

SMA InfoMeat

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New Jersey Firm Expands Ground Beef Recall

On Saturday, Topps Meat Company, LLC, of Elizabeth, NJ, voluntarily expanded its September 25 recall to include a total of approximately 21.7 million pounds of frozen ground beef products due to contamination with *E. coli* O157:H7, according to USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). The recall is being expanded based on an additional positive product sample reported by the New York Health Department, reported illnesses, and findings from a food safety assessment conducted by FSIS at the establishment. There are currently 25 illnesses under investigation in Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Maine, New Jersey, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania. An investigation carried out by the New York Department of Health in coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, preceded the recall of September 25. Frozen products still in commerce with an unexpired sell-by date are subject to this recall expansion. The company applies a one-year sell-by date to their frozen products. For best quality, FSIS recommends consumers use any frozen ground beef products within three to four months of the stated sell-by date. It is important that consumers look for the recalled products and return them if found in their freezers. The frozen ground beef products were produced on various dates between September 25, 2006, and September 25, 2007, and were distributed to food service institutions in the New York metropolitan area and to retail establishments nationwide. Each package bears the establishment number "Est. 9748" inside the USDA mark of inspection as well as a sell-by date between "SEP 25 07" and "SEP 25 08." For a complete list of the recalled products, please access the FSIS press release at www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/040_2007_Expanded_Recall.pdf.

FSIS Issues Notice on *E. coli* Verification Sampling

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) recently issued Notice 62-07, "Instructions for Verification Sampling Programs for *E. coli* O157:H7 in Raw Beef Products." This Notice provides clarification on several issues which arose from the two earlier FSIS O157 Sampling Notices: 17-07 (Traceback Sampling) and 18-07 (Routine Trim Sampling) and provides instructions to inspectors regarding:

- The new FSIS *E. coli* O157:H7 sampling procedures, including shipment of the sample before any establishment testing on the product has been completed (including conducting pre-shipment review);
- The rules applicable to handling positive results, especially when the establishment also tests the same lot;
- The reporting of any establishment testing procedures/results in connection with FSIS sampling;
- The conducting of traceback samples of intact product used in ground/non-intact products which FSIS tested positive for *E. coli* O157:H7; and
- The rules applicable to ammoniated Boneless Lean Beef Trimmings (BLBT)

Many of these clarifications had previously been discussed in letters to specific companies; the Notice memorializes these clarifications in a single document, though with certain changes. We also hope to get some additional clarification from FSIS on traceback sampling of intact beef. The agency's policy to expand the "non-intended use" of the intact products to ground and non-intact products will only serve to limit the use of the carcass sampling alternative. FSIS added a requirement that such non-intended use is somehow conveyed to purchasers, but does not identify how an establishment should convey this "non-intended use." For a detailed summary of this Notice by SMA legal counsel Olsson, Frank and Weeda, P.C., please email phyllis@southwestmeat.org. The notice is available at www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISNotices/62-07.pdf.

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Canada Confirms Bird Flu Outbreak

Highly pathogenic H7N3 avian influenza has been detected in a commercial poultry operation in Saskatchewan, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) announced last Thursday. The virus is not the same as the strain circulating in Asia, Africa and Europe, which has been associated with human illness. H7N3 is not normally associated with serious human illness, and avian influenza viruses do not pose risks to food safety when poultry and poultry products are properly handled and cooked. In this case, the affected birds were not destined for immediate slaughter and were not producing eggs for human consumption. CFIA has begun depopulating and disposing of the infected flock and will oversee the cleaning and disinfection of the barns, vehicles, equipment and tools to eliminate any infectious material that may remain. To limit any potential virus spread, the CFIA has restricted the movement of poultry and poultry products within three kilometers of the infected premises. As an additional safeguard, all poultry operations within ten kilometers of the infected premises will be closely and regularly monitored for signs of illness. The CFIA is investigating the recent movement of birds, bird products and equipment onto and off of the property and additional cases of infection may be detected. The CFIA's actions are consistent with internationally recognized animal health guidelines and the CFIA's established avian influenza response protocols. The U.S. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced that USDA is barring imports of all live poultry and unprocessed avian products from the entire province of Saskatchewan. Likewise, Japan has imposed a similar ban on Canadian poultry products.

UK Battling Another FMD Outbreak, Bluetongue

Two sets of disease controls have been put in place in southeast Britain for foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and bluetongue, and some areas will have restrictions for both. Different movement controls apply in different parts of the country according to the disease risk. An eighth case of foot and mouth disease was confirmed at a farm in Surrey over the weekend as control and protection zones for bluetongue came into force around parts of southern and eastern England. On Saturday, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) arranged for the cull of cattle at a farm near Wraysbury after confirming the disease. Yesterday the agency announced minor changes to the FMD protection zones already in place in the vicinity of the latest outbreak. Veterinary experts advised that cattle on four premises near the latest infection were also likely to have been exposed. Anthony Gibson, a spokesman for the National Farmers' Union, said vets would have to carry out intensive surveillance of cattle in the area so that the virus could be contained as quickly as possible. "The longer we keep getting these outbreaks, the longer it will take to get the export ban lifted, and that's costing at least £2m a day. Since the foot and mouth outbreak was confirmed in August, we think the total cost to the farming industry is around £250m. That's in terms of lost exports and lower meat prices," he said. Immediate action was taken to investigate the possible link with the Pirbright site through the regulatory framework with a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) led investigation at the Institute for Animal Health and at Merial. The Pirbright lab was determined to be the source of a previous outbreak in August. With 11 cases of bluetongue confirmed, authorities have classified it as an "outbreak." A 1212-mile control zone has been imposed around the area in East Anglia where cases have been identified so far. An additional 93-mile protection zone will cover parts of Lincolnshire to Sussex, with different movement restrictions applied within the zones, mainly to cattle. The deputy chief veterinary officer, Fred Landeg, said bluetongue was being spread via infected midges, rather than between farm animals directly, and a cull would not help to eradicate it



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our newest member:

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Crystal Braden, Quality Control/Laboratory Manager

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Does Your HACCP Plan Need An Update?
Are You Ready for an FSIS Review?

Register now for "Beyond Basics: HACCP Plan Improvement Workshop for Raw and Cooked Product Operations," hosted by SMA, NMA, and the Texas A&M University Department of Animal Science, **November 1-2, 2007** at Texas A&M University.

This workshop will provide a review and evaluation of your company's HACCP plan, with hands-on help to improve it. Registration information and the course outline are available on page 4 and on our website.

Sign up today!

Briefly . . .

FSIS to Co-Host Public Meeting on *E. coli* Non-0157 STEC: FSIS and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Food and Drug Administration's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will hold a public meeting on October 17, 2007. The purpose of the meeting is to solicit input from academia, consumers, other public health and regulatory agencies and industry on the issue of whether non-O157:H7 Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STECs) should be considered to be adulterants as *E. coli* O157:H7. The meeting will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the George Mason University, Arlington Campus, 3401 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA. The agenda and other meeting materials will be posted on the FSIS website at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/.

FDA Announces Availability of Draft Guidance on Microbiological Issues: The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced the availability of the draft guidance document entitled "Guidance for Industry: Microbiological Considerations for Antimicrobial Food Additive Submissions." The draft guidance explains, using a question and answer format, FDA's current thinking on a number of microbiological issues unique to the preparation of premarket submissions for antimicrobial food additives. The draft guidance is available online at www.cfsan.fda.gov/guidance.html. To ensure consideration of comments on this draft guidance before FDA begins work on the final version, written or electronic comments should be submitted by November 26, 2007. Written comments on the draft guidance may be submitted to the Division of Dockets Management (HFA-305), Food and Drug Administration, 5630 Fishers Lane, Rm. 1061, Rockville, MD 20852. Submit electronic comments to www.fda.gov/dockets/ecomments.

TAHC Tackles Tuberculosis Entry and ID: Texas livestock health officials, striving to protect Texas' hard-earned cattle tuberculosis (TB)-free status, have adopted new cattle entry, testing and movement regulations that go into effect October 13. The 13 commissioners for the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) have tightened regulations due to concerns about the recent findings of cattle TB infection in two New Mexico dairies, a Colorado bucking bull herd, and an Oklahoma beef herd. Additionally, both Minnesota and Michigan have waged war against TB in both cattle and free-ranging deer. The new TAHC regulations include: lowering the TB test-eligible age from six to two months for sexually intact dairy cattle entering Texas; forgoing TB testing on out-of-state dairy cattle delivered to an approved feedlot in Texas for finish feeding for slaughter only; identifying all Texas dairy cattle, regardless of age, with an official or TAHC-approved identification device prior to movement within the state; and requiring TB tests for Mexican-origin (or "M"-branded) steers. (*Drovers*, 9/28/07)

Industry Associations Sponsor *Listeria* Workshop: SMA and AAMP are co-sponsoring NAMP's international *Listeria monocytogenes* Control Workshop for small businesses. It is scheduled for Thursday, November 8, 2007, at the Embassy Suites Dallas – DFW International Airport North. Dr. Harshavardhan Thippareddi and Dr. Dennis Burson, both of the University of Nebraska, will conduct the workshop. Though October 25, the registration rate is \$295 for SMA, NAMP, and AAMP members and \$395 for non-members. The fee increases \$100 for all registrants after that. This one-day workshop is specifically designed for small to medium sized meat plants that produce Ready-to-Eat products, and will offer techniques and programs specifically tailored for these companies. Check our website for registration information or email phyllis@southwestmeat.org.

Beyond Basics:

HACCP Plan Improvement Workshop for Raw and Cooked Product Operations

Questions:

- Do you have decision-making documentation for your HACCP plan?
- Can you justify and defend your CCPs or CLs?
- Do you have all of your scientific supporting documentation on file?
- Can you support the frequency of your monitoring and verification activities?
- Is the FSIS asking for information that you don't have?
- Are you ready for an FSIS Review Team visit?

Answers:

If you answered "No" to any of the questions above, then you need to attend this workshop, and we'll help you find the answers! To participate in this program, you **must bring** your company's raw and/or cooked product HACCP plan(s) to the workshop and we will work together to improve your HACCP plan(s)! Space is limited to allow for optimal hands-on interaction, so register today!

Course Overview

- Flow Chart Review and Evaluation
- Review and Scientifically Support a Hazard Analysis
- Defend the Selection of CCPs
- Support the Selection of Monitoring and Verification Frequencies
- Discuss HACCP Plan Validation Scheme
- Compose Decision-Making Documentation
- Compile Supporting Documentation

Registration Information

Minimum number of participants for the course to make is 25. If the course is not filled by two weeks prior to the start date, the course will be cancelled.

Maximum number of participants: 40

Member price: \$600.00 (SMA or NMA)

Non-member price: \$750.00

Registration fee includes: refreshments during breaks and materials.

Hotel Information

Hampton Inn

320 South Texas Ave.
College Station, Texas 77840
979-846-0184

Room Rate: \$75.00 plus tax, single/double
Ask for the **Southwest Meat Association block.**

Room reservations must be made 14 days prior to the first day of the course!

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Southwest Meat Association
4103 S. Texas Avenue, Suite 101
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Registration Form

Name: _____

2nd Person: _____

3rd Person: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ FAX: _____

Email: _____

Indicate the type of raw/cooked products produced in your facility: _____

Please check course date:

November 1-2, 2007

Registration Fee Per Person:

- \$600.00 SMA or NMA member
 \$750.00 Non-member

Payment Information: (check one)

Check: Check # _____ (Payable to SMA)

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Cardholder Name: _____

Card Number: _____ Expires: _____

3 or 4-digit Verification Code on back of card: _____

Billing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

****NOTE - We cannot process without a valid Zip Code****

Signature: _____

Remit form and payment to:

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Cancellation policy:

All requests for refunds are subject to a \$75 processing fee. Refunds will be issued if written notification is postmarked or faxed three days prior to the workshop.