

# SMA InfoMeat

1957

50 Years of Excellence!

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## USDA Clears Swine, Poultry for Processing

Testing confirmed that meat from swine and poultry fed rations supplemented with pet food containing melamine and related compounds is safe for human consumption, prompting the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to allow animals held on farms to be released and approved for processing. Testing confirmed that melamine and related compounds do not accumulate in the meat and are eliminated by the body quickly. The testing also reinforced the conclusions of a human health risk assessment that there is a very low risk of illness from the consumption of meat from animals exposed to the feed in question. Poultry and swine held on farms appear healthy, which will be confirmed upon the rigorous inspection that USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) provides for all meat and poultry prior to processing. There were approximately 56,000 swine that consumed the feed in question and were held on farms in California, North Carolina, South Carolina, New York, Kansas, Utah and Illinois, as well as approximately 80,000 birds held on farms in Indiana. USDA will also provide compensation to some producers for certain additional costs incurred as a result of voluntarily holding the animals. The human health risk assessment announced by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and USDA has been updated. It still concludes that there is very low risk of harm to humans from eating food containing low levels of melamine or related compounds. The updated risk assessment concludes that in the most extreme risk assessment scenario, when scientists assumed that all the solid food a person consumes in an entire day contained melamine and the melamine compound cyanuric acid at levels potentially present in the meat, the potential exposure is about 250 times lower than the dose considered safe. Translated to consumption levels, this means that a person weighing 132 pounds would have to eat more than 800 pounds per day of meat or other food containing melamine and its compounds to approach a level of consumption that would cause a health concern. Previously, the agencies reported that the potential exposure was about 2,500 times lower than the safe level. FDA and USDA are in the process of identifying scientific experts who would be charged with reviewing the updated risk assessment. They will be asked to provide their views to FDA as quickly as possible, with the intent of finalizing the risk assessment within several weeks. FDA is continuing its investigation into the presence of melamine and its compounds in fish feed and has confirmed that two U.S. commercial aquaculture establishments received the feed. The fish in those two establishments are on hold and samples of the fish and the feed were also tested for melamine levels.

## Convention Registration Packets Are in the Mail

Registration materials and information for SMA's 51st Annual Convention and Suppliers' Showcase were mailed to members on Friday, and will soon be posted on our website as well. Our theme this year is "Changing and Growing: Meating the Next 50 Years." Included with the registration form and brochure are the Suppliers' Showcase contract and an order form for Convention Program advertising, as well as several informative flyers about hotel activities and convention events. If you have not received your packet by Friday, please contact Phyllis at the SMA office. Please book your hotel rooms early. Even though the deadline for reservations at the Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort is June 25, there will be no rooms available once the room block is full! You can make reservations by calling the hotel at 512-308-1234 and asking for the Southwest Meat Association room block, or you can use the link on our website to make reservations online. We look forward to seeing you in July at the Lost Pines!

**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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## **Japan Bans Beef Imports from Another U.S. Plant**

Last Friday Japan slapped a temporary ban on beef imports from a U.S. meatpacking plant after recent shipments from the plant included meat that may have been taken from cattle aged more than 20 months in violation of a bilateral beef trade agreement, according to Japan's agriculture and health ministries. The ban will stay in force until Japan receives a detailed investigation report on the matter from the United States. According to Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, some 18 tons of frozen liver from Cargill Meat Solutions's plant in Fort Morgan, Colorado, included 7 kilograms of omasum, or stomach parts, carrying no safety certificate from the USDA. The shipment arrived at Osaka port on May 8. The absence of a safety certificate attached to the omasum makes it impossible to check whether it is from cattle clearing the age limit. There is no indication how this latest infraction may affect negotiations as the Japanese and U.S. governments prepare to begin talks next month on relaxing some of Japan's import conditions. Separately, the ministries released a report from the U.S. government that a lax management system at another Cargill plant resulted in the arrival of ineligible ox tongue at Kobe port, which was found in April. The Cargill plant in Dodge City, Kansas, mistakenly included tongue in eligible shipments to Japan covered by the required export certificate, according to the report. Japan will decide whether to resume imports from the plant after inspecting it today, the ministry said. Japan limits U.S. beef imports to those from cattle aged 20 months or less since discovery of the first U.S. case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in December 2003.

## **House Bill on Interstate Shipping Introduced**

A bill introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives last Wednesday would allow state-inspected processing plants to ship beef across state lines just like federally inspected plants. Representatives Earl Pomeroy (D-ND) and Roy Blunt (R-MO), along with 15 other cosponsors, introduced H.R. 2315, the New Markets for State-Inspected Meat and Poultry Act of 2007. Federal law requires the USDA to inspect all meat products. In the 1960s Congress created state inspection programs that are mandated to be "at least equal to" the federal inspection program. Other perishable products, such as milk, other dairy items, fruit, vegetables, and fish, are freely shipped across state lines after state inspection, but standard meat products, like poultry, beef, and pork, are prohibited from interstate commerce. This bill would remove that prohibition. Members of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) endorsed the legislation as a way for state-regulated businesses to compete in interstate commerce and increase the opportunities for cattle producers and small local businesses to market branded beef products. "It's unfair that smaller beef producers are not able to ship and sell their products outside their own state when interstate sales of other food products aren't restricted at all," says Colin Woodall, NCBA's executive director of legislative affairs. "This outdated policy hurts many of our country's small businesses who deserve an equal right to compete in the national market." Currently, state-regulated meat and poultry inspection programs exist in 28 states and serve about 2,000 small or very small establishments. Blunt says the existing law penalizes smaller American companies while companies from as many as 30 foreign nations are permitted to sell meats freely in any state. "This issue boils down to one of fairness," says Blunt. "If we want to open more markets up to American agriculture products abroad, we ought to start opening them at home first."

### **Welcome, New Member!**

**SMA is proud to introduce our newest member:**

#### **Kennedy's Sausage Company**

P.O. Box 2008 • Weatherford, TX 76086  
Phone: 817-594-3316 • Fax: 817-596-8686

Jason Beyer & D.L. Funderburgh, Co-Owners

*Service: Slaughterer, boner, processor, purveyor, portion control, grinder • Product: Beef, pork • Federally inspected • 20 employees*

### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW**



to attend SMA's 51st Annual Convention & Suppliers' Showcase, July 18-21, 2007 at the Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort in Bastrop, Texas! Hotel reservations are available by calling 512-308-1234 or accessing the link on our website!

## FSIS Announces Regulatory Education Sessions for June

FSIS will hold regulatory education sessions on June 9, 12 and 20, for the owners and operators of small and very small plants in Maryland, North Carolina and Arizona. The June 9 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 PM to 8:30 PM, at the Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites, 30232 Lighthouse Square Drive, Delmar, MD 21875. The June 12 session will cover a regulatory walk-through of sanitation performance standard regulations and food defense. This session will be held from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM, at the Holiday Inn, Crabtree Valley Hotel, 4100 Glenwood Avenue, Raleigh, NC 27612. The June 20 session will cover a regulatory walk-through of sanitation standard operating procedures, hazard analysis and critical control point and rules of practice regulations. The session will be held from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM, at the Holiday Inn Springdale, 1500 S. 48th Street, Springdale, AZ 72762. To register for any of these sessions 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](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Outreach_Sessions_SVS_Plants/index.asp).

### Briefly . . .

FSIS Offers Fact Sheets on BBQ, Microwave Cooking: The Food Safety and Inspection Service recently issued two new food safety fact sheets, one about barbecuing and grilling outdoors and the other about microwave cooking. Since many Americans now cook outdoors year round, it's important to follow food safety guidelines to prevent harmful bacteria from multiplying and causing foodborne illness. The barbeque fact sheet offers tips on safe handling, marinating, temperature guides, and reheating hints, as well as storage tips and answers to frequently asked questions. To learn more about barbecue and food safety, visit [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Barbecue\\_Food\\_Safety/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Barbecue_Food_Safety/index.asp). The fact sheet on microwave cooking advises that special care must be taken when cooking or reheating meat, poultry, fish and eggs to make sure they are prepared safely. Microwave ovens can cook unevenly and leave "cold spots," where harmful bacteria can survive. For this reason, it is important to use safe microwaving tips to prevent foodborne illness. To read the fact sheet on microwave cooking safety, visit [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Cooking\\_Safely\\_in\\_the\\_Microwave/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Cooking_Safely_in_the_Microwave/index.asp).

#### 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 and 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 science field, a working knowledge of HACCP, SSOPs, & other 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](mailto:ffsrecruiter@yahoo.com)**.

Illinois Senate Passes Horse Slaughter Ban: The Illinois Senate approved a ban on slaughtering horses for human consumption Wednesday, 39-16, sending the legislation to the governor. The proposal would stop the Cavel International plant of DeKalb, IL from continuing to ship horse meat overseas. Governor Rod Blagojevich agrees and will likely will sign the bill into law. Cavel and the nation's two other horse slaughter plants ceased operations after a federal court said plant inspections were being improperly funded by USDA, but Cavel resumed operations after the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit decided May 1 to grant the slaughterhouse's emergency request for a stay as it considers an appeal of the ruling to end the fee-for-service inspections.

APHIS Proposes Voluntary *Trichinae* Certification: The USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is proposing to establish a voluntary *trichinae* certification program for U.S. pork. The program would ensure that American producers standardize their protocols and offer overseas markets a USDA certification as to the *Trichinella spiralis* protections in place at U.S. farms without having to test every animal and every product. APHIS would certify pork production sites that follow good production practices to reduce, eliminate or avoid the risk of exposure of animals to *Trichinella spiralis*, such as feed integrity and facility construction and condition as it pertains to biosecurity.