Notice of Change page of MLG Appendix 1.09.

FSIS intends to begin using the updated method no sooner than Dec. 29, 2017. To review the guidebook, please visit <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/science/laboratories-and-procedures/guidebooks-and-methods/microbiology-laboratory-guidebook>.

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 65-17 - Federal Benefits 2017 Open Season

IFSAC Webinar on Updated Foodborne Illness Source Attribution Estimates

The Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration (IFSAC) is hosting a webinar to discuss its latest report on updated foodborne illness source attribution estimates using outbreak data for 2013 for *Salmonella*, *E. coli* O157, *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Campylobacter*. During the webinar, experts will share results from the report and discuss IFSAC's approach to analyzing outbreak data to estimate which foods are responsible for foodborne illnesses related to specific pathogens.

The webinar will take place on Friday, Dec. 15, 2017 from 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. ET. To register, please visit: <https://ifsac-2017-december.eventbrite.com>.

Attendees who previously registered for the original Oct. 20, 2017 webinar will need to re-register to attend the rescheduled Dec. 15 webinar.

Participants are encouraged to register for the webinar by Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2017, as space is limited. Registered participants will receive a confirmation email with the agenda and detailed instructions for accessing the webinar. A recording and transcript will be posted to IFSAC's events page in the weeks following the event.

IFSAC is a collaboration between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA FSIS), and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The collaboration works to improve coordination of federal food safety analytic efforts and to address cross-cutting priorities for food safety data collection, analysis and use. Projects and studies aim to identify foods that are important sources of illnesses.

For more information on IFSAC, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/ifsac/index.html> or email IFSAC at IFSAC@fda.hhs.gov.