

SMA InfoMeat

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2007

October 29, 2007
Volume 32, Issue 5

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

Edited by Phyllis Zimmerman

Ag Committee Passes Senate Version of Farm Bill

Chaired by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), the Senate Agriculture Committee passed their version of the 2007 Farm Bill last Thursday. Harkin said that the committee worked within a very strict budget allocation to pass a farm bill he believes is "good for agriculture, good for rural areas, conservation, energy security, and good for better health for Americans." Critics say the bill devotes too much money to wealthy farmers and should divert those dollars to conservation programs that protect the land, food aid to the poor, or reducing the federal deficit. "This committee could do much better on behalf of not just farmers, but all taxpayers," said Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN), a member and former chairman of the panel who said that he plans to challenge the bill on the Senate floor. "Each passing year the policies seem ever more misguided." The Senate version of the farm bill includes an amendment banning packer ownership of livestock aimed at the largest processors, strengthened COOL language to clarify that all categories of red meat are required to be labeled, and an amendment to create a program for interstate sales and shipment of meat and poultry products from certain small plants currently under state inspection.

FSIS Takes Aggressive Actions To Combat *E. Coli* O157:H7

FSIS issued a news release and held a teleconference on October 23 to announce new, continued and upcoming actions, including expanded testing and more rapid recalls, to protect public health against the risk of *E. coli* O157:H7. "We want the American consumers to know that FSIS has taken a number of aggressive actions to respond to a recent increase in *E. coli* O157:H7 recalls and illnesses associated with this pathogen and we are further expanding these efforts," said Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Richard A. Raymond. In June 2007, FSIS identified an increased number of *E. coli* O157:H7 positive tests in beef, as well as a larger number of recalls and illnesses caused by this pathogen than in recent years. The agency immediately took a number of steps, such as increasing testing of ground beef by more than 75% in July, and planning a new follow-up testing program for beef plants that had positive tests for *E. coli* O157:H7. "We also realized that to make risk-based inspection in processing most effective, we need to strengthen our database that will support that system," said Raymond. The agency is working to ensure that suppliers, processors and inspection personnel can identify an emerging problem as early as possible and thereby prevent contaminated product from entering commerce. The agency is committed to enhancing a close working relationship with consumer and industry organizations and has developed the following key initiatives, targeted towards federally inspected plants that produce raw beef products:

- Testing and analysis of trim earlier in the production chain
- Testing more domestic and imported ground beef components
- Pursuing more rapid recalls or regulatory action
- Beginning routine targeting testing for *E. coli* O157:H7 at all slaughter and grinding facilities
- Strengthening communications with public health partners, industry and consumer representatives and internally with inspection program personnel. These efforts include: working with federal partners (FDA, CDC, etc.), working with small plants through outreach and training sessions, working with stakeholders to examine the current situation and factors that may be leading to an increased number of positive test results, and working with public health partners about how to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of outbreak investigations and recalls.
- Verifying control of *E. coli* in all beef plants
- Ensuring safety of imported beef products
- Using a new checklist for verifying control

The comprehensive list of FSIS actions is posted at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/NR_102307_01_Att/.

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Register Now for the *E. coli* O157:H7 Reassessment Workshop

SMA and the National Meat Association (NMA) will co-host a one day workshop focusing on *E. coli* O157:H7 and the recently announced actions by FSIS. The workshop will be held Wednesday, November 14, 2007 in Kansas City, Missouri. Several excellent presenters will discuss the latest FSIS regulatory requirements and policies, FSIS testing programs, validated interventions, supporting documentation, and industry best practices. Speakers will include Dr. Barbara Masters and Dennis Johnson, of Olsson Frank and Weeda, P.C. and Dr. Kerri Harris, Director of Texas A&M University's Center for Food Safety. The registration form is available on page 5, or you may contact the SMA office. Hotel details will be available soon. We encourage all members, especially those that produce or purchase raw beef, to attend this informative workshop.

FSIS Posts Checklist for All Beef Operations

FSIS is collecting information on the control measures that establishments use during production of beef trim, other raw ground beef components, ground beef, mechanically tenderized, and enhanced raw beef products to prevent, reduce or eliminate *E. coli* O157:H7. The agency will use the information collected for several purposes: to assist in the design and development of risk-based verification sampling program of *E. coli* O157:H7, to prioritize the scheduling of food safety assessments at establishments, and for the general analysis of raw beef processing practices and volumes at individual establishments and in aggregate. FSIS in-plant inspection personnel will complete a "final" checklist emailed this week to inspection program personnel for each establishment at which they are the inspector-in-charge when the establishment: grinds trim or other raw ground beef components, fabricates trim or other raw ground beef components, slaughters cattle, regrinds coarse ground beef, forms beef patties, "enhances" (marinates or injects) raw beef products, mechanically tenderizes raw beef products, or conducts some combination of these operations. The "final" checklist is posted on the FSIS website at www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/FSIS_Notices_Index/index.asp as a bulleted item under Notice 65-07, Notice of Reassessment for *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 Control and Completion of a Checklist for All Beef Operations.



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Advertise Now in the 2008 SMA Membership Directory!

Promote your products and services to our membership all year long! For prices and specifications, please call the SMA office or email phyllis@southwestmeat.org.

Hurry! The deadline for advertising is this Friday, November 2nd!



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Welcome, New Member!

SMA is proud to introduce
our newest member:

Bunzl Processor Division

7800 Sovereign Row • Dallas, TX 75247
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Email: russell.lammers@bunzlusa.com

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Mark Your Calendars

for these upcoming SMA Events:

- Nov 1 - 2 – Beyond Basics: HACCP Plan Improvement Workshop - Texas A&M University, College Station, TX
- Nov 8 – NAMP's Listeria Control Workshop, co-sponsored by SMA and AAMP - Dallas, TX
- Nov 14 – SMA/NMA *E. coli* O157:H7 Reassessment Workshop- Kansas City, MO
- Dec 11-13 – Developing and Implementing HACCP Plans for the Meat Industry - Texas A&M University, College Station, TX
- Jan 8-10 – 2008 Processed Meats Clinic - Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

FSIS Plans Notices and Directives

FSIS frequently publishes directives and notices to enhance the agency's efforts in protecting public health. The Agency recently amended Directive 7120.1 to revise the list of safe and suitable ingredients for meat and poultry products. The following directives are expected to be issued within the next month: 5420.1 - Homeland Security; 5420.3 - Office of Program Evaluation, Enforcement and Review Homeland Security; 5420.4 - Homeland Security - Office of International Affairs; 5500.2, Revision 2 - Non-Routine Incident Response; 6100.3 - Ante-mortem and Post-mortem Inspection; 6170.1 - Ratite Inspection Methodology; 8080.1, Revision 5 - Recall of Meat and Poultry Products; and 8140.1 - Inspection Program Responsibilities When Establishments Receive Adulterated or Misbranded Products. The Agency also expects to issue Notices on the following topics: cancellation of meat and poultry manual and other obsolete documents; questions and answers for Salmonella; documentation of non-compliance reports in egg product plants; planned directives and notices for egg products inspection; stamping of pork carcasses and primal parts; reassessment and training; and transporting between custom exempt establishments. Watch **InfoMeat** for further information on these FSIS activities.

Briefly . . .

FSIS Offers Web Seminar on SRM Rule: FSIS will hold a Web seminar on November 6, the first of a six-part outreach series targeted to small and very small plants which will continue through April 16. This seminar will cover the FSIS final rule on specific risk material removal (SRM) and recordkeeping, which became effective October 1.

The objective is to focus on changes in the final rule (compared with the interim rule that plants have been operating under since 2004). The agency will also discuss SRM requirements mandated by the final rule, including the new recordkeeping requirements. The seminar will be held 10 -11 AM EST and 6-7 PM EST. To register by phone, call 800-336-3747. Information about upcoming Web seminars can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Outreach_Sessions_SVS_Plants/index.asp.

Source Identified in Topps Recall: A Canadian firm, Ranchers Beef Ltd. of Balzac, Alberta, has been identified as the likely source of the multistate outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 infections linked to the Topps Meat Co. of Elizabeth, NJ. The cost and damage from the 21 million pound recall of frozen ground beef in September forced Topps out of business. Last Tuesday, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) provided USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) with DNA results from beef trim tests from Ranchers Beef Ltd. that matched the strain linked to the recall. The Canadian company supplied beef trim to Topps Meat. Although Ranchers Beef Ltd. closed and filed for bankruptcy last August, some product remained in storage and was collected and tested by the CFIA as part of their investigation into 45 illnesses in Canada caused by *E. coli* O157:H7 and as part of the Topps recall investigation.

FDA Announces Hearing on Salt in Food: The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has announced public hearing concerning FDA's policies regarding salt (sodium chloride) and sodium in food. FDA also is announcing the availability for comment of a citizen petition, submitted by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), requesting that FDA make changes to the regulatory status of salt, require limits on salt in processed foods, and require health messages related to salt and sodium. The purpose of the hearing is for FDA to share its current framework of policies regarding salt and sodium and to solicit information and comments from interested persons on this current framework and on potential future approaches, including approaches described in the citizen petition. The public hearing will be held on November 29, 2007, from 9 AM to 4:30 PM. For more information, visit www.fda.gov/OHRMS/DOCKETS/98fr/05p-0450-nhc0001.pdf.

November 14, 2007
Kansas City, Missouri



E.coli O157:H7 Reassessment Workshop

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

EXPERT SPEAKERS:

Dennis Johnson ~ Olsson, Frank & Weeda
Dr. Kerri Harris ~ Int'l HACCP Alliance
Barbara Masters ~ Olsson, Frank & Weeda
Ken Mastracchio ~ NMA

- 7:45am Registration
- 8:00am Welcome & Introduction
- 8:10am Review
 - FSIS Regulatory Requirement*
 - FSIS Policies*
 - Testing Programs*
- 9:45am Best Practices
 - Validated Interventions*
 - Supporting Documentation*
 - Industry Testing-N-60 (Combos/Carcasses)*
 - COA's*
 - Imported Products*
 - Product Lotting*
 - Audits*
- 11:30am Lunch
- 12:15pm FSIS Checklist
- 1:45pm Questions & Answers
- 3:00pm Conclude

DATE & LOCATION:

Wednesday, November 14, 2007
Kansas City, Missouri
Exact location will be announced with seminar confirmation.

REGISTRATION INFO:

Minimum of 18 participants required in order for seminar to go as scheduled. Confirmation will be faxed two weeks prior to seminar start date. Registration fee includes lunch.

Register early, space is limited to 30 participants!

REGISTER TODAY - mail or fax to: 510-763-6186

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