

SMA InfoMeat

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FSIS Posts Guide to Federal Food Labeling Requirements

FSIS has posted a manual entitled, "A Guide to Federal Food Labeling Requirements for Meat and Poultry Products" on its website. The manual is designed to be an easy-to-follow guide to assist manufacturers, consumers and FSIS personnel on the regulatory requirements and policies for labeling products. While this document is not a substitute for an in-depth understanding of legal and regulatory labeling requirements, which are referenced throughout the manual, the guide provides the reader with a useful tool to identify and understand the requirements that shape the food labels that manufacturers design for consumers. The manual can be assessed on FSIS' website at www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/Basics_of_Labeling/index.asp. Questions regarding the manual should be directed to FSIS' Labeling and Program Delivery Division at 202-205-0623, or by using the agency's web-based feature, askFSIS, at askfsis.custhelp.com.

SMA, NMA Work Together to Reduce *E. coli* O157:H7

The November 14th, *E. coli* O157:H7 workshop in Kansas City MO sponsored by National Meat Association and Southwest Meat Association was a sold-out success. Distinguished presenters Dr. Kerri Harris, President of the International HACCP Alliance, Dr. Barbara Masters, Senior Policy Advisor at Olsson, Frank & Weeda and Dennis Johnson, Esquire of Olsson Frank & Weeda reviewed current policy and addressed real world "how to solutions" applicable to Federal Notices dated October 7, 2002 and May 26, 2005 addressing the hazard status of *E. coli* O157:H7 in raw non-intact beef products. The presentations focused on "best practices." Specific topics consisted of testing programs, applicable FSIS policies, regulatory requirements, validated interventions, supporting documentation, industry testing, product lotting, COAs, imported products and third party audits. In addition the participants worked in one of several workshop groups and were given a supplier letter and Certificate of Analysis to determine how it matched up with the "best practices" that they had learned in the morning sessions. The workshop provided them an opportunity to share their knowledge with each other and workshop leaders. Bobby Palesano, SMA Vice President of Technical Services, designed these materials. Lastly, clarification was provided as to what is or is not a regulatory requirement as per the "Checklist" and "Industry Best Practices" and unresolved issues addressing non-intact subprimals and imported products were discussed. Currently SMA and NMA are considering options for follow-up actions. Members may contact the SMA office with any questions regarding this or other regulatory issues.

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!

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Industry Defends MAP Packaging

Last Tuesday two of the nation's largest meat processors defended a packaging technique designed to keep meat looking fresh at grocery stores even as U.S. lawmakers criticized it as unsafe and misleading. During a hearing before the House Energy and Commerce Committee Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Gregory Page and Jeffrey Ettinger, the chief executives of Cargill and Hormel Foods Corp., respectively, detailed the facts supporting the safety of meat packaged in low-oxygen modified atmosphere packaging (MAP) systems utilizing minute amounts of carbon monoxide. Both executives supported a product label encouraging consumers to depend on a "use by" or "freeze by" date rather than color to determine the safety of their meat or fish. Despite scientific evidence supporting the safety of MAP technology, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) agreed to do an additional review of the data surrounding the technology. During the hearing, Page and Ettinger noted that MAP products have been in use for nearly four years with wide consumer acceptance. USDA and FDA officials also provided testimony and defended the process they used to review the use of the packaging technology under the General Recognized as Safe or G.R.A.S. process. "This is not a priority for the agency with regard to public health," said Daniel Engeljohn, a deputy assistant administrator with USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service. In response to questions from Subcommittee Chairman Bart Stupak, who suggested the FDA should consider suspending its acceptance of the technology until it can review the technology again, David Acheson, M.D., director of FDA's Food Safety and Security staff, said, "FDA has no concerns about CO in meat packaging." The packaging technology was recently thrust into the spotlight as a result of a campaign waged by Kalsec, the maker of a competing and patented technology using rosemary extract to maintain meat's red color. In a strongly-worded statement, Representative Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee defended the practice on grounds that it reduces the need for human handling and limits the chance of adding bacteria to the meat. "There is no need for the federal government to implement overzealous regulations that would likely take a step backward and away from safe and efficient meat packaging," Blackburn said. "How many experts have to say that the use of carbon monoxide in meat packaging is not a food-safety issue before we believe them?" She added that the hearing had nothing to do with public health risk, since critics could not cite one case of foodborne illnesses due to consumption of spoiled food.

Register now for "Developing & Implementing HACCP Plans for the Meat Industry"

to be held at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, **December 11-13, 2007**, hosted by SMA and the Texas A&M Department of Animal Science. The course provides hands-on training in developing a HACCP program for all types of meat slaughtering and processing facilities.

Registration forms are available on our website at southwestmeat.org or by contacting the SMA office.

Sign up today!



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Two New Studies Confirm Effectiveness of *E. coli* Vaccine

Two recently published studies conducted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln found that a vaccine product containing type III secreted proteins of *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 effectively reduced the probability for cattle to shed *E. coli* O157:H7. The vaccine also reduced *E. coli* colonization of the terminal rectum under conditions of natural exposure, the first step in its evaluation as an effective intervention for food and environmental safety. In the first study, 608 same-source steers were utilized and assigned randomly to 60 pens and one of four vaccination treatments. The four treatments were: no vaccination; one dose, vaccinated on arrival day; two doses, vaccinated on arrival day and again on day 42; and three doses, on arrival day, day 21 and day 42. The remaining 128 steers were assigned randomly to 12 pens within the same feedlot to serve as unvaccinated external controls. The study found that vaccine efficacy of receiving one, two and three doses of vaccine was 68%, 66% and 73% respectively, compared with cattle not receiving the vaccine. In addition, this study found that vaccinating a majority of cattle within a pen offered a significant protective effect (herd immunity) to unvaccinated cattle within the same pen. In the second study, a blinded clinical trial was conducted on 288 steers that were assigned randomly to 36 pens, and pens were randomized to vaccination treatment in a balanced fashion within six dietary treatments of an unrelated nutrition study. Treatments included vaccination or placebo. Fecal samples were collected and terminal rectum mucosal (TRM) cells were collected for culture. Researchers found vaccinated cattle were 98.3% less likely to be colonized by *E. coli* O157 in TRM cells. Both studies can be found in the *Journal of Food Protection*, Volume, 70, No.11,

Briefly . . .

FSIS Considers Mandatory Test-and-Hold Policy: According to a story in *USA Today*, the USDA may soon require meat processors to hold product that's been routinely tested by the government until test results come back. Ten of this year's recalls, mostly small ones with no associated illnesses, resulted from routine USDA testing, recall records show. The USDA tests thousands of products annually for bacteria, including *E. coli* O157:H7, before the meat leaves plants, but currently companies aren't required to hold product until those results are issued. When tests are positive and the meat has been shipped, recalls follow. USDA currently recommends that plants hold product when doing so will not affect product quality, but there are no regulations to require it. Kenneth Petersen, assistant administrator for the USDA, said, "It's not in anybody's interest to do all of these recalls." While holding product may prevent recalls, most industry advocates believe further steps in preventing pathogens would better serve the public health.

FSIS Posts *Salmonella* Testing Results: Last Friday FSIS posted to its website the third quarterly progress report on *Salmonella* testing of selected raw meat and poultry products. This report provides preliminary data for the months July - September 2007. FSIS provides quarterly results from individual *Salmonella* verification sample tests the agency regularly conducts at meat and poultry establishments to establishments that have asked to be informed of various tests. Highlights from the report include:

- Using the agency's new trend indicator, 84% of turkey slaughter establishments are now Category 1, up from 73% for the previous quarter. The other 16% are in Category 2.
- For broilers, market hogs and cows/bulls, the percentages in Category 1 are all up by small amounts (1% for broilers, 3% for market hogs and 2% for cows/bulls). The quarterly report is at www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Quarterly_Salmonella_Results/index.asp.

FSIS Announces *E. coli* Outreach Workshops: As part of the agency's initiative to enhance outreach to small and very small plants, FSIS is hosting a series of *E. coli* outreach workshops on November 28, in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Missouri. The workshops will cover prerequisite programs and FSIS Notices 65-07, 66-07 and 68-07 and will be held from 6:30 - 8:30 PM at the following locations: Holiday Inn and Suites, 2785 Ramada Way, Green Bay, WI; Holiday Inn Historic District, 400 Arch St. Philadelphia, PA; and Hyatt Regency St. Louis, One St. Louis Union Station, St. Louis, MO. To register by phone, call 800-336-3747. Online registration and information about upcoming sessions can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Outreach_Sessions_SVS_Plants/index.asp.

OFFICE HOLIDAY

The SMA office will be closed
November 22-23, 2007
for the Thanksgiving holidays.



SMA wishes all
our members,
their families and
employees a very
safe and
happy holiday.

Happy Thanksgiving!