

SMA InfoMeat

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FSIS Issues Notices on Sampling Raw Ground Beef Components

In response to concerns raised by USDA's Office of the Inspector General, FSIS promised to conduct sampling at slaughter establishments which supplied the raw material used in an FSIS positive ground beef sample. On Thursday, March 1, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) issued two Notices dealing with sampling raw ground beef components for *E. coli* O157:H7. Notice 17-07, entitled "Follow-Up Sampling of Certain Raw Ground Beef Products after an FSIS Verification Sample Tests Positive for *E. coli* O157:H7," instructs district offices how to initiate follow-up sampling at the originating supply slaughter establishments that produce beef manufacturing trimmings and other raw ground beef or raw beef patty components. It also instructs inspection program personnel how to sample under the new sampling program for beef manufacturing trimmings and other raw ground beef or raw beef patty components. The notice is available online at: www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISNotices/17-07.pdf. Notice 18-07, "Routine Sampling of Beef Manufacturing Trimmings Intended for Use in Raw Ground Beef," instructs inspection program personnel how to sample under the new sampling program for beef manufacturing trimmings. On March 19, inspection program personnel will begin routine verification of beef manufacturing trimmings intended for use in raw ground beef or beef patty products at the slaughter establishments that produced those trimmings. The notice is available online at www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISNotices/18-07.pdf. Although the two Notices are identical in most regards, the triggering of the sample and product subject to sampling are different. The Notices became effective upon issuance. For the follow-up sampling, this means that the agency can begin to draw samples in response to any positive ground beef sample. With regard to the routine sampling, it may take several weeks before FSIS will instruct inspectors to take samples. For a detailed summary of both notices by SMA legal counsel Olsson, Frank and Weeda, P.C., please email phyllis@southwestmeat.org. The summary highlights the major components of the follow-up sampling (MT-52) and the routine sampling (MT-50) programs and provides a review of the provisions which apply equally to both.

FSIS Updates Canadian Import Regulations

Last Monday the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) issued Notice 14-07, "Importation of Canadian Cattle, Sheep, and Goats into the United States," effectively canceling Notice 15-05. This notice provides important information to FSIS personnel about the receipt, slaughter, and inspection of cattle, sheep, and goats imported from Canada. It also outlines the regulatory requirements for the importation of certain Canadian ruminants, which began July 15, 2005 and carries forward the instructions for inspection of these animals from FSIS Notice 15-05 with changes in: (A.) verification instructions for inspection program personnel to follow when slaughter establishment employees are authorized to break seals on livestock trucks; (B.) FSIS verification of Canadian ruminants when Canadian ear tags are lost or missing at the U.S. feedlot, and the animals are retagged at the feedlot; and (C.) verification instructions for inspection program personnel at establishments that receive Canadian bison for slaughter. The notice is available online at www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISNotices/14-07.pdf.

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Does Your HACCP Plan Need An Update? Are You Ready for an FSIS 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 provides a review and evaluation of your company's HACCP plan, with hands-on help to improve it. The registration form and course outline are available on our website.

Sign up today!

FSIS Issues Uniform Compliance Date for Food Labeling

Today the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) established January 1, 2010 as the uniform compliance date for new food labeling regulations that are issued between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2008. In December 2004, FSIS issued a final rule (69 FR 74405) announcing that it will adopt uniform compliance dates and established January 1, 2008, as the uniform compliance date for food labeling regulations that were issued between January 1, 2005, and December 31, 2006. The Agency recognizes that many meat and poultry establishments also produce non-meat and non-poultry food products subject to the jurisdiction of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). FSIS established the approach that it will set uniform compliance dates in two year increments and periodically issue final rules announcing those dates, similar to FDA practices. Two year increments enhance the industry's ability to make orderly adjustments to new labeling requirements without unduly exposing consumers to outdated labels. With this approach to effecting compliance, the meat and poultry industry is able to plan for the use of label inventories and to develop new labeling materials that meet the requirements of all labeling regulations made within the two year period, thereby minimizing the economic impact of labeling changes. By establishing a uniform compliance date that is the same as FDA's, FSIS is providing meat and poultry product manufacturers with a greater ability to adjust production plans to new labeling requirements across all of their product lines. Interested parties may submit comments until April 4, 2007.

Alternative Methods for Ensuring Lean Trimmings Announced

Establishments can now meet the minimum 12 percent lean tissue standard in meat trimmings by either visually examining each piece of trim or by using statistically-based sampling and analytical testing methods, the Food Safety and Inspection Service announced last week. FSIS issued Notice 15-07, "Alternative Methods for Ensuring 12 Percent Lean Tissue in Meat Trimmings," and officially cancelled Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) Bulletin 83-53, which addresses the minimum percent lean standard. The Agency recommends that establishments that choose to use analytical testing methods to verify the percent lean tissue in trim conduct periodic comparisons with the traditional method of visual inspection to ensure the 12 percent minimum is being met. The notice expires March 3, 2008. Review the entire notice on the FSIS website at: www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISNotices/15-07.pdf.

Regulatory Education Sessions Offered In March

FSIS will hold regulatory education sessions in March for the owners and operators of small and very small plants in South Carolina, Missouri, Pennsylvania and Alabama. 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 regulatory education sessions will be held at the following locations:

- Tuesday, March 6, 6:30 - 8:30 PM at the Ramada Columbia Northeast, 7510 Two Notch Road, Columbia, SC;
 - Tuesday, March 6, 6:30 - 8:30 PM at the Radisson Hotel & Suites Kansas City-City Center, 1301 Wyandotte, Kansas City, MO;
 - Tuesday, March 20, 6:30 - 8:30 PM at the Crowne Plaza Harrisburg, 23 S. Second Street, Harrisburg, PA;
 - Wednesday, March 21, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., at the Doubletree Birmingham, 808 South 20th Street, Birmingham, AL.
- 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.

Briefly . . .

Illinois Congressman Introduces State Legislation to Ban Horse Slaughter: Illinois State Representative Robert Molaro (D-Chicago) introduced a bill (H.B. 1171) on February 22 that would prohibit the transportation of horses in the state for the purpose of slaughter for human consumption. A January 19 Federal Court decision halted the only two other U.S. plants in Texas from processing horse meat for human consumption and a federal slaughter bill was reintroduced simultaneously in the House and Senate early this year. A group of more than 200 horse industry leaders, including the American Veterinary Medical Association and the American Association of Equine Practitioners contend that if the plants close, horse slaughter would move to Canada and Mexico, outside USDA inspection and scrutiny.

Canadian Stock Quarantined in Feed Mix-Up: About 8,000 cattle and deer from nine Saskatchewan farms are under quarantine after receiving feed that doesn't meet Canada's feed ban requirements, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency said Friday. Two of the farms are in the Swift Current area, and the other seven are in the Saskatoon region. The contamination occurred when misidentified ruminant meat and bone meal was distributed from a Saskatoon processor to one of the city's feed mills, said the agency's Dr. George Luterbach. That meat and bone meal was then included as an ingredient in some feed for ruminant animals, such as cattle and deer, which is prohibited under Canadian feed rules. Luterbach said the feed mill had ordered "feather meal," a protein source originating from poultry, which is legal to be fed to cattle and deer. All of the feed in question was recalled, and the agency insured all affected farms were properly cleaned, he said.

Majority of Dairy Producers Approve of Beef Checkoff: While milk may be their No. 1 commodity, a notable 68% of dairy producers surveyed said they approve of the \$1-per-head beef checkoff program they contribute to as beef producers, according to recent independent research of dairy producers commissioned by the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board. This level is similar to the 70% of beef producers surveyed who said they approved of the beef checkoff. Additionally, 66% of dairy producers surveyed said they were informed about The Beef Checkoff Program, with 21% of those saying they were "very well informed" about it. "Nearly a quarter of the beef supply in the United States comes from dairy beef. That's why the beef checkoff considers dairy producers an important segment of the beef industry," said Cattlemen's Beef Board member Jenny Senn, a dairy producer from Silverstreet, SC.

Chicken Recall Expanded: A February 18 recall of approximately 53,000 lbs. of product has been expanded to include 2.8 million lbs. of Oscar Mayer/Louis Rich chicken breast cuts and strips. According to the Food Safety and Inspection Service(FSIS), Carolina Culinary Foods, a West Columbia, SC - based company contracted by Kraft Foods, Inc. to process the products, has voluntarily issued the recall over concerns about some packages being contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*. The expanded recall is based on additional sampling initiated by Kraft officials and conducted at a non-government laboratory. The chicken breast cuts and strips were distributed to retailers nationwide, but to date, no reports of illnesses associated with the products has been reported. The front of each package subject to this recall bears the establishment number "P-19676" inside the USDA mark of inspection, with a "Use-by" date earlier than May 28, 2007.

Farmers, Consumer Groups Urge Congress to Implement COOL: The National Farmers Union, along with more than 200 organizations representing a broad cross-section of groups including consumers, urged members of Congress to support mandatory country-of-origin labeling (COOL). This is the largest coalition letter ever sent on COOL. In a letter to Congressional leadership and the Chairmen and Ranking members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees, the groups asked that the implementation date be changed to September 2007.

Welcome, New Member!

**SMA is proud to introduce
our newest member:**

Texas Best Smokehouse

1020 Dale Evans Road • Italy, TX 76651
Phone: 972-483-7264

Greg Short, Plant Supervisor

*Service: Processor • Product: Beef, pork, chicken,
turkey, other • Federally inspected • 5 employees*

The 2007 SMA Membership Directory has been mailed to all members.

If you have not received yours,
please contact Phyllis at the SMA
office or email
phyllis@southwestmeat.org.

Additional copies are available while
supplies last.