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Email: phyllis@southwestmeat.org

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Edited by Phyllis Zimmerman

FSIS Posts Draft Compliance Guidelines for *E. coli* Sampling

FSIS has posted two draft compliance guideline documents on sampling with a particular focus on beef trimmings for *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 this week on its website. FSIS is providing the documents to stakeholders for review and there will be a 30 day comment period. FSIS will consider suggestions received and if appropriate, will revise the documents based on the comments and issue final guidance via a future FSIS Notice to inspection program personnel. At that time, FSIS will convey verification procedures to inspectors to ensure that raw beef operations are aware of the guidance. Through these compliance guidelines, FSIS expects establishments to increase their consistency and uniformity in the design of control procedures for raw beef operations. The specific purpose of these draft guidance documents is to provide information about the design of sampling and testing programs for *E. coli* O157:H7. These documents are focused on manufacturers and users of boneless beef manufacturing trimmings and other raw ground beef components ("trimmings"). These draft guidance documents are intended to assist establishments in developing programs to assess the adequacy of process controls for *E. coli* O157:H7. Comments are to be submitted on or before September 15. FSIS expects to issue final guidance documents within two months after the close of the comment period. All stakeholders are encouraged to submit their comment via email to the Office of Policy and Program Development, Risk Management Division at FSISGuidanceDocumentComments@fsis.usda.gov. To view the "Compliance Guidelines for Sampling Beef Trimmings for *Escherichia coli* O157:H7," visit FSIS' website at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Compliance_Guides_Index/index.asp#Ecoli. For a detailed summary of the guidelines by SMA legal counsel Olsson, Frank & Weeda, P.C., please email phyllis@southwestmeat.org.

FSIS Reports *E. coli* Control Checklist, Reassessment Results

On Friday, FSIS posted a report titled "Results of Checklist and Reassessment of Control for *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 in Beef Operations." The data was collected in response to several events in 2007 including an increase in the number of *E. coli* O157:H7 positives and recalls. This report details the results and analysis of information received in response to FSIS Notice 65-07 titled Notice of Reassessment for *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 Control and Completion of a Checklist for All Beef Operations, which instructs FSIS inspectors to collect data about establishments' reassessment of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans. Inspection program personnel also had to complete a checklist, collecting information about the practices at several types of raw beef operations. FSIS welcomes comments from its stakeholders and there will be a 30 day comment period, at which individuals may submit information to O157H7EstablishmentPractices@fsis.usda.gov. FSIS believes this report will assist the Agency to develop additional risk mitigation actions to control for *E. coli* O157:H7. The report can be found on FSIS' website at www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Ecoli_Reassessment_&_Checklist.pdf.

**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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Nebraska Beef Expands Recall

Nebraska Beef, Ltd., an Omaha, Nebraska establishment, is clarifying information from and expanding its recall announced on August 8 of primal cuts, subprimal cuts and boxed beef to include such products bearing the company name “Nebraska Beef Ltd” that may be contaminated with *E. coli* O157:H7, the USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced last Thursday. The total product subject to recall is approximately 1.36 million pounds. The expansion of approximately 160,000 pounds and the clarifying information include primal cuts, subprimal cuts and boxed beef produced on June 24 and July 8, whose shipping containers and labels bear the establishment number “EST. 19336” inside the USDA mark of inspection and the company name “Nebraska Beef Ltd.” The products may or may not bear a green sticker. FSIS concluded that the production practices employed by Nebraska Beef, Ltd., on June 24 were insufficient to effectively control *E. coli* O157:H7 and the products subject to the expansion may have been produced under insanitary conditions. The expansion was not prompted by foodborne illness investigations. The recalled products were sent to establishments and retail stores nationwide for further processing and will likely not bear the establishment number “EST. 19336” on products available for direct consumer purchase.

Pork, Beef Exports Climbing

Pork exports enjoyed a record-setting first half of 2008, while the value of U.S. beef exports has climbed closer to the pre-BSE highs achieved earlier in the decade, according to the latest export figures released by USDA. Surging meat sales in overseas markets have provided a needed boost for hog and cattle producers in recent months, brightening the outlook for the nation’s livestock industry. Pork and pork variety meat exports in June totaled 192,667 metric tons valued at \$451 million, double the volume exported in June of last year. This drove year-to-date pork exports to 1,018,467 metric tons valued at \$2.3 billion, 67% above the first six months of 2007 in terms of volume, and 58% higher than last year in terms of value. Resumption of beef exports to South Korea represents an important and well-publicized breakthrough for U.S. beef producers, as Korea once represented the third-largest market for U.S. beef. As the first-half results for 2008 strongly indicate, demand for U.S. beef is now surging in a wide range of foreign markets. Beef and beef variety meat exports in June increased 35% and totaled 89,054 metric tons, valued at \$328 million. During the first half of the year, these exports totaled 445,036 metric tons, valued at \$1.58 billion – an increase of 30% in volume and 39% in value. First-half exports reached 71% of the volume achieved in the first six months of 2003, and 87% of the value achieved during the same time period.



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Welcome, New Member!

SMA is proud to introduce our newest member:

Texas Natural Meats, Inc.

523 State Highway 320 • Lott, TX 76656
 Phone: 214-448-0580 • Fax: 214-823-5587
 Website: www.texasnaturalmeats.com
 Email: melanie@texasnaturalmeats.com

Melanie O'Neill, Managing Director • Troy Carter, VP of Operations
 Steve Robbins, Sales Manager

Service: Slaughterer, boner, processor, purveyor, portion control, grinder • Product: Bison, wild boar • Federally inspected • 10 employees



Texas Natural Meats – The Texas Advantage

Texas Natural Meats is a specialty meat company providing Bison and Wild Boar meat to customers all over the globe. The family owned company is dedicated to creating premium quality, all natural specialty meats for distributors, restaurants, groceries and case ready customers. By the box or pallet, Texas Natural Meats will make every effort to satisfy your needs.

Briefly . . .

Canada Confirms Case of BSE: Last Friday the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) confirmed bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in a six-year-old beef cow from Alberta. No part of the animal's carcass entered the human food or animal feed systems. The animal's birth farm has been identified, and an investigation is underway. CFIA is tracing the animal's herd mates at the time of birth and examining possible sources of infection. The case was detected through the national BSE surveillance program, which has been highly successful in demonstrating the low level of BSE in Canada and continues to play an important role in Canada's strategy to manage BSE. Canada remains a Controlled Risk country for BSE, as recognized by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). Accordingly, this case should not affect exports of Canadian cattle or beef.

FSIS Updates Testing Results: This week's report on *E. coli* O157:H7 testing by FSIS has been updated to include data through August 10, 2008. In January 1999, FSIS clarified that intact raw beef products that are to be processed further into non-intact raw beef products, such as raw ground beef, should be treated in the same manner as non-intact raw beef products themselves. In March 2007, FSIS initiated a project for the routine sampling and testing of domestic beef trimmings intended for use in raw ground beef. There had been some sampling of raw beef trimmings as early as 2004. In certain cases, FSIS sampled beef manufacturing trimmings at suppliers whose product was used by a grinding establishment with a positive raw ground beef sample. In October 2007, the routine trim testing program was expanded to imported trim as well as the overall raw beef component testing program that was expanded to include other raw beef components such as head meat. Individual positive results for all 2008 Raw Ground Beef sampling programs are reported at www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/2008_Ecoli_Positive_Results/index.asp.

Canada Examines U.S. COOL Rule: Canadian Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz said that Canada plans to examine the impact the U.S.'s mandatory country of origin labeling (COOL) rules could have on its exporters of meat and other commodities. In the past, Ritz said Canada is prepared to launch a NAFTA or WTO challenge over COOL if it imposes an economic burden on Canadian producers. Congress recently passed the 2008 U.S. Farm Bill, which requires that mandatory COOL for beef, lamb, pork, chicken and goat meat, along with perishable agricultural commodities like peanuts and ginseng, be implemented by September 30, 2008. "We will analyze the recently released rule to determine the economic impacts on integrated North American markets," Ritz said in a statement on August 8. "The government of Canada will continue to work with industry and the provinces and territories to minimize any impact on Canadian farmers and ranchers. Should the implementation of the rule result in undue restrictions on the exportation of any products or animals from Canada, the government will have to consider its options." Ritz was especially concerned about the effect COOL requirements could have on beef and pork production, since American feeders buy lots of young livestock in Canada to finish in the United States.

Researchers Have New BSE Test for Meat: Researchers working in conjunction with the National Animal Disease Center of the USDA's Agricultural Research Service said a new real-time monitoring test of possible central nervous system (CNS) contamination during slaughter could provide an additional, science-based tool for sanitation measures in slaughterhouses. The researchers claim their light-based spectroscopic monitoring technique is rapid and non-invasive, requiring no sample preparation as opposed to existing methods. The test is based on detection of the fluorescent pigment lipofuscin, a substance that appears in high concentrations in the nervous tissue of cattle, which they claim is a dependable indicator for the presence of brain/spinal tissue in bovine carcasses and meat cuts.