

SMA InfoMeat

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Hallmark/Westland Voluntarily Recalls Beef

Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Co. of Chino, California is voluntarily recalling approximately 143,383,823 pounds of raw and frozen beef products that FSIS has determined to be unfit for human food because the company violated inspection regulations pertaining to non-ambulatory cattle. Through evidence obtained by FSIS, the establishment did not consistently contact the FSIS public health veterinarian in situations in which cattle became non-ambulatory after passing ante-mortem inspection. Such circumstances require that an FSIS public health veterinarian reassess non-ambulatory cattle which are either condemned and prohibited from the food supply, or tagged as suspect. Suspect cattle receive a more thorough inspection after slaughter than is customary. This noncompliant activity occurred occasionally over the past two years and therefore all beef product produced during the period of time for which evidence indicates such activity occurred has been declared "adulterated" by FSIS. It is important to note that this recall, the largest recall in U.S. history, is designated as Class II due to the remote probability that the beef being recalled would cause adverse health effects if consumed. FSIS made this determination because the animals passed ante-mortem inspection but should have been identified as suspect requiring additional inspection after slaughter to determine if there is evidence of disease, injury, or other signs of abnormalities that may have occurred after ante-mortem inspection. The products subject to this recall were sent to wholesale distributors nationwide in bulk packages and are not available for direct purchase by consumers. All products subject to recall bear the establishment number "EST. 336" inside the USDA mark of inspection. The products were produced on various dates from February 1, 2006 to February 2, 2008. We advise any members who have purchased Westland raw materials over the past two years to check their records and see if they still have in their inventory any of the raw materials or finished products containing Westland beef. If so, those products should be put on hold. Regarding products that may already be in commerce, we are working hard to get clarification on FSIS expectations regarding those products and will keep members informed as soon as answers are available.

USDA Names New Deputy Under Secretary for Food Safety

On February 12, 2008, Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer announced the appointment of H. Scott Hurd as Deputy Under Secretary for Food Safety at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). "We are pleased to welcome Scott Hurd back to USDA as a senior member of the nation's food safety team," Schafer said. "He has extensive experience in a wide range of food safety and animal health issues that will greatly serve the Food Safety and Inspection Service's mission to protect public health." Hurd hails from Iowa State University where he served as an epidemiologist at the College of Veterinary Medicine and led important research on epidemiology and food risks affecting human health. Hurd specializes in *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and antibiotic resistance risk assessments. Prior to becoming an Associate Professor at Iowa State University, Hurd served in USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) from 1989 to 2004. At ARS, Hurd managed research programs and laboratory initiatives focusing on *Salmonella* in turkeys and swine. Hurd helped USDA's chief veterinary officer and other officials develop animal health programs to protect against *Salmonella*, tuberculosis and avian influenza infections. He also led the design and analysis of APHIS' National Animal Health Monitoring System, which still conducts national studies on the health and health management of domestic livestock and poultry populations.

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FSIS Posts Guidance on *Listeria* Control

This week, FSIS posted on its website a supplementary guideline on how to use antimicrobial agents to control *Listeria monocytogenes* (*Lm*) in post-lethality exposed ready-to-eat (RTE) meat and poultry products. FSIS developed this guidance for establishments in response to the 2007 recall of RTE chicken products to help prevent recurrence of *Listeria* positive products. This document emphasizes the following:

- Resources on the validation and application of antimicrobial agents or processes for effective control of *Listeria*;
- Recommendations on the validation and application of antimicrobial agents or processes; and
- Sanitation practices to control *Listeria* in RTE operations.

To view the complete document, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/97-013F/Lm_Supplementary_Guidance.pdf.

FSIS Hosts *E. coli* Workshops for Small, Very Small Plants

FSIS will hold regulatory education workshops in Alabama and North Carolina on February 27, 2008. These workshops will cover prerequisite programs and the following notices:

- 65-07, Notice of Reassessment for *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 Control and Completion of a Checklist for All Beef Operations;
- 66-07, Multiple Follow-Up Sampling After FSIS Positive *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) O157:H7 Results; and
- 68-07, Routine Sampling and Testing of Raw Ground Beef Components Other Than Trim and Imported Raw Ground Beef Components for *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 (*E. coli*).

The regulatory education sessions will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 PM at two locations: the Hyatt Place Inverness, 4686 Highway 280 East, Birmingham, Alabama and the Wyndham Raleigh Durham Hotel, 4260 South Miami Blvd., Durham, NC. To register by phone, call 800-336-3747. Online registration forms and information about these sessions can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Outreach_Sessions_SVS_Plants/index.asp.



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Smithfield, John Morrell, Farmland Foods, Patrick Cudahy, Butterball, and Smithfield Beef Group are just a few of the dozens of names that make up the Smithfield Foods family of branded products. Their pork, beef, and other protein products can be found in supermarkets, delis, and specialty stores across North America and their market-leading brands are also enjoyed by consumers throughout Europe, Asia, and Latin America.

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POSITION AVAILABLE

A poultry slaughter/processing facility in Gonzales, TX has an immediate opening for a **Plant Manager.**

Poultry experience desired and meat experience a must! Qualified candidates should have good organizational skills, the ability to maintain good customer relations, great personnel skills and be aggressive, forward thinking, and able to deal with USDA. Bilingual a plus!

Interested parties may submit resume and salary requirements to SMA via fax to: 979-846-8198 or by e-mail to: info@southwestmeat.org.

Briefly . . .

Criminal Charges Filed Against Packer Manager. **Employee:** Last week, San Bernardino County, California prosecutors filed felony charges against a former Chino slaughterhouse manager who allegedly used cruel methods to force downer cattle to slaughter. 49-year-old Daniel Ugarte Navarro of Pomona faces up to eight years in prison if convicted of five felony counts of animal cruelty and three misdemeanor counts of illegal movement of a non-ambulatory animal. Navarro, who was a head pen manager at Hallmark Meat Packing, was fired after the release of a video by the Humane Society of the United States. Three misdemeanor counts were also filed against Luis Sanchez of Chino, who worked directly under Navarro and was also fired last month. Sanchez faces up to three years if convicted.

Food Safety Researchers Recognized: ARS research teams at Clay Center, NE, and Fayetteville, AR, received 2007 Technology Transfer Awards for Outstanding Efforts and were recognized last week with six other teams at the ARS Annual Recognition Program. Scientists at the Roman L. Hruska U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (USMARC) in Clay Center were recognized for developing a chemical hide-washing system that removes *E. coli* O157:H7 and other dangerous microorganisms from cattle hides before processing. Research conducted at the Poultry Production and Product Safety Research Unit in Fayetteville also helped reduce the risk of foodborne pathogen contamination. Research leader Ann M. Donoghue, with colleagues at the University of Arkansas, developed a new method for identifying beneficial probiotic bacteria.

Instrument Could Replace Meat Graders: According to a report in *Meatingplace.com*, a video analysis instrument that grades beef carcasses by analyzing a digital video image it takes of the ribeye portion, could become a widely used substitute for USDA graders. The systems have been tested for "accuracy, precision and repeatability" of results in a laboratory setting, Marty O'Connor, chief of the standards analysis and technology branch of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, told *Meatingplace.com*. USDA is rolling out commercial tests of the system in four major processing facilities and if the technology stands up under commercial testing, it could be used by any company that grades its beef according to USDA standards. Nationwide, about 160 USDA graders now evaluate about 94% of the steer and heifer slaughter. In three to five years, if the technology proves reliable enough, the USDA could move to a system of auditing the grading results, further reducing its head count in that area. (*meatingplace.com*, 2/15/08)

Tyson Fires Workers for Animal Cruelty: Tyson Foods has fired several workers at chicken slaughterhouses in Cumming, GA and Union City, TN, in the wake of a federal investigation of animal cruelty charges, the company said last week. Tyson also is increasing management surveillance of areas where live chickens are handled and retraining workers, according to a statement from spokesman Gary Mickelson. The Springdale, AR-based company disciplined other workers. Mickelson declined to say how many employees had been fired.

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