

SMA InfoMeat

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USDA, FDA Continue Investigation of Contaminated Feed

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) continued their investigation of imported rice protein concentrate which has been found to contain melamine and melamine-related compounds. FSIS and FDA notified State authorities that swine fed adulterated product will not be approved to enter the food supply. At this time, there is no evidence of harm to humans associated with the processed pork product from any animals that consumed the contaminated feed, and therefore no recall of meat products processed from these animals has been issued. If any evidence surfaces to the contrary, appropriate action will be taken. The product was imported by Wilbur-Ellis, an importer and distributor of agricultural products. Although the company began importing product from China in August 2006, the company did not become aware of the contamination until April 2007. FDA has also determined the rice protein was used in the production of pet food and a portion of the pet food was used to produce animal feed. The ongoing investigation is tracing products distributed since August 2006 by Wilbur-Ellis throughout the distribution chain. USDA is offering to compensate producers who euthanize swine that were fed the adulterated product and is also offering the expertise and assistance of Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) personnel in carrying out depopulation activities to ensure animals are euthanized and disposed of in accordance with Federal and State laws. USDA and FDA continue to conduct a full, comprehensive examination to protect the nation's food supply and will provide updates as new information is confirmed.

RBI Meeting Examines Use of Volume in RBI Score

On April 25th, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) held another public meeting on its Risk Based Inspection (RBI) initiative. This meeting was to address the use of volume in calculating an establishment's RBI score. SMA President/CEO Dr. Joe Harris attended and presented recommendations from the meat industry. FSIS' initial algorithm to calculate an establishment's RBI score used five categories to classify an establishment's volume. The volume score would be multiplied by the inherent risk of the product produced (based on the ranking in the expert elicitation) to determine the Inherent Risk Measure (IRM). The IRM would make up one-half of the establishment's RBI score; the other half was the risk control measure (RCM) determined on how well an establishment controlled risk based on its compliance and analytical sampling history. For the initial implementation at various prototype locations across the country, the RBI scores for all plants would be slotted into one of three RBI categories which would determine the level of inspection intensity the plant would receive. For large volume plants, especially those making products ranked high on the risk ranking, the multiplier effect of volume resulted in establishments with outstanding risk controls receiving a high RBI score (and more inspection intensity) than very low volume facilities with a poor risk control score. Harris said that the agency's algorithm penalizes plants with greater volume. "We don't want to see an establishment that has great controls penalized simply based on its size," Harris said. Conversely, "we would not want to see a plant rewarded simply because of its small volume." Industry favors an approach in which volume is not used in a way that eliminates incentives for an establishment to improve its risk control, and thereby, its score, and would allow plants of all sizes to achieve all levels of inspection. FSIS may further refine or revise how volume is ultimately factored into the RBI algorithm. For a detailed summary of the meeting by SMA legal counsel Olsson, Frank & Weeda, P.C., email phyllis@southwestmeat.org. The FSIS PowerPoint presentations are available at: www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Risk_Based_Inspection/index.asp.

S O U T H W E S T M E A T A S S O C I A T I O N

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FSIS Continues Regulatory Education Sessions in May

FSIS will hold regulatory education sessions during May for the owners and operators of small and very small plants in New Jersey, Georgia and Tennessee. The May 2 session will cover a regulatory walk-through of sanitation standard operating procedures, hazard analysis and critical control point and rules of practice regulations. This session will be held from 6:30 - 8:30 PM at the Sheraton at Woodbridge Place Hotel, 515 Route One South, Iselin, NJ. The May 9 session will cover a regulatory walk-through of sanitation performance standard regulations and food defense. This session will be held from 6:30 - 8:30 PM at the Sheraton Atlanta Hotel, 165 Courtland Street, Atlanta, GA. The Tennessee regulatory education session on May 9 will cover a regulatory walk-through of sanitation standard operating procedures, hazard analysis and critical control point and rules of practice regulations. This session will be held from 6:30 - 8:30 PM at the Holiday Inn Brentwood, 5543 Edmondson Pike #160, Nashville, TN. Online registration forms and information about upcoming sessions can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Outreach_Sessions_SVS_Plants/index.asp.

FSIS Revises Custom Exempt Review Process

On April 26, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) issued Directive 5930.1, Revision 3, titled, Custom Exempt Review Process. This directive describes the policies and procedures for the review of custom livestock or poultry slaughtering and processing operations that are exempt from inspection requirements under the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act. It also outlines the actions that FSIS may take when custom exempt facilities and operators do not maintain compliance with the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. In Addition, the directive updates methodologies for determining whether establishments are meeting performance standards for sanitation as set out in the sanitation performance standards regulations and reflects organizational changes in FSIS and reflects policies regarding bovine spongiform encephalopathy and specified risk materials. Directive 5930.1, Revision 3 is available on the FSIS website at www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISDirectives/5930.1.pdf.

Horse Slaughter Bills Advancing in Congress

Last Wednesday, the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee approved a bill banning horse slaughter for human consumption, 15-7. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) was among those voting against the ban because she believes that states are capable of handling the issue. Also, the U.S. House voted Thursday on a bill restoring a ban on the slaughter of wild horses and burros. The ban had been in place for more than 30 years, but Congress changed the law three years ago to permit older and unwanted horses to be sold for slaughter. In the last few years, animal protection groups stepped up efforts to ban horse slaughter and have had much success in the courts. A federal appeals court in January upheld Texas' law banning the sale of horse meat for human consumption and in March a U.S. district court in Washington ordered USDA to stop the fee-for-service horse meat inspections. The decisions have forced the shutdown of operations at two Texas plants and a third in Illinois. Charles Stenholm, a former Texas congressman who has lobbied for groups opposing the ban, conceded "it's not looking good." He said the consequences of the ban will soon be seen when "unwanted horses [that somebody has to take care of] suddenly start showing up on county roads."

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to attend SMA's 51st Annual Convention and Suppliers' Showcase, July 18-21, 2007 at the Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort in Bastrop, Texas! Hotel reservations are available by calling 512-308-1234 or accessing the link on our website!

Briefly . . .

US Beef Shipment Clears S. Korean Inspections: South Korea's government said Friday a shipment of U.S. beef that arrived last week was safe, clearing a key hurdle after an import absence of more than three years due to BSE fears. The National Veterinary Research & Quarantine Service made the announcement after inspecting the beef, which arrived Monday. The 6.4-ton shipment from Creekstone Farms Premium Beef in Arkansas City, Kansas, will be released into commerce as soon as paperwork is finalized. "After thorough quarantine and inspection, no problematic points were found, including bone fragments," said the statement, issued at the Agriculture and Forestry Ministry south of Seoul. The statement also said the government would continue to conduct "thorough inspections" of U.S. beef imports.

Bush Promotes Beef with Abe: In talks with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe last week, President Bush said that he promoted U.S. beef and planned to serve the delegation cheeseburgers for lunch during their Camp David visit. "I brought up to the prime minister that I'm absolutely convinced the Japanese people will be better off when they eat American beef," Bush told reporters. Media reports didn't indicate whether Abe offered a response, though his government earlier agreed to scrap its mandatory, box-by-box inspection of U.S. beef in exchange for access to U.S. meatpacking plants. Japan wants to make sure U.S. facilities are complying with its current standards. Secretary Mike Johanns said that he hopes the new Japanese inspections of U.S. meat packers will be complete in about one month.

Japan Reports Possible BSE Cases: According to Associated Press reports, preliminary tests on a 6-year-old cow in western Japan indicate it may be infected with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). Meat inspectors in Okayama prefecture (state) found late Monday that a dairy cow, intended to be slaughtered for meat, has tested positive for the disease, said prefectural health official Waichiro Kawai. The prefecture has sent samples from the cow to the National Institute of Infectious Diseases for confirmation, which could come as early as Wednesday, Kawai said. Also on Monday, agriculture ministry officials said a 20-month-old steer in northeastern Japan may have had BSE.

Brooks Appointed to NACMCF: Dr. Scott Brooks of Food Safety Net Services, Ltd. was recently appointed to the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF) by Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns. The committee provides scientific advice on public health issues relative to the safety and wholesomeness of the U.S. food supply, and assists in the development of microbiological criteria and reviews and evaluates epidemiological and risk assessment data as well as methodologies for assessing microbiological hazards. Appointees are scientists from government, industry, academia, and consumer groups and serve on the committee for two years.

POSITION AVAILABLE

Weiler and Company, Inc., a leading manufacturer of heavy-duty food processing equipment, is currently seeking a **Customer Service Representative** to join its customer service team. This position reports directly to the Corporate Director of Customer Service.

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IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that we report the death of longtime SMA member and supporter Delores Jean Clifton, 70, who passed away suddenly April 18, 2007 at her home. She married Eugene "Gene" M. Clifton in 1951, and in 1962, they moved to Fort Worth, where they raised their family. In 1988, they founded Clifco Spice Sales to supply spices and seasoning needs to meat packers and processors. Delores served as president, and with son, Kevin, operated and successfully expanded the business during the 15 years after Gene's death in 1992. She is survived by her children, Vicki Meldrum and husband, David; Michael Clifton and wife, Patty; Greg T. Clifton and wife, Marcia; and Kevin S. Clifton and wife, Joanne; grandchildren, Mandi, Cristi, and Zachary Meldrum; Michael Wayne, KC, Laura, Jessica, Morgan, Natalie and Sarah Clifton; four sisters; one brother; a large extended family, and many friends. We extend our deepest condolences to her family, friends, and colleagues. She will be greatly missed. The family has requested that memorials be made to the American Diabetes Association.