

SMA InfoMeat

1957

50 Years of Excellence!

2007

October 8, 2007
Volume 32, Issue 2

Email: phyllis@southwestmeat.org
Internet website: southwestmeat.org

Edited by Phyllis Zimmerman

USDA May Reevaluate Recall Policies

USDA plans to expedite warnings about contaminated meat in the future, officials said Thursday, as the Agency sought to dispel criticism of an 18-day delay in seeking the recall of millions of pounds of tainted ground beef. During a press conference, department officials acknowledged that they knew as early as September 7 that a New Jersey firm's frozen hamburger patties could be contaminated after preliminary tests indicated the presence of *E. coli* O157:H7. They emphasized that it was impossible to seek a recall without conducting a more sophisticated test to confirm the original results, but said they would reevaluate what USDA can do to warn the public sooner. "Let me be clear from the beginning, at this point we weren't able to take action based on the initial test," said David Goldman, assistant administrator of the USDA's Office of Public Health Science. Still, "this agency is not completely satisfied with the time elapsed and the issuance of the recall," he said. "We will be reviewing data related to this recall as well as our own protocol to determine how we might improve." Dr. Richard Raymond, Under Secretary for Food Safety, added, "It's a policy we will be changing here." The recall that began September 25 was soon expanded to comprise 21.7 million pounds of hamburger produced by Topps Meat Co. of Elizabeth, NJ, to become the second-largest beef recall in U.S. history. The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has planned a conference call with industry tomorrow to discuss possible new policies or directives to combat *E. coli* O157:H7.

Topps Meat Company Closes Following Recall

Topps Meat Company of Elizabeth, NJ, one of the country's largest manufacturers of frozen hamburgers, announced Friday that it was going out of business after voluntarily recalling more than 21.7 million pounds of ground beef products in one of the largest meat recalls in recent years. COO Anthony D'Urso said that the company "cannot overcome the reality of a recall this large." He added, "This has been a shocking and sobering experience for everyone." A few of Topps' 87 employees will remain at the Elizabeth plant to help USDA investigators try to trace how the meat became contaminated. Some industry experts speculated that the size of the recall was probably related to the company's practice of "carrying over" meat from one day's production to the next, without issuing separate batch numbers. While the practice is not illegal or unsafe, it certainly makes it harder for officials to pinpoint the source and extent of contamination when a positive pathogen test is found. The company now faces at least one lawsuit resulting from an illness related to the recalled beef, and is also named with several retailers in a class action suit. Topps is not the first meat company to close following a massive recall. A Hudson Foods plant in Nebraska shut down in August 1997 after an even larger recall, of 25 million pounds of ground beef, and was later bought by Tyson Foods.

Register Now for the *Listeria* Control Workshop!

SMA and AAMP are co-sponsoring NAMP's International *Listeria monocytogenes* Control Workshop for small businesses, 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. Registration rate is \$295 for SMA, NAMP, and AAMP members and \$395 for non-members through October 25. The 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 those operations. Registration information is available on our website or you may email phyllis@southwestmeat.org. **Sign up today!**

S O U T H W E S T M E A T A S S O C I A T I O N
4103 SOUTH TEXAS AVENUE, SUITE 101 • BRYAN, TX 77802 • (979) 846-9011 • FAX (979) 846-8198

FSIS Plans New Directives

FSIS publishes directives to enable the agency to carry out its mission of protecting public health and plans to issue the following directives within the next month:

- 5420.1 - Homeland Security. This directive will set out food defense procedures that the Office of Field Operations should follow.
- 5500.2 Revision 2 - Non-Routine Incident Response. This directive will offer clarification and provide corrections to the preceding version (5500.2 Revision 1).
- 6100.3 - Ante-Mortem and Post-Mortem Inspection of Poultry. Instructions in this directive will provide public health veterinarians, off-line and on-line inspection program personnel guidance on how to perform ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection on poultry.
- 6170.1 - Ratite Inspection Methodology. This directive will provide direction to inspection program personnel on performing ante- and post-mortem inspections on ratites.
- 8080.1 - Recall of Meat and Poultry Products. This directive will address recall effectiveness and checks on imported product.
- 8140.1 - Inspection Program Responsibilities when Establishments Receive Adulterated or Misbranded Products. This directive will update instructions for Form 8140-1.

We will keep you advised as these directives are implemented and become effective.



SPECTRUM
CONCRETE RESTORATION

Industrial Floors for Food Plants
Specialty Concrete Repairs
Stainless Drains

www.spectrumconcrete.com



Mike Robinson	281-782-4450
Scott Ragsdill	972-948-7746

COLD STORAGE CONSTRUCTION SERVICES, INC.

Buildings and Repairs for the Meat Processing Industry

10611 Commerce Row • P.O. Box 526
Montgomery, TX 77356
Phone: 936-448-4115 or 936-448-1222
Fax: 936-582-6185

Worldwide Services Available

- Condensation Elimination
- Walk-in Coolers/Freezers
- Meat Plant Designs
- Product Flow
- Construction Drawings
- Plant Renovations and Upgrades
- Facility Review for HACCP
- Emergency Repairs
- Construction Supervision
- Assessment of Plants/Operations for Sale or Division

Derald Hudson	Chad Kirby	Wade Hudson
713-882-9794	936-672-2304	936-537-0145

Email: coldstorage@consolidated.net
Website: coldstorageusa.com

USDA Denies License for *E. coli* Vaccine

Bioniche Life Sciences Inc., a Canadian research-based, biopharmaceutical company announced that USDA has denied license approval for its proprietary *E. coli* O157:H7 cattle vaccine. The USDA indicated that based on their statistical treatment of results from the field use study conducted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln last year, the data would not support licensure at this time. The company plans to submit additional statistical analyses and supporting rationale to the USDA in the coming weeks, but may be required to pursue additional vaccine studies in 2008. The vaccine remains under review by The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). In the course of its review process, the CFIA approved distribution of the vaccine under its Permit to Release Veterinary Biologics regulations. This is equivalent to a conditional license in the U.S. and allows Canadian cattle owners, through their veterinarians, to request vaccine be supplied to them by Bioniche. In light of recent recalls, there remains a pressing need for reducing *E. coli* O157:H7 shed into the environment by cattle. Pre-harvest interventions to reduce the shedding of *E. coli* O157:H7 by cattle may assist in reducing the potential for food and water contamination and the resulting human illnesses and deaths.



POSITION AVAILABLE

MSI, a central U.S. based company, is looking for a **Safety Director.**

This person is responsible for planning, directing and implementing safety programs to ensure a safe, healthy and accident-free work environment in accordance with Company policies, Federal & State regulations and client requirements. Excellent oral, written and computer skills are necessary. Extensive travel required. Bilingual a plus but not necessary.

Fax resume with salary requirements to 702-448-5540.

**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 our website.

Sign up today!

Briefly . . .

Senators Propose Resolution of Disapproval for Minimal Risk Beef Imports: Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND) introduced a Resolution of Disapproval in the U.S. Senate that, if passed, would express the Senate’s dissatisfaction with USDA’s decision to expand the list of allowable beef and cattle imports from countries recognized as presenting a minimal risk of introducing bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) into the United States. Dorgan is joined by Senators Michael Enzi (R-WY), Tim Johnson (D-SD), Kent Conrad (D-ND), John Thune (R-SD), Jon Tester, (D-MT), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), and John Barrasso (R-WY). The rule, set to take effect November 19, will allow the importation of live cattle and other bovines for any use born on or after March 1, 1999, and other beef products from countries rated as “minimal” or “controlled” risk for BSE. A Resolution of Disapproval would not impact agency policy unless passed by both houses of Congress and approved by signature of the President.

NCC Elects New Officers: At its annual meeting in Washington, D.C. last Thursday, the National Chicken Council installed new officers to serve one-year terms. Mike Welch, president and CEO of Harrison Poultry, of Bethlehem, GA, was elected NCC Chairman. He has been a member of the NCC board since 2002 and has served on the NCC Executive Committee. Welch has been in the industry since 1967 and has held various management positions at several major poultry companies, serving as president and CEO of Harrison Poultry for 16 years. Michael Roberts, president of Perdue Farms’ Food Products Group in Salisbury, MD, was appointed Vice Chairman and O.B. Goolsby, Jr., President and CEO of Pilgrims’ Pride of Pittsburg, TX, was named Secretary-Treasurer.

HACCP Consulting Group Founder Dies: L.L. “Lou” Gast, 76, one of the founders of the HACCP Consulting Group, passed away Tuesday, October 2, 2007. Lou was stricken with a fatal heart attack while teaching in Denmark. After a long, distinguished career with the U.S. government, culminating as Associate Administrator of USDA’s Food Safety & Inspection Service, he retired in 1986 and founded the HACCP Consulting Group in 1994. The firm trains and consults with the industry firms and leadership on food safety initiatives. He participated in the International HACCP Alliance, and served as a Director of the National Meat Association and chair of NMA’s Food Safety & Regulatory Committee. Colleagues recall his uncompromising principles and integrity, as well as his tireless efforts to help others achieve excellence in their efforts to produce safe meat and poultry. SMA offers our sincere condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues.

Advertise Now in the 2008 SMA Membership Directory!

We are currently accepting ads for the 2008 SMA Membership Directory. Here is your chance to promote your products and services to our membership all year long! If you need more information about prices or specifications, please call the SMA office or email Phyllis at phyllis@southwestmeat.org. Hurry! The deadline for advertising is November 2nd!

Also, if you haven’t already done so, please take a few moments to review your directory listing and submit any changes. Current information will make SMA’s 2008 edition as accurate and useful as possible for the upcoming year!