

SMA InfoMeat

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Final SRM Rule Bans Downers, Captive Bolt Stunning

After receiving almost 23,000 comments on the interim SRM rule, FSIS published a final rule on the "Prohibition of the Use of Specified Risk Materials for Human Food and Requirements for the Disposition of Non-Ambulatory Cattle; Prohibition of the Use of Certain Stunning Devices Used to Immobilize Cattle." The final rule issues a permanent prohibition on the slaughter of cattle that are unable to stand or walk ("downer" cattle) when presented for pre-slaughter inspection. The rule, which was published in the *Federal Register* on July 13, combines and makes permanent two interim final rules that had been in effect since January 12, 2004. Those rules prohibited for human consumption non-ambulatory "downer" cattle and cattle tissue identified as specified risk materials (SRMs); and banned the use of high-pressure stunning devices that could drive SRM tissue into the meat. The final rule becomes effective on October 1. A third interim final rule that established requirements for Advanced Meat Recovery systems will be finalized separately. "This final rule further strengthens our public health controls at slaughter plants across the United States," said Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Richard Raymond. "Less than three weeks after the December 2003 BSE detection in an imported cow, USDA moved quickly and decisively to put in place interim rules that greatly reduced the risk of human exposure. Experience has borne-out that these interim steps were correct and should be made permanent." Under the rule, cattle that are injured after they pass pre-slaughter inspection will be re-evaluated to determine their eligibility for slaughter. Veal calves that cannot stand because they are tired or cold may be set apart and held for treatment and re-inspection. The rule requires that spinal cord must be removed from cattle 30 months of age and older at the place of slaughter. It also mandates that records must be maintained when beef products containing SRMs are moved from one federally inspected establishment to another for further processing. FSIS will conduct outreach sessions with industry to ensure that the provisions of the final rule are fully understood by all affected establishments. The final rule is available online at www.fsis.usda.gov/Frame/FrameRedirect.asp?main=http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/03-025F.htm. A detailed summary of the final rule by SMA legal counsel Olsson, Frank, and Weeda, P.C., is available by emailing phyllis@southwestmeat.org.

Regulatory Education Sessions Offered

FSIS will hold regulatory education sessions on July 17 and 18 in Dallas, New Mexico and Illinois for the owners and operators of small and very small plants. The July 17 session will cover a regulatory walk-through of sanitation standard operating procedures, hazard analysis and critical control point and rules of practice regulations. This session will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 PM, at the Crowne Plaza Suites Dallas Park Central, 7800 Alpha Road, in Dallas, Texas. The July 18 sessions will be held at the following locations:

- Sheraton Albuquerque Uptown Hotel, 2600 Louisiana Blvd, NE., Albuquerque, NM, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM - This session will cover a regulatory walk-through of sanitation performance standard regulations and food defense.
- Holiday Inn Oak Brook Hotel, 17 West 350 22nd Street, Oakbrook Terrace, IL, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM - This session will cover a regulatory walk-through of sanitation standard operating procedures, hazard analysis and critical control point and rules of practice regulations.

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.

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FSIS Issues New Directive on Residue Sampling, Testing

Last Thursday, USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) issued a new Directive 10,800.1, "Procedures for Residue Sampling, Testing, and Other Responsibilities for the National Residue Program." This Directive provides instructions to inspection program personnel on "how to perform residue sampling, testing, and verification procedures in accordance with the National Residue Program (NRP). In providing these instructions, the Directive combines, and revises instructions found in these previous, now cancelled, Directives: 8150.1; 10,001.1; 10,012.1; 10,100.1; 10,110.1, 10,130.1; 10,530.1; 10,600.2 and 10,620.1. Information and instructions have been combined and updated to emphasize the inspector's role in the detection and control of residues, focus on animal identification, familiarize inspection program personnel with the detection of implants, and address the monitoring and receipt of laboratory results through the Laboratory Electronic Application for Results Notification (LEARN) system. Requirements of the NRP are carried out by various departments in FSIS, and the directive outlines the key responsibilities of each. For a detailed summary of the new Directive by SMA legal counsel Olsson, Frank, and Weeda, P.C., please email phyllis@southwestmeat.org. Directive 10,800.1 may be viewed at: www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISDirectives/10800.1.pdf. All questions regarding residue sampling and testing are to be directed to the TSC at 800-233-3935.

FSIS Notice Clarifies NR Language

FSIS issued Notice 42-07 on July 11 titled, "Contents of Noncompliance Records." The notice provides clarification to FSIS inspection program personnel on standardized language or "tag lines" used on FSIS Form 5400-4, Noncompliance Record. The agency issued this notice in response to questions that have been raised through supervisory channels and in Food Safety Regulatory Essentials classes. Inspection program personnel are not to use standard phrases that attempt to characterize the public health context of the noncompliance. Examples include "Continued noncompliance could lead to foodborne illness" or "Continued noncompliance could result in illness or death." The language must cite specific regulations with which the establishment has failed to comply and provide a description of the event that constitutes the noncompliance. The notice is available on FSIS' website at www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISNotices/42-07.pdf.



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SMA Office Closed for Convention

The SMA office will be closed from **Tuesday, July 17 through Friday, July 20** while we attend our 51st Annual Convention and Suppliers' Showcase in Bastrop, Texas. Of course, we will be checking office messages regularly, or you may reach us at the Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort at 512-308-1234. Ask for the **"Gone to Texas" Screening Room** to reach our convention registration desk. **We hope to see you at the Lost Pines!**

Briefly . . .

FSIS Hosting Web Seminars: The web seminar, "Review of FSIS Compliance Guidelines for the Production of Safe Meat and Poultry Jerky Products in Small and Very Small Plants," will be held August 8, 2007 from 11 AM - 12 PM. This seminar will discuss the jerky compliance guidelines and regulatory, practical, and scientific approaches for processing safe jerky products. Registrations for the seminar will be taken through Friday, August 3, 2007. A seminar representative will contact registrants the week of the seminar with instructions on how to join the event. To register, email OutreachTSC@fsis.usda.gov, call 800-336-3747, or go to www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/

Registration_080807_Web_Seminar/index.asp. For more information on other web seminars, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Outreach_Sessions_SVS_Plants/index.asp.

New Mexico to Come Under Federal Inspection: FSIS published a final rule on July 13 in the *Federal Register*, titled, "Designation of the State of New Mexico under the Federal Meat Inspection Act and Poultry Products Inspection Act." The rule announces that FSIS is designating New Mexico as a state to receive federal inspection for meat and poultry products. Although New Mexico has a clean meat safety record without a case of any kind of illness related to meat operations, federal inspectors who made spot checks in the state didn't like what they found, according to Livestock Board member Bob Maldonado. New Mexico will join 22 states in which FSIS takes care of all meat inspections.

Wendy's Tightens Animal Welfare Rules: According to a *Dow Jones* report, Wendy's International Inc. has beefed up its animal welfare guidelines for preferred vendors of pork and chicken to demonstrate its "long-term commitment to the principles of humane animal treatment." The Dublin, Ohio, fast-food chain plans to get 20% of its pork from farms that don't use gestation stalls and to give purchasing preference to poultry farms that use gas to anesthetize chickens before they are processed. Vendors that don't follow its guidelines will be eliminated as preferred suppliers.

China Suspends Some U.S. Imports: China announced Saturday that it was, according to a *Washington Post* story, blocking imports of some U.S. processed meat that showed signs of contamination, the latest indication the government may be retaliating as its products are turned back from overseas because of safety concerns. The suspension affected some of the largest U.S. food companies, including Cargill Meat Solutions, Sanderson Farms, and Tyson Foods. The increasingly aggressive moves are raising concern that what started as an isolated investigation in March over contaminated pet food ingredients from China has triggered a broader trade skirmish.

Miller Returns to Cattle-Fax: Cattle-Fax, an industry leader in cattle and beef market information, research and analysis, has announced the return of Mike Miller as chief operating officer. Miller will lead efforts to expand the quantity and quality of data collected from Cattle-Fax members, as well as remodeling the entire Cattle-Fax data collection, benchmarking and reporting systems. Miller was with Cattle-Fax for ten years before leaving the organization in 2006. He served most recently as director of research, and previously served as director of business development, director of cost and performance analysis, and as editor of several Cattle-Fax publications.