



Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

USDA Announces Availability of Compliance Guide to Help Reduce Foodborne Illness

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

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FSIS is providing a set of draft guidelines to help small and very small meat and poultry manufacturers reduce harmful bacteria in ready-to-eat (RTE) foods. This guide sets out standard regulatory procedures and will help establishments understand how best to operate to ensure a safer quality product.

“The prevention of foodborne illness is our top priority,” said FSIS Administrator Al Almanza. “These guidelines spell out FSIS’ recommended best practices when it comes to producing food items that consumers usually do not cook before eating. Our goal is to help industry apply some of the recent lessons we have learned so they can prevent future problems, resulting in safer food for consumers.”

In light of several illness-related recalls in 2010, FSIS has fine-tuned guidelines for RTE meat and poultry products. The agency looked at possible causes of contamination in these cases and believes, that in some instances, pathogens were introduced to product after it had undergone processing. This compliance guide illustrates measures to help prevent these types of situations.

The draft guide does not represent new requirements for the meat and poultry industry, but will assist small and very small manufacturers in meeting current FSIS regulations. FSIS will post the draft compliance guide at www.fsis.usda.gov/Significant_Guidance/index.asp.

FSIS will accept public comments for 60 days and will then update the document in response to suggestions. Comments may be submitted through www.regulations.gov or through the Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, FSIS, Room 2-217,

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Export Requirement Updates



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

Canada

Colombia

Singapore

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

FSIS Constituent Update is prepared by the Congressional and Public Affairs Office.

**Office of Public Affairs
and Consumer Education**

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...Reducing Foodborne Illness in RTE

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All comments must include docket number FSIS-2010-0026. Comments received will be made available for public review and posted without change to www.regulations.gov.

FSIS Identifies Top 25 Source Violators from Same Source Supplier List

FSIS is adding an additional section to the weekly Same Source Supplier listing on its website to assist stakeholders in identifying the top 25 sources responsible for the most violations.

The Same Source Supplier list includes results from the National Residue Program on residue testing data covering veterinary drugs, pesticides and environmental contaminants on meat, poultry and egg products. Livestock supplier information is provided by federally inspected slaughter establishments.

There will now be a four-part list:

- **Part I:** Residue Violations Recorded for the Current Week. Sources as Reported by the Establishment.
- **Part II:** Source Violations Recorded for the Current Week Having Prior Violation(s) Identified Within the Past Year. If a violation is recorded in Part I, that violation and all other violations attributed to that source collected over the past year are listed.
- **Part III:** Source Violations Collected Over Rolling 12-Month Window Not Including Violations in Part I or Part II.
- **Part IV:** Top 25 Source Violations Associated with Greatest Number of Violations.

The Same Source Supplier list can be reviewed at www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Chemistry/index.asp.

Updates on FSIS Testing for *E. coli*

Weekly updates for the agency's raw beef *E. coli* sampling program are posted to the FSIS website.

For comparative previous and current year results, go to www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Ground_Beef_E.coli_Testing_Results/index.asp.

Second Phase of FSIS Circuits Scheduled for Implementation

The second phase of FSIS circuits will begin using the Public Health Information System (PHIS) on June 6.

Visit www.fsis.usda.gov/PHIS/PHIS_Circuits_Second_Phase/index.asp for a list of circuits that are included in this second phase of implementation.

Also check out our video on PHIS featuring an interview with Administrator Al Almanza and OFO Assistant Administrator Dr. Kenneth Petersen at www.youtube.com/watch?v=8YZ8iu2hj6I.

In addition, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCAvv4C8JME to see the newly posted predictive analytics video.

Visit USDA's Blog

Every day, the USDA Blog shares something new about its expansive mission. The blog provides a rich and diverse look at the work within the department, spanning the nation – and even the world – and highlights the breadth of USDA programs and the role it plays in the lives of every American.

Go to <http://blogs.usda.gov/> and see what's happening within the agency and across the department.

Salesman Indicted for Federal Meat and Poultry Inspection Act Violations

FSIS, in conjunction with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico, announced the indictment of a businessman for violations of the Federal Meat and Poultry Inspection Acts.

On April 6, 2011, a grand jury indicted Filiberto Berrios, 52, of Guaynabo, Puerto Rico, on four counts of adulteration, transport, distribution and sale of adulterated meat and poultry products and issued a warrant for his arrest. The federal charges state that on or about June 25, 2009, Berrios transported approximately 45,582 pounds of spoiled and misbranded meat and poultry that he reportedly purchased for approximately 10 cents per pound.

FSIS investigators, along with the U.S. Marshals Service, served the warrant and conducted the arrest at Berrios' place of business on April 12, 2011. FSIS investigators developed the case while conducting normal surveillance and review operations at cold storage facilities in Puerto Rico.

Berrios would transport products to an open air vacant lot in Bayamon, Puerto Rico, the indictment reads. Without the benefit of training, experience in food safety or a sanitary permit, and without subjecting the salvaged products to federal inspection, he then sorted and repacked the products to enhance their appearance. Products were transported to a food warehouse in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where he held the products for sale to restaurants, retail stores, processors and local street vendors.

Meat seized from Berrios' operation underwent lab analysis and was found to be unfit for human consumption and then destroyed. The Puerto Rico Department of Health assisted in the case by embargoing the adulterated food products. It is not known at this time whether the consumption of any of the products led to illness. If convicted, Berrios faces possible jail time and/or fines. He is presently free on bail.

The Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act are intended to ensure that meat and poultry products are slaughtered and processed under sanitary conditions resulting in clean, wholesome, unadulterated and properly labeled products. The requirements also apply to imported meat and poultry products, which must be inspected under equivalent foreign standards.

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. To view recently posted topics, visit <http://askfsis.custhelp.com/>.

Disposition of Beef/Veal Carcasses Positive for *E. coli* 0157:H7

http://askfsis.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/1510

FSIS Notice 13-11 Implementation

http://askfsis.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/1531

USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline

Food safety experts are available year-round from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET to answer questions in English and Spanish about safely preparing and cooking foods.

The toll-free number is 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854). Recorded messages are available 24 hours a day.

Inspection Seminars Designed for International Government Officials

FSIS will host a meat and poultry inspection seminar for international officials in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, from May 16 through June 11.

This seminar will be held in cooperation with the University of Puerto Rico and includes basic HACCP certification. There will also be an in-depth review of FSIS verification of HACCP and sanitation requirements.

Other topics and activities include: import and export policies and procedures, foreign inspection program equivalence, and field visits to import and export locations, as well as processing and slaughter plants. This seminar will be conducted in Spanish.

For more information, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/2011_Meat_&_Poultry_Inspection_Seminars/index.asp.

Food Safety Tips for Storm-Impacted Areas

To minimize the potential for foodborne illnesses due to power outages and other problems often associated with severe weather, FSIS offers food safety tips.

“Particularly during times of emergency, food safety can be a critical public health risk,” said FSIS Administrator Al Almanza. “In areas impacted by severe weather, the American public should be aware that information is readily available to help them protect their food supply.”

Severe weather events can mean power outages, floods and other problems that can affect the safety of food. Knowing what to do before and after a weather event can help you reduce your risk of illness.

FSIS offers tips to keep food safe, even when the weather isn't. Check them out at www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Emergency_Preparedness_Fact_Sheets/index.asp.