

SMA InfoMeat

1957

50 Years of Excellence!

2007

December 3, 2007
Volume 32, Issue 10

Email: phyllis@southwestmeat.org
Internet website: southwestmeat.org

Edited by Phyllis Zimmerman

FSIS Resumes Normal Pathogen Testing on Canadian Products

In a letter to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) last Thursday, FSIS stated that the agency would resume normal levels of product examinations of exported Canadian meat, poultry and egg products at import houses in the United States effective November 28, 2007. The return to the normal testing frequency comes after FSIS completed two audits in Canada earlier this month. One audit focused on the CFIA's investigation into unsafe practices employed by Ranchers Beef Ltd., and recall events associated with that establishment. This audit indicated that the unsafe practices employed by Ranchers Beef Ltd. were not used by other Canadian establishments. The second audit was a follow-up review of seven Canadian establishments that were either delisted or received Notices of Intent to Delist in an earlier FSIS audit. These establishments were found to have sufficient corrective actions in place to address concerns found in the earlier audit. FSIS has also resumed normal levels of testing for *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Salmonella* in ready-to-eat products. The agency will continue testing of raw ground beef and trim normally sent for grinding. Testing for *E. coli* O157:H7 will proceed at levels to be determined after an analysis is completed for eligible imported beef products from all equivalent countries.

USDA, NCBA Partner on Animal ID System

Last week, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced a partnership with the National Cattlemen's Foundation in cooperation with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA). The partnership will facilitate the registration of additional cattle premises as part of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). USDA will soon release a business plan to advance animal disease traceability. That plan outlines strategies to be undertaken to help achieve the long term goal of NAIS which is to retrieve sufficient trace forward and traceback data within a 48 hour window. This will allow animal health officials to trace a disease back to its source, which ultimately protects other premises and cattle from the adverse economic impact of a disease outbreak. "This cooperative agreement will help USDA reach out to the large and varied American cattle industry to promote the merits of a national animal identification system," said Bruce Knight, under secretary for USDA's marketing and regulatory programs. "For the future success of the industry, it is essential that producers and animal health officials have the information they need to respond quickly and effectively in the event of an animal disease situation. The National Animal Identification System provides that framework." Under the terms of the agreement, the National Cattlemen's Foundation and NCBA will use print and electronic media opportunities including National Cattlemen magazine and NCBA's "Cattlemen to Cattlemen" television program, as well as radio segments to create a foundation for future cattleman-to-cattleman outreach efforts. Funding also will be used for educational efforts to reach the organization's 29,000 members as well as approximately 230,000 additional cattle producers. These efforts will include direct producer contact along with education through the Livestock Marketing Council. NCBA will use its trade show and website to provide educational outreach. NAIS is a voluntary program and consists of three components: premises registration, animal identification and tracing. The premises registration component of NAIS ensures the availability of a nationwide communications network to assist livestock owners and animal health officials in the event of an animal disease event. A total of 426,671 premises nationwide have been registered to date.

S O U T H W E S T M E A T A S S O C I A T I O N
4103 SOUTH TEXAS AVENUE, SUITE 101 • BRYAN, TX 77802 • (979) 846-9011 • FAX (979) 846-8198

AMS Seeks Comments on “Naturally Raised” Standard for Meat

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking comments on a proposed voluntary standard for a naturally raised marketing claim for livestock and meat. The standard was published as a Notice and Request for Comments in the November 28 *Federal Register* and is entitled, “U.S. Standards for Livestock and Meat Marketing Claims, Naturally Raised Claim for Livestock and the Meat and Meat Products Derived from such Livestock.” USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) works with representatives of the various agricultural commodity marketing chains and others to establish or revise U.S. standards for nearly 240 agricultural products. The standards are used in the marketplace to specify the quality of commodities. Standards facilitate commerce by providing a common language for trade and a means of measuring value in marketing agricultural products. Increasingly, livestock and meat producers are using production or processing claims to distinguish their products in the marketplace. AMS, through its voluntary certification and audit programs, verifies the accuracy of these claims. The proposed standard will establish the minimum requirements for those producers who choose to operate a USDA verified program involving a naturally raised claim. The naturally raised marketing claim will also be a voluntary program. Comments must be received on or before January 28, 2008, and should be submitted online at www.regulations.gov. Written comments may be mailed to: Naturally Raised Marketing Claim, Room 2607–S, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250–0254; or faxed to 202-720–1112. All comments should reference docket number LS-07-16.

Register for the 2008 Processed Meats Clinic, January 8-10 at TAMU!

Are you interested in troubleshooting a processed meat product you currently manufacture? Or perhaps you’ve been considering development of a new product, or a variation of a current one? Do it at the 2008 Processed Meats Clinic, January 8-10, 2008, at Texas A&M University! Hosted by SMA, TAMU’s Meat Science Section, and Texas Cooperative Extension, this hands-on workshop will provide training and expert demonstrations in meat processing and product development. Registration information is available on the SMA website or by contacting the SMA office.

Sign up today! Registration is limited!



Custom Antimicrobial System

Innovation Means Integration
One Cost Per Head, One Cost Per Pound
On-Site Customer Service with OJT!

**Basic Employee
Technical Service CD
2006-2007**

Antimicrobial Agent
Keeper[®]
*Antimicrobial Intervention for the
Red Meat and RTE Industry*

Dan Mar Co.
Website: www.danmarco.net

Call Today:
(817) 822-5767



BEEF FREEZER STORAGE

Phone: 325-658-5555

Fax: 325-653-2472

Brent Smith brentsmithlsb@aol.com
Burley Smith lsbburley@aol.com
Bryan King lsbbryan@wcc.neg

New Modern Facility We Offer:

- ★ Storage
- ★ Boxing/Freezing
- ★ Tempering
- ★ Blast Freezing
- ★ Export Preparation

Prion Protein in Brain May Not Be Reliable Marker for Disease

Rapid diagnostic testing used to check for the presence of prion diseases such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) might fail to identify some highly infectious samples, researchers have found. Currently, scanning beef or other meat products for possible prion infection involves sampling brain tissue from the animal for abnormally folded prion protein, also called PrP; this form of PrP, which is sticky and hard to degrade, is believed to be the infectious agent behind prion diseases. Rona Barron and colleagues tested whether abnormal PrP and infectivity was an absolute association. They injected mice with two different strains of prion-infected tissue and quantified the degree of infection in these mice. Next, they examined the amount of abnormally folded PrP in brains of the sick mice and found that it did not correlate in any way with how infectious the disease strain was; in fact, some highly infectious tissue samples had nearly undetectable levels of abnormal PrP. These data suggest that not all abnormal PrP found in diseased tissues is infectious, and may instead be a pathologic by-product of disease. Some other agent, or a specific conformation of abnormally folded PrP, may therefore be responsible for prion disease, and current assays relying solely on abnormal PrP detection could therefore underestimate the frequency of infection. Barron and colleagues note that it's vital to find additional disease markers to help ensure no future prion outbreaks occur. The report appeared online November 30, 2007 in the *Journal of Biological Chemistry*. (*ScienceDaily.com*, 12/3/07)

Briefly . . .

Local Chamber of Commerce Honors Slovacek Sausage: The Bryan/College Station Chamber of Commerce recently awarded Slovacek Foods, LP and Owner/CEO Tim Rabroker their 2007 Agribusiness Award. The purpose of the annual award, voted by the Chamber's Agribusiness Council, is to recognize an agriculture producer or business that has gone above and beyond in supporting agriculture and promoting the industry, while philanthropically contributing to the community. The Snook, Texas establishment produces over 2.5 million pounds of sausage, employs 46 area personnel, and distributes across Texas and 11 states. Slovacek Sausage is "the Official Sausage of Texas A&M Athletics," and generously contributes to countless Aggie charities and organizations, such as The Big Event, Carpool, First Yell, and Aggie Ring Day. The firm's sponsorships and contributions to numerous community events and local charities, such as the Kolache Festival, Feast of Caring, Buddy Walk, Hospice Brazos Valley, the Holiday Classic Livestock Show and Brazos Valley MHMR, is also unequalled. Congratulations, Tim, for an honor well-deserved!

FSIS Announces Regulatory Education Workshop in UT: As part of the agency's ongoing initiative to enhance outreach to small and very small plants, FSIS will hold a regulatory education workshop in Salt Lake City, UT, tomorrow, December 4. This specific workshop will cover prerequisite programs and FSIS Notices 65-07, 66-07 and 68-07, with special emphasis on *E. coli*. The education session will be held 6:30 - 8:30 PM at the Radisson Hotel, 215 W. South Temple, Salt Lake City, UT. To register by phone, call 800-336-3747. Online registration forms and information can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Outreach_Sessions_SVS_Plants/index.asp.

U.S. to Push China on Farm Trade, Product Safety: The U.S. will push China to open its markets to more American farm goods and to ensure the safety of its exports during high-level talks this month in Beijing, U.S. officials said Friday. Acting Agriculture Secretary Chuck Conner, Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez and U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab will be in Beijing December 11 for the U.S.-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade talks. The U.S. will also urge China to maintain an open, competitive market and to beef up efforts to stop piracy and counterfeiting, U.S. officials said.

Most Recalled Meat Is Unrecovered: While consumers may draw comfort from voluntary meat recalls that alert stores, restaurants and households to potentially unsafe meat, most recalled meat is never recovered, according to a *USA Today* report. Typically, most recalled meat has already been consumed before the recall. A *USA Today* analysis of recall data from USDA revealed that for 73 meat recalls this year and last, recovery rates averaged 44 percent. For five recalls that followed reports of consumer illness, recovery rates per recall averaged just 20 percent. The article quotes a USDA official who says recalls sparked by reports of illness have low recovery rates because of the length of time that can pass between when a product is produced, when someone gets sick, and when the illness is linked with food.

FDA Claims Food Supply Is at Risk: America's food supply is at risk, as are the regulatory systems in place to oversee the nation's drug and device supplies, according to a subcommittee of the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Science Board in a report to be presented today. The subcommittee attributed the deficiencies to soaring demands on the FDA and resources that have not increased in proportion to those demands. The study's authors conclude "this imbalance is imposing a significant risk to the integrity of the food, drug, cosmetic and device regulatory system, and hence the safety of the public." (*Bryan Salvage, meatpoultry.com*, 12/3/07)