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FSIS Constituent Update

PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH THROUGH FOOD SAFETY & FOOD DEFENSE

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USDA Announces Speakers for the 2013 Agricultural Outlook Forum

This week, USDA announced speakers for the 2013 Agricultural Outlook Forum, "Managing Risk in the 21st Century." The forum will be held Feb. 21-22 at the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel, Arlington, Va.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will present the keynote address, followed by the guest speaker, former Senator Thomas A. Daschle, currently a senior policy advisor with DLA Piper. In addition, USDA Chief Economist Joseph Glauber will present the 2013 U.S. Economic Outlook for Agriculture.

This year's food safety panel, "The Food Safety Revolution: How Far Have We Come? What's Next?," will be moderated by Elizabeth Weise of USA Today. Panel members include: Craig Wilson, VP for Quality Assurance and Food Safety at Costco; Nancy Donley, STOP Foodborne Illness; and Dr. Rodney Moxley of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

This year also marks twenty years after a major *E. coli* O157:H7 outbreak that led to that strain being declared an adulterant, and 15 years of HACCP. How has food safety evolved? What has been the impact of a HACCP-based system, and of the battle against O157:H7 - on FSIS, on establishments, and ultimately, on consumers? What new strategies have recently been deployed, and what is the next new advancement in food safety in the future?

USDA has hosted the Agricultural Outlook Forum since 1923 to provide farmers, ranchers, government and agribusinesses with sound information for decision-making. Attendees are expected to include members of farm organizations, food and fiber firms, academia, foreign governments and the news media.

Individual speakers' topics and biographies are available at www.usda.gov/ocel/forum. Plenary speeches after 6 p.m. ET on Feb. 21 will be broadcasted live on the Web, and breakout session speeches and presentations will be posted online after 6 p.m. on Feb. 22.

For the program schedule and registration, go to www.usda.gov/ocel/forum.



Inside This Issue

- 2 Foreign Equivalency Process
- 2 *E. coli* Testing Updates
- 2 Labeling Submission Webinar

Export Requirement Updates



The Library of Export Requirements has been updated to reflect changes in export requirements for the following countries:

- Cuba**
- Israel**
- Mexico**
- Peru**
- Republic of Korea**
- Russia**

Complete information can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Export_Information/index.asp.

Federal Register Notice Will Update Foreign Equivalency Process

FSIS sent a notice to the *Federal Register* today updating the agency's methods for determining a foreign country's food safety system equivalence to that of the U.S. and, ultimately, its ability to export meat and egg products to the U.S.

FSIS has periodically updated its foreign audits process since 1967, when the department inspected certified foreign establishments to determine whether they were "equal to" U.S. establishments. In 2008, FSIS asked the National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection (NACMPI) to review its then three-pronged approach.

Since 2009, FSIS has performed its annual verification of the equivalence of foreign food safety regulatory systems by reviewing any changes in the foreign country's food safety system, the country's performance in

port-of-entry (POE) inspections and on-site food regulatory system audits. FSIS continues to evaluate foreign inspection systems on an annual basis. Based on this review, the agency decides whether it can conclude that the country is maintaining equivalence, or whether additional FSIS action is warranted. This performance-based approach allows the agency to direct its resources to foreign food regulatory systems that pose greater risk to public health compared to others; make its international program more consistent with its domestic inspection system; and improve the linkage between POE reinspections and on-site audits.

FSIS is further refining the more systematic approach currently in use. An advance copy of the *Federal Register* notice has been published and is available for review at www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/2012-0049.pdf.

Updates on FSIS Testing for *E. coli*



FSIS posts bi-weekly updates for the agency's raw ground beef *E. coli* sampling program. Included are testing results of raw ground beef component samples for *E. coli* O157:H7 and STECs from FSIS routine and follow-up sampling programs. Also featured is data for non-O157 STECs by each non-O157 STEC serogroup.

To review testing results, go to www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Ground_Beef_E.Coli_Testing_Results/index.asp.

Webinar Available on the Labeling Submission System

FSIS is offering webinars on the Labeling Submission and Approval System (LSAS)—a Web-based application for accepting label submissions that launched last May.

The discussion will focus on the steps establishments can take to register and submit label applications. LSAS allows industry to electronically submit the required information to obtain label approval. It also makes it possible to flag application submission errors that could delay the approval process, and allows users to track the progress of their submission.

Webinars are scheduled for 2 p.m. ET on Jan. 23, Feb. 20 and March 20. To access the webinar, go to <https://connect16.uc.att.com/usda/meet/?ExEventID=85277207> and follow the on-screen instructions. For questions, contact Kristin Goodwin at (301) 504-0878 or kristin.goodwin@fsis.usda.gov.

Get Answers at AskFSIS

AskFSIS is a Web-based technology and policy question-and-answer forum on topics such as exporting, labeling, inspection, programs and procedures. In addition, AskFSIS offers Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds that link back to the Q&As.

Visit <http://askfsis.custhelp.com/> to view recently posted topics. The following topic was recently updated:

PHIS Noncompliance Record Form Update

http://askfsis.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/1824

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