

SMA InfoMeat

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AMS Publishes Interim Rule on Mandatory COOL

Last Friday, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) published the interim final rule, "Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling of Beef, Pork, Lamb, Chicken, Goat Meat, Perishable Agricultural Commodities, Peanuts, Pecans, Ginseng, and Macadamia Nuts," in the *Federal Register*. AMS issued this interim final rule to provide newly affected industries that were added by provisions in the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) an opportunity to provide comments prior to issuance of the final rule. Comments will be due on or before September 30, 2008. Because new covered commodities and requirements were added, this interim final rule will not apply to covered commodities produced or packaged before September 30, 2008. AMS intends to conduct an industry education and outreach program during the first six months after this interim final rule becomes effective to aid in understanding the provisions and requirements of this rule, although a schedule of these programs has not yet been posted. Briefly, the interim final rule requires retailers to notify their customers of the country of origin of "covered commodities" including: muscle cuts of beef, lamb, chicken, goat and pork; ground beef, lamb, chicken, goat and pork; wild and farm-raised fish and shellfish; perishable agricultural commodities; Macadamia nuts; pecans; ginseng; and peanuts. Food service establishments such as restaurants, cafeterias, food stands, and salad bars and delis located within retail establishments are exempt from mandatory country of origin labeling (COOL), as are "processed foods items" such as meatloaf, fabricated steaks, breaded meats, corned beef, and sausage, etc. For a detailed summary of the interim rule by SMA legal counsel Olsson, Frank & Weeda, PC, please email phyllis@southwestmeat.org.

Senators Introduce Bill to Reform FDA's Food Safety Systems

Last week a bipartisan group of senators introduced a bill to dramatically reform the way the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) protects the safety of the nation's food supply. The bill, The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act, would give FDA new authorities, tools and resources to comprehensively reform the nation's food safety systems. The bill is cosponsored by Dick Durbin (D-IL), Judd Gregg (R-NH), Richard Burr (R-NC), Chris Dodd (D-CT), Lamar Alexander (R-TN), and Tom Harkin (D-IA). "As we have seen in the past few months, our nation is in need of increased food safety measures to ensure that public health in America is not jeopardized by bad food," Burr said. "This bill will go a long way towards giving the FDA the authorities and resources it needs to properly regulate our food safety system and respond to food-borne illness outbreaks." Last week, the FDA announced that the source of a recent *Salmonella* outbreak was jalapeño peppers and not tomatoes, as previously thought. The three month outbreak sickened more than a thousand people and highlighted significant gaps in FDA's ability to adequately protect the nation's food supply. This bill addresses some of those failings by authorizing new science-based standards for the safety of produce; increasing the frequency of inspections of all food facilities; establishing a new pilot program for tracking and tracing-back fruits and vegetables in the event of a food-borne illness; and by giving FDA mandatory recall authority in the event a company fails to recall a product at FDA's request. Some food safety experts believe that had any of these provisions been in place, the scope of the recent *Salmonella* outbreak could have been drastically reduced and FDA's response time, dramatically improved. The bipartisan bill focuses on four key areas where FDA's authorities and resources need to be improved: food-borne illness prevention; food-borne illness detection and response; food defense capabilities; and overall resources.

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FSIS Offers Videos on Website

FSIS offers on its website various streaming video and audio resources for owners and operators of small and very small plants. Food defense videos include:

- USDA Emergency Support Function - Learn about FSIS' role in a national emergency response to a natural disaster and non-routine food-related incidents
- Reducing the Insider Threat - Learn why insider threat is a real risk to your product and facility, potential indicators to be aware of, and where to report suspicious activity.
- Developing Food Defense Plans - Learn the importance of developing a food defense plan, a three-step process to create a plan, and essential components of a plan.
- Food Defense: What Does it Mean to You? - Learn why food defense is important to your company and in protecting public health, and how a food defense plan can help you minimize the risk of intentional contamination.
- Who is OFDER? - Learn about the Office of Food Defense and Emergency Response, FSIS's central office for managing and coordinating homeland security, food defense, and emergency response activities for meat, poultry and egg products to protect public health.

More information is available at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Meat_Poultry_&_Egg_Inspection_Video/index.asp.

Welcome, New Member!
SMA is proud to introduce our newest member:
BindMax Proteins

4020 N MacArthur, Ste 122-306 • Irving, TX 75038
Phone: 903-399-4055 • Email: jbelew@bindmax.com
Jason Belew, Technical Sales

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BindMax Proteins is committed to providing the food industry with the highest quality, highest functionality, and most technologically advanced soy, milk, and meat protein blends available in the marketplace today. Our proteins, modified food starches, and meat flavors will deliver excellent value to meat and poultry processors by enhancing product performance through cook yield, flavor, and texture improvements. The consumers of these meat and poultry products will also enjoy the benefits of our nutritious, high-quality and flavorful protein blends. Our naturals line provides our customers superior flavor with clean labels.

Register now for "Developing and Implementing HACCP Plans for the Meat Industry,"
September 16-18, 2008 at Texas A&M University.

Hosted by SMA and the TAMU Department of Animal Science, this course provides hands-on training in developing a HACCP program for all types of slaughter and processing facilities.

Registration forms are available on our website or by contacting the SMA office. Sign up today!



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Briefly . . .

FSIS Posts Draft IKE on Weekly Meetings: Last week, FSIS Posted on their website Draft IKE Scenario 03D-08 - Conducting Weekly Meetings to Verify Changes in Plant Processes, which may Affect Food Safety. This IKE highlights the questions that inspection program personnel should ask when verifying whether a plant has made any changes to its process that may affect its hazard analysis in any way. Under FSIS Directive 5000.1, Rev.3 (PDF), inspection personnel are to raise this question periodically, about once a month, in the weekly meeting. The Draft IKE will be available for comment August 4 - 8, 2008 at www.fsis.usda.gov/FSIS_Employees/IKE_03D-08/index.asp. Comments should be emailed to lke@fsis.usda.gov.

FSIS Updates E. coli O157:H7 Reports: Results of E. coli O157:H7 testing by FSIS has been updated to include data through July 27, 2008. A table in FSIS' weekly *Constituent Update* reported year-to-date information for the current year and one year prior for raw ground beef and raw ground beef components in federal plants and retail stores. Access it online at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Const_Update_080108/index.asp. Starting next week, FSIS will begin reporting raw ground beef results for import establishments.

FSIS Announces Education Workshops: FSIS has announced its August schedule of regulatory education workshops for owners and operators of small and very small plants. Workshops will be held:

- Tuesday, August 5, 6:30 - 8:30 PM, at the Holiday Inn Express Jackson-Coliseum/Downtown, 310 Greymont Avenue, in Jackson, MS and at the Sheraton Atlanta Hotel, 165 Courtland Street, in Atlanta, GA 30303;
- Wednesday, August 13, 6:30 - 8:30 PM, at the Holiday Inn Crabtree Valley, 4100 Glenwood Ave, Raleigh, NC;
- Thursday, August 14, 4:00 - 6:00 PM, at the Holiday Inn Boston at Beacon Hill, 5 Blossom Street, Boston, MA
- Wednesday, August 20, 6:30 - 8:30 PM, at the Sheraton Westport Plaza Towers, 900 Westport Plaza Drive, St. Louis, MO. The workshops will cover a variety of topics and prerequisite programs, including hazard analysis and critical control points, sanitation performance standards and standard operating procedures, and E. coli workshops.

Horse Transportation Bill Introduced in House: The Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act of 2008 was introduced July 24 in the U.S. House of Representatives and would criminalize the possession, sale and transport of horses in interstate or foreign commerce for the purpose of slaughter for human consumption. John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI) introduced the bill to prevent horses being bought at U.S. auctions for transport to foreign slaughterhouses. Advocates of horse slaughter worry about the mounting number of unwanted horses in the U.S. and believe it is in the best interest of horses to have slaughter facilities available domestically as an option for horse owners.