

SMA InfoMeat

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FSIS Updates RTE Products Form for Online Submission

The USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) published a Notice in the May 31 *Federal Register* announcing the availability of an electronic Web-based version of FSIS Form 10,240-1, "Production Information on Post-Lethality Exposed Ready-To-Eat Products." This form will now be available for online submission for the collection of information "about the ready-to-eat (RTE) products produced by establishments." All establishments are required to file this new form within 30 days after an awareness meeting with their inspection program personnel. The Notice may be viewed at: www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/2006-0038.pdf. FSIS Form 10,240-1 may be viewed at: www.fsis.usda.gov/Forms/PDF/Form_10240-1.pdf. The agency is accepting comments through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov or by e-mail at FSIS.RegulationsComments@usda.gov. For a detailed summary of changes in the form and new implementation procedures by SMA legal counsel Olsson, Frank and Weeda, P.C., please email phyllis@southwestmeat.org.

Directive Issued on Verification Activities Under EV Programs

FSIS issued Notice 33-07 on May 30 to ensure that inspection program personnel are following all steps in Notice 19-06, Revised Notice for Certifying Beef Products under Export Verification (EV) Programs. Inspection program personnel who are asked to sign an export certificate at a third-party facility (e.g., a cold storage warehouse or other facility where the products to be exported are not processed) should be particularly aware of the verification activities that they are to perform. Third-party facilities assemble and export products that they receive from other establishments or facilities, which may have been produced under an EV program. Inspection program personnel should verify that the establishment that supplied the product to the third-party facility is eligible to produce product under an EV program and that the product is eligible to be exported to the country listed on the export certificate (see FSIS Notice 19-06). Notice 33-07 is available on the FSIS website at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Notice_33-07/index.asp.

FSIS Announces June Regulatory Education Sessions

FSIS has scheduled regulatory education sessions in North Carolina and Arkansas in June for the owners and operators of small and very small plants. A session will be held June 12 from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM, at the Holiday Inn, Crabtree Valley Hotel, 4100 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh, NC, 27612. The session will cover a regulatory walk-through of sanitation performance standard regulations and food defense. On June 20, a session will be held from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM, at the Holiday Inn Springdale, 1500 S. 48th Street, Springdale, AR, 72762. This session will cover a regulatory walk-through of sanitation standard operating procedures, and 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. FSIS has cancelled the regulatory education session scheduled for June 9 in Maryland.

S O U T H W E S T M E A T A S S O C I A T I O N

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USDA Appeals Court Decision on Private BSE Testing

A federal court ruling allowing a meat processor to conduct its own tests for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) is now on hold following an appeal filed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). After the discovery of BSE in the U.S., Creekstone Farms Premium Beef, LLC asked to voluntarily test all of its cattle for the disease in order to pass the rigorous import requirements of Japan and South Korea. Current BSE testing is only conducted by the USDA on about one percent of all cows slaughtered in the country. USDA believes that private testing on all cattle exports to Japan could force other processors to follow suit, and lead to domestic calls for increased BSE screening of products. While Creekstone claims full testing will assure its customers of the safety of its products, the USDA contends that full testing gives a false sense of security because BSE is generally undetectable in younger cattle. In March, U.S. District Judge James Robertson ruled in favor of the processor, stating "prohibition of the private use of rapid test kits to screen cattle for bovine spongiform encephalopathy is unlawful." The ruling was to take effect June, 1 2007, but will have to wait until after a decision on the USDA's appeal. Dennis Buhlke, president and CEO of Creekstone said that while the company has taken a lead role, it is not alone in believing that the government should not prevent private companies from voluntarily testing cattle for BSE. "Although we are disappointed, we are not surprised by USDA's decision to appeal," he said. "In refusing to allow Creekstone Farms to respond to its customers' preference for beef from animals that have been tested for BSE, the USDA is doggedly pursuing a course that scientists, consumer groups, trade associations and business, and members of Congress regard as a bad policy." Officials claim that Creekstone can manage to test each of the 300,000 animals it slaughters each year, but larger processors handling millions of cattle would be unable to, and would therefore be unable to compete in the same international markets. "We still hope to convince USDA to work with Creekstone on a voluntary BSE testing program," Buhlke said. "However, Creekstone Farms will continue to pursue our right to test even in the wake of this latest action by the USDA."

Masters, Theno Honored for Food Safety Service

The publishers of the market-leading trade publication *Food Safety Magazine* will present the prestigious 2007 Food Safety Distinguished Service Awards to food safety pioneers Barbara J. Masters, DVM, and David M. Theno, Ph.D. at the annual meeting of the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) in July. The Food Safety Magazine Distinguished Service Award honors individuals who best exemplify the characteristics of the dedicated food safety professional. Those honored are recognized by members of the profession for their collective works in promoting or advancing science-based solutions for food safety issues. "This year's recipients are truly inspiring, and we are pleased to recognize Dr. Theno and Dr. Masters for their outstanding contributions to advance food safety in industry and government," said Julie Larson Bricher, Editorial Director of *Food Safety Magazine*. "Their efforts and advocacy of food safety science and management have had widespread impact throughout the supply chain." Dr. Barbara J. Masters, Senior Policy Advisor at Olsson, Frank and Weeda, P.C., is recognized for her outstanding service and contributions in advancing food safety with the USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service for more than 17 years, most recently as FSIS Administrator. Masters' efforts in the development and implementation of FSIS HACCP and SSOP rules, regulations and guidelines, as well as her leadership and commitment to building an effective science-based policy infrastructure at FSIS, have contributed to improved food safety measures in industry and the reduction of foodborne illness in the U.S. Dr. David M. Theno, Senior Vice President, Quality and Logistics at Jack in the Box, Inc., is recognized for his outstanding service and contributions in advancing food safety by developing Jack in the Box's food safety programs and leading efforts industry-wide to improve food safety measures in industry and reduce the incidence of foodborne illness in the U.S. Under his direction, Jack in the Box's food safety systems have become the gold standard against which other foodservice establishments benchmark the quality of their food protection management programs.

Changing and Growing: Meating the Next 50 Years!



Register now to attend our 51st Annual Convention and Suppliers' Showcase, July 18-21, 2007 at the scenic Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort in Bastrop, Texas! Registration information is available on our website at www.southwestmeat.org. Register and reserve your hotel room today!

Briefly . . .

Latin American Firm Buys Swift: HM Capital Partners LLC, a Dallas-based private equity firm, announced that it and J&F Participações S.A., which owns 77% of Brazil's JBS S.A., Latin America's largest beef processor, signed a definitive agreement to acquire Swift & Co. in an all-cash transaction of approximately \$1.4 billion. The transaction value includes \$225 million in cash for all Swift stock held by HM Capital and Booth Creek Management Corporation, its investment partner in the September 2002 acquisition of Swift from ConAgra Foods, Inc., and the assumption by J&F of approximately \$1.2 billion in Swift debt plus all transaction-related expenses. Edward Herring, a Partner of HM Capital, described the agreement as "a win-win transaction for everyone involved." For HM Capital, the proceeds will offer a very attractive return for their investors and for J&F, the strategic combination of Swift and JBS will create the world's leading beef processor. "The transaction also will benefit Swift's customers, employees and business partners, by creating a combined Swift-JBS enterprise in which Swift will retain its organizational identity, customer and supplier relationships and substantially all of its employees and leadership team while becoming part of the world's largest beef processor," he said. With nearly \$10 billion in annual sales, Swift & Company is the third-largest processor of fresh beef and pork in the U.S. and the largest beef processor in Australia.

Johanns Announces Appointments to Pork Board: Last week Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced five appointments to the 15-member National Pork Board. Each appointee will serve three-year terms. "I am pleased that these individuals have agreed to provide their time and expertise," said Johanns. The five were chosen from among eight pork producers nominated by the National Pork Producers Delegate Body during its meeting in February. The appointees are: Tim Bierman, Larrabee, IA; Henry E. Moore, Clinton, NC; Steven Weaver, Elk Grove, CA; Bruce Samson, Three Forks, MT; and Everett Forkner, Richards, MO. The National Pork Board develops budgets and awards contracts to carry out a coordinated program designed to strengthen the position of pork in the marketplace.

Honduras Resumes U.S. Beef Trade: FSIS recently announced that Honduras will accept all beef and beef products from the United States. All FSIS federally inspected plants are eligible to export to Honduras. All product for export must be accompanied by an FSIS Form 9060-5, "Meat and Poultry Export Certificate of Wholesomeness."

Recent exports of frozen beef exports to Honduras have increased exponentially. To review a complete listing of export requirements for Honduras, go to www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/Honduras_requirements/index.asp.



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POSITION AVAILABLE

Freedman Food Service - Houston, a subsidiary of SYSCO Corporation, has an immediate opening for a **Food Safety/Quality Assurance Manager**. This position oversees all Food Safety/Quality Assurance functions for all production and processing operations. Duties include: managing QA personnel, assisting with Food Safety training, Pre-Operational Sanitation inspections, microbiological testing and evaluation of the facility, finished product and raw material quality evaluations, maintaining requirements for all third party Food Safety/GMP audits and ensuring compliance with all HACCP, SSOP, GMP and company SOP programs. Qualifications include a degree in Animal/Meat/Food Science/Food Microbiology or related field, working knowledge of HACCP, SSOPs, & USDA regulations, and excellent communication skills. The ideal candidate will possess a strong work ethic, be extremely detail oriented and efficient, be able to coordinate multiple priorities under a variety of conditions and constraints and be able to work a schedule that accommodates plant requirements and inspections. Freedman Food Service offers a competitive compensation package and an excellent opportunity for professional advancement. Send resume & references to: **Freedman Food Service Human Resources, Attn: Honorio Orozco, P.O. Box 1449, Houston, TX 77251** or email to ffsrecruiter@yahoo.com.