

SMA InfoMeat

1957

50 Years of Excellence!

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SMA Adds FSIS Veteran to Staff

The Southwest Meat Association is pleased to announce the addition of Mr. Bobby Palesano to its staff. Palesano will assume the role of Vice President of Technical Services on February 12, 2007. He recently announced his retirement from the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), effective February 2nd, after over 40 years of federal service. Over the years, Palesano served in a variety of jobs within FSIS, including Special Assistant to the Director of the Technical Service Center; Branch Chief, Domestic Review Staff; Processing Staff Officer; Food Technologist Instructor at the Center for Learning; and various inspection positions in the field. Most recently he led a working group as part of FSIS' risk-based inspection initiative and co-led a task force for strengthening FSIS outreach to small and very small plants. Palesano will be co-employed by the International HACCP Alliance, splitting his time between the Alliance and SMA. In his position at SMA, he will provide technical and regulatory assistance to member firms, assisting them with all regulatory compliance related issues as well as the development and implementation of food safety programs. "We are really excited about this excellent addition to SMA's staff," said Glen Kusak, President. "Bobby brings an enormous amount of expertise and experience to the position. SMA has become known for providing excellent service and value to its members. Bobby will be a valuable asset to the association, and our members will be the fortunate beneficiaries of his knowledge." "Bobby Palesano will provide a terrific boost in our ability to effectively serve an expanding membership," added SMA executive director Dr. Joe Harris. "As a charter member of the HACCP Alliance, SMA is glad to be able to partner with the Alliance in this unique way."

GAO Report Designates Food Safety As High Risk Area

A report released Wednesday by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) was highly critical of the current system for preventing dangerous bacteria from contaminating food and leading to deadly outbreaks. GAO's audits and evaluations identify federal programs and operations that, in some cases, are high risk due to their greater vulnerabilities to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement. This year, the GAO designated as high risk the area of federal oversight of food safety because of risks to the economy and to public health and safety. The report said that agriculture, as the largest industry and employer in the U.S., generates more than \$1 trillion in economic activity annually. Any food contamination could undermine consumer confidence in the government's ability to ensure the safety of the U.S. food supply, as well as cause severe economic consequences. In the 98-page report, GAO blamed problems with federal food safety monitoring on a lack of coordination among 15 different agencies responsible for enforcing at least 30 different laws and said that the current fragmented federal system has caused inconsistent oversight, ineffective coordination, and inefficient use of resources. GAO recommended that Congress consider a fundamental re-examination of the system and other improvements to help ensure the rapid detection of and response to any accidental or deliberate contamination of food before public health and safety is compromised. Preliminary data taken from 10 states by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show drops of 29% or more in the rates of some major food-borne illnesses from 1996 to 2005. Steven Cohen, a spokesman for USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, cited the falling rates as evidence of recent work to bolster government oversight through better detection. He said improved surveillance has also helped authorities find outbreaks that previously went unnoticed.

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U.S. Urges Japan to Expand Beef Imports

The Bush administration is insisting that Japan comply with U.S. plans to allow an increase in the number of beef producers that can export to Japan, according to a January 19 letter to the Japanese agriculture minister from Secretary Mike Johanns and U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab. The letter warned that the U.S. intends to approve additional plants for shipment as soon as an agreed-upon six-month moratorium ended. That moratorium should have ended January 27, 2007, according to U.S. calculations. Japanese officials have insisted that they be able to take as much time as they need to review the last six months of beef trade before agreeing to allow more imports. The U.S. asked that Japan do its review quickly – “within one month” – and allow beef trade to increase before that review is complete.

FSIS Issues Notice on Sample Collection for BSE Surveillance

Last week the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) released Notice 08-07, “Sample Collection from Cattle Under the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) Ongoing Surveillance Program.” The notice provides updated instructions for FSIS inspection program personnel regarding the collection of brain samples for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service’s (APHIS) Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) ongoing surveillance plan. It also incorporates the pertinent information from two cancelled notices, 51-06, “Sample Collection from Cattle under the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy,” and 52-06, “Temporary Suspension of Provision in the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) Ongoing Surveillance Program.” FSIS has incorporated the pertinent information from the cancelled notices into this notice. This revised notice is a result of changes APHIS has made to its surveillance plan. To review the Notice 08-07, visit the FSIS website at www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISNotices/08-07.pdf.

FSIS Announces Regulatory Education Sessions for March

FSIS will continue to hold regulatory education sessions in March for the owners and operators of small and very small plants in South Carolina and Missouri. The sessions will cover a regulatory walk-through of sanitation standard operating procedures and the hazard analysis and critical control point and rules of practice regulations. The agency has moved forward with plans to expand the regulatory education sessions. The March regulatory education sessions will be held at the following locations:

- Tuesday, March 6 - 6:30 to 8:30 PM, at the Ramada Columbia Northeast, 7510 Two Notch Road, Columbia, SC;
- Tuesday, March 6 - 6:30 to 8:30 PM, at the Radisson Hotel & Suites Kansas City-City Center, 1301 Wyandotte, Kansas City, MO.

The agency will also hold regulatory education sessions this month at the following locations:

- Tuesday, February 6 - 6:30 to 8:30 PM, at the Doubletree Albuquerque, 201 Marquette Avenue, Albuquerque, NM;
- Wednesday, February 28 - 6:30 to 8:30 PM, at the Crowne Plaza Madison East Towne, 4402 East Washington Avenue, Madison, WI.

The sessions are free, but registration is required. To register by phone, call 800-336-3747. Online registration forms and information about upcoming sessions can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Outreach_Sessions_SVS_Plants/index.asp.

Does Your HACCP Plan Need An Update? Are You Ready for an FSIS Team Review?

Register now for “Beyond Basics: HACCP Plan Improvement Workshop for Raw and Cooked Product Operations,” hosted by SMA, NMA, and the Texas A&M University Department of Animal Science, **March 29-30, 2007** at Texas A&M University.

Do you have decision-making documentation for your HACCP plan? Can you justify and defend your CCPs? Do you have all of your scientific supporting documentation on file? Can you support the frequency of your monitoring and verification activities? Is your inspector asking for information that you don’t have? We can help you with these issues and answer your questions! This two day workshop will provide a review and evaluation of your company’s HACCP plan, with hands-on help to improve it. Registration information and the course outline are available on page 4 and on our website.

Sign up today!

Johanns Releases 2007 Farm Bill Proposals

Last week Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns unveiled the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2007 farm bill proposals. The more than 65 proposals correspond to the 2002 farm bill titles with additional special focus areas, including specialty crops, beginning farmers and ranchers, and socially disadvantaged producers. "We listened closely to producers and stakeholders all across the country and took a reform-minded and fiscally responsible approach to making farm policy more equitable, predictable and protected from challenge," said Johanns. "We started with the 2002 farm bill and propose to improve it by bolstering support for emerging priorities and focusing on a market-oriented approach." Highlights of the proposals include: increase conservation funding by \$7.8 billion; provide \$1.6 billion in new funding for renewable energy research; target nearly \$5 billion in funding to support specialty crop producers by increasing nutrition in food assistance programs; provide \$250 million to increase direct payments for beginning farmers and ranchers; support socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers by reserving a percentage of conservation assistance funds and providing more access to loans for down payments, land purchasing and farm operating; strengthen disaster relief by establishing a revenue-based counter-cyclical program, providing gap coverage in crop insurance, linking crop insurance participation to farm program participation, and creating a new emergency landscape restoration program; simplify and consolidate rural development programs; dedicate nearly \$400 million to trade efforts to expand exports, fight trade barriers, and increase involvement in world trade standard-setting bodies; simplify, modernize, and rename the Food Stamp Program. The proposals are available at www.usda.gov/farbill.

Briefly . . .

U.S. to Meet with S. Korea on Beef: South Korea and the U.S. will hold talks this week to discuss Seoul's rejection of American beef shipments for containing bone fragments, the two governments said on Friday. The two-day meeting is scheduled to begin Wednesday in Seoul, according to South Korea's Agriculture and Forestry Ministry. The U.S. Embassy in Seoul confirmed the plans. The meeting, described as a "technical consultation," was requested by U.S. officials.

Researchers Claim BSE May Be Caused by Virus: Researchers have discovered more evidence that a virus may cause bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and a related brain disorder in humans, threatening to contradict 25 years of research focusing on malformed proteins called prions. Laura Manuelidis, a neuropathologist at Yale Medical School, was cited as saying that nerve cells infected with Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease contained a virus-size particle that doesn't appear in uninfected cells. Cells infected with scrapie, a related sheep disorder, contained the same germ. The findings challenge the idea that the diseases are spread by prions, abnormal proteins that have also been detected in the brains of infected humans and animals. Stanley Prusiner won the Nobel Prize in 1997 for research identifying prions as the infectious agent. Questions have arisen because people and animals are thought to catch the disease by eating infected meat, and some researchers argue that the stomach and intestines would quickly break down any protein before it reached the blood or brain.

UK Confirms Outbreak of Bird Flu: Tests confirmed the presence of the virulent H5N1 strain of avian influenza in a commercial turkey flock in Suffolk, Great Britain early Saturday. 160,000 turkeys had to be slaughtered and the government has imposed a 3 kilometer protection zone and 10 km surveillance zone around the infected factory plant. Environment Secretary David Miliband said officials are still not sure how bird flu arrived in Britain, but a "full epidemiological report will be produced by our experts and made publicly available." "The State veterinary Service is carrying out rapid and urgent investigations both on the infected premises themselves and by testing poultry farms and collecting dead wild birds in the protection and surveillance zones," he said. A further restricted zone covering has been imposed around East Suffolk and South East Norfolk within which all poultry must be kept indoors. British government scientists said the outbreak is being contained and posed no immediate danger to human health.

USDA Releases Draft Documents for NAIS: The NAIS is a cooperative State-Federal industry program administered by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) working to provide a streamlined information system that will help producers and animal health officials respond quickly and effectively to animal disease events in the United States. Last week the USDA made available three documents relating to the National Animal Identification System: A Draft User Guide, a Program Standards and Technical Reference document, and a technical specification document for the animal tracking databases. The documents are available for review and comment. Comments about any of these documents or other aspects of the NAIS may be submitted to USDA through the NAIS website e-mail address: animalidcomments@aphis.usda.gov or by mail to NAIS Program Staff, VS, APHIS, 4700 River Road, Unit 200, Riverdale, MD 20737. You can read all three documents on the Internet at [http:// animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/](http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/).

Beyond Basics:

HACCP Plan Improvement Workshop for Raw and Cooked Product Operations

Questions:

- Do you have decision-making documentation for your HACCP plan?
- Can you justify and defend your CCPs or CLs?
- Do you have all of your scientific supporting documentation on file?
- Can you support the frequency of your monitoring and verification activities?
- Is the FSIS asking for information that you don't have?
- Are you ready for an FSIS Review Team visit?

Answers:

If you answered "No" to any of the questions above, then you need to attend this workshop, and we'll help you find the answers! To participate in this program, you **must bring** your company's raw and/or cooked product HACCP plan(s) to the workshop and we will work together to improve your HACCP plan(s)! Space is limited to allow for optimal hands-on interaction, so register today!

Course Overview

- Flow Chart Review and Evaluation
- Review and Scientifically Support a Hazard Analysis
- Defend the Selection of CCPs
- Support the Selection of Monitoring and Verification Frequencies
- Discuss HACCP Plan Validation Scheme
- Compose Decision-Making Documentation
- Compile Supporting Documentation

Registration Information

Minimum number of participants for the course to make is 25. If the course is not filled by two weeks prior to the start date, the course will be cancelled.

Maximum number of participants: 40

Member price: \$600.00 (SMA or NMA)

Non-member price: \$750.00

Registration fee includes: refreshments during breaks and materials.

Hotel Information

Hampton Inn

320 South Texas Ave.
College Station, Texas 77840
979-846-0184

Room Rate: \$75.00 plus tax, single/double
Ask for the **Southwest Meat Association block.**

Room reservations must be made 14 days prior to the first day of the course!

Free hot breakfast bar in the hotel lobby, free high-speed internet connections in guest rooms, and free airport shuttle bus service.



Southwest Meat Association
4103 S. Texas Avenue, Suite 101
Bryan, Texas 77802
979-846-9011 Phone
979-846-8198 FAX

Registration Form

Name: _____

2nd Person: _____

3rd Person: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ FAX: _____

Email: _____

Indicate the type of raw/cooked products produced in your facility: _____

Please check course date:

March 29-30, 2007 October 18-19, 2007

Registration Fee Per Person:

- \$600.00 SMA or NMA member
 \$750.00 Non-member

Payment Information: (check one)

Check: Check # _____ (Payable to SMA)

Charge: Visa MC DISC AMEX

Cardholder Name: _____

Card Number: _____ Expires: _____

3 or 4-digit Verification Code on back of card: _____

Billing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

****NOTE - We cannot process without a valid Zip Code****

Signature: _____

Remit form and payment to:

Southwest Meat Association
4103 S. Texas Avenue, Suite 101
Bryan, Texas 77802
979-846-8198 FAX

Cancellation policy:

All requests for refunds are subject to a \$75 processing fee. Refunds will be issued if written notification is postmarked or faxed three days prior to the workshop.