

SMA InfoMeat

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OIE Classifies U.S. “Controlled Risk” for BSE

As expected, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) formally granted the U.S. “controlled-risk” status for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). Last Tuesday, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns announced, “I’m pleased to report that the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) has formally classified the United States as a controlled risk country for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). This classification confirms what we have always contended - that U.S. regulatory controls are effective and that U.S fresh beef and beef products from cattle of all ages can be safely traded due to our interlocking safeguards.” Last October, USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) submitted the application and supporting documents to OIE for review and formal classification for BSE risk. The controlled risk status classification provides strong support from an internationally recognized, standard-setting body that the science-based mitigation measures in place in the United States effectively protect animal health and food safety. Johann’s added, “We appreciate OIE’s review of our application, as well as its leadership in developing sound, science-based standards that will help countries standardize regulations and import requirements. The U.S. is taking action to achieve compliance with OIE standards and we ask the same of our trading partners. We will use this international validation to urge our trading partners to reopen export markets to the full spectrum of U.S. cattle and beef products. We are notifying our trading partners of our expectation that they commit to a timeframe to amend import requirements and expand access to their markets to reflect this controlled risk determination. We will use every means available to us to ensure that countries rapidly take steps to align their requirements with international standards.” Other countries recognized as having “controlled risk” status were Canada, Switzerland, Taipei-China, Chile and Brazil.

FSIS Offers Federal Grant of Inspection Guide Online

USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has developed a comprehensive guide to aid small and very small establishments that are contemplating applying for a federal grant of inspection and has made it available online. “The Small/ Very Small Plant Guide - Applying for a Federal Grant of Inspection for Meat and Poultry Establishments” is available at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/Grant_of_Inspection_Guideline/index.asp. The guide describes the seven basic steps required for obtaining federal meat and poultry inspection, including: filing an application for inspection; meeting regulatory performance standards at your facility; obtaining an approved labels and/or brands; obtaining an approved water source letter; obtaining approved sewage system letter; providing a written standard operating procedure for sanitation; and providing a written hazard analysis and hazard analysis and critical control point plan. District offices can also provide either a hard copy or electronic version of the guide to every prospective applicant. For additional inquiries, district office personnel will be able to assist prospective plant owners with the application process. The guide also provides an extensive list of agency contacts, technical resources and regulatory references. The federal regulations are also provided and are referenced throughout the document. The guide is featured on FSIS’ home page and the Regulations and Policies page and a link for the guide is located in the right column under “I Want To - Apply for a Federal Grant of Inspection.” It is also located on the Small Plant Outreach page and Business and Partners page. The links for these pages are located in the left column, under the pull-down tab for “Browse By Audience.”

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Southside Market & BBQ Celebrates 125th Anniversary

SMA member Southside Market & BBQ, Inc. will mark its 125th Anniversary with an all day celebration at Veteran's Park in historic downtown Elgin, Texas on Saturday, June 2. The makers of Elgin's Hot Sausage are the second oldest business in the central Texas town! The festivities will kick off at 8 AM with a Sausage Stampede, a 5K/1K Run/Walk through downtown, with proceeds benefitting the Cattlemen for Cancer Research Patient Assistance Fund and the Greater Elgin Chamber of Commerce. Live music will be performed throughout the day by the Crop Dusters, Sons of the Lone Star, and the award winning South Austin Jug Band. The Shindig will also feature many special events, like three chances to see a 30 minute re-enactment of an Wild West gunslinger shootout; a Weenie Dog Beauty Contest; antique equipment displays and old photographs at the original Southside Market location; birthday cake made by Trisha's Treats; Blue Bell Ice Cream; delicious barbeque cooked all day by the Southside Market "Sausage Trailer"; entertainment by Trick Roper Cowboy Bob; a kid's area with a moonwalk, face painter, clown magic, balloon twisting, and a petting zoo; an Art Show featuring jewelry, art, crafts, and one-of-a-kind items from Elgin and Central Texas artisans; and an Antique Car display. SMA congratulates the Bracewell family and Southside Market & BBQ on 125 successful years in Elgin! Stop by the Sausage Capital of Texas (as Elgin was named in 1995) and join in the fun!

LPAI Confirmed in Wales

Four people tested positive for bird influenza linked to a low-risk strain found in chickens which died on a farm in north Wales last week, as samples were taken Saturday from another farm in the area. Dr. Christianne Glossop, chief veterinary officer for Wales, said that the chickens at the first farm died from the H7N2 low pathogenic avian influenza strain, not the most virulent H5N1 strain. The Health Protection Agency (HPA) "confirmed infections in four" of the samples taken from nine people who were associated with the infected or dead birds and reported flu-like symptoms, its chief executive Pat Troop said. "These test results confirm that human infection with the avian flu virus has occurred. The cases so far have been associated with the infected birds," Troop said. She stressed that the H7N2 avian flu remains largely a disease of birds and does not transmit easily to humans. Welsh health officials identified 142 people who may have had possible contact with the mild viral disease, including monitoring 14 children who may have been exposed at school. Each of these is being followed up to establish whether or not they developed symptoms.

FSIS Issues Notices on YCBS Program, Cancelled Directives

FSIS issued Notice 31-07 to announce that FSIS' Nationwide Young Chicken Microbiological Baseline Data Collection Program (YCBS) will begin on June 25, and the 90-day training ("shake down") period referred to in FSIS Notice 60-06, Nationwide Young Chicken Microbiological Baseline Data Collection Program, has ended. The YCBS baseline study will provide FSIS and the regulated industry with data concerning the prevalence and quantitative levels of selected foodborne pathogens and microorganisms that serve as indicators of process control (e.g., *Campylobacter*, generic *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella*, *Enterobacteriaceae*, coliforms, and plate counts of aerobic microorganisms). This data will enable the agency and industry to target interventions and effectively work toward reducing the risk posed by foodborne pathogens in FSIS-regulated products.

The agency also issued Notice 32-07 on May 23 titled, Cancellation of FSIS Directive 7010.4 and FSIS Form 7010-4. This notice cancels the obsolete Directive 7010.4, Preparation and Submission of Revised FSIS Form 7010-4, Meat and Poultry Processing Operations and Processed Products Condemned at Official Establishments, and FSIS Form 7010-4. FSIS is cancelling this directive and form because the agency no longer relies on the information regarding condemned products that the form seeks. Notices 31-07 and 32-07 are available on the FSIS website at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/FSIS_Notices_Index/index.asp.



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 . . .

S. Korea, U.S. to Talk on Beef: South Korea said it will hold talks with the United States about further easing its restrictions on imports of American beef. Minister of Finance and Economy Kwon O-kyu said that S. Korea will also conduct a risk assessment of U.S. beef in a possible step toward resuming imports of meat attached to bone, which is currently banned. The breakthrough came after a recent ruling by the OIE that the U.S. was a "controlled risk nation," a category that means countries can export beef irrespective of the animal's age. When it sealed a landmark free trade pact with the U.S. in April, Seoul gave verbal promises to consider expanding its beef market following the OIE ruling. The U.S. has since been urging South Korea to further open its market, which was the third-largest U.S. beef destination after Japan and Mexico before the ban.

Supreme Court Rejects Final Appeal by Texas Horse Slaughter Industry: On May 22, the United States Supreme Court denied the horse slaughter industry's final appeal of a federal appeals' court ruling upholding a Texas ban on the sale of horsemeat for human consumption. The slaughter plants claimed that the Texas law at issue was unconstitutional or preempted by federal law, arguments that were rejected by the Fifth Circuit in its January opinion. The Supreme Court's denial of the plants' petition renders the Fifth Circuit's decision final. The Texas House also let a deadline of midnight Monday pass without action on an amended bill that would have authorized the reopening of the two Texas horse slaughter establishments.

Morris Named AMS Deputy Administrator: The USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) recently announced the selection of Craig A. Morris, Ph.D., as the new Deputy Administrator of AMS' Livestock and Seed Program. The major functions performed by the Livestock and Seed Program are: meat grading and certification service; livestock, meat, and grain market news service; voluntary, user-fee, audit-based programs that are available to suppliers of agricultural products and services; and seed regulatory and testing activities. Prior to his appointment to this position, Morris served as the Deputy Administrator of AMS Poultry Programs since 2004. Previously, he served as Associate

Deputy Administrator heading the Agency's services for the chicken, turkey, egg, and rabbit industries. He received his B.S. with Distinction in Animal Science from Iowa State University and served as a Regent's Graduate Fellow while earning his Doctorate in Animal Science from Texas A&M University.

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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.