

# SMA InfoMeat

1957

Representing the Meat Industry for Over 50 Years

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Email: [phyllis@southwestmeat.org](mailto:phyllis@southwestmeat.org)  
[www.southwestmeat.org](http://www.southwestmeat.org)

Edited by Phyllis Zimmerman

## OIG Issues Audit Report on Risk-based Inspection

On December 17, 2007, the USDA's Office of the Inspector General (OIG), issued "Audit Report: Issues Impacting the Development of Risk-Based Inspection at Meat and Poultry Processing Establishments." OIG provided the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) with 35 recommendations, all of which the Agency agreed to implement, reaching a management agreement on the report. Accordingly, we can expect FSIS will once again begin to move forward with Risk-Based Inspection (RBI), but most of the activity this year will be in implementing the recommendations with regard to infrastructure for RBI and conducting a Food Safety Assessment (FSA) at large establishments. While it was not explicitly expressed whether FSIS can spend money on RBI, the Agency has now met the requirements of Congress to have the OIG review FSIS data in support of development and design of RBI. Congress' restriction on funding was to be in place until FSIS "addressed and resolved" issues identified. It is unclear whether the funding will be released based on reaching management decision on the recommendations or whether they will have to implement the recommendations prior to release of funds. In summary, FSIS will be implementing a Public Health Information System (PHIS) in 2008 as the "brains" to underlie RBI and other inspection improvements. As part of, and in conjunction with PHIS, FSIS will:

- Modify FSAs by: adding structured questions in an interactive web-based format; prioritizing "Not for Cause" FSAs; developing a tracking system to ensure that all establishments are considered in prioritizing FSAs; including verification plan methodology in an FSIS Directive to ensure establishments's actions in response to FSAs are verified; tracking FSAs in the PHIS; and including FSA results in the algorithm for allocating inspection resources;
  - Develop a method to better assess production volume at establishments. Until PHIS is fully implemented, FSIS will repeat the collection of verifiable volume data begun with FSIS Notice 65-07 at a frequency determined by analysis of the initial results and changing data needs. Also before PHIS is fully implemented, FSIS will begin collecting verifiable volume data on products other than raw beef. Once implemented, the PHIS is expected to prompt inspection program personnel to regularly verify that the collected information remains accurate;
    - Include information provided by Form 10,240 in the establishment's PHIS file;
    - Proceed with the algorithm for determining the risk posed by establishments based on their control programs.
- For a detailed summary of the audit report by SMA legal counsel Olsson, Frank and Weeda, P.C., please email [phyllis@southwestmeat.org](mailto:phyllis@southwestmeat.org). The Audit Report is available for review at: [www.usda.gov/oig/webdocs/24601-07-HY.pdf](http://www.usda.gov/oig/webdocs/24601-07-HY.pdf).

## FSIS Offers Regulatory Web Seminar

In continuing the efforts for outreach to small and very small plants, FSIS is sponsoring a free monthly seminar series. The seminars cover a variety of technical topics concerning FSIS policies and new technologies of interest to industry. The January 23rd seminar will feature Texas A&M University's Dr. Wes Osburn, speaking on new technologies that small and very small plants can use to control pathogens such as *E. coli* and *Salmonella* in meat and poultry slaughter operations. The seminar will be conducted via Net Meeting, 10-11 AM EST and 6-7 PM EST, using internet access for viewing the presentation and a phone line for the audio portion. Upon registration, a seminar representative will contact you with instructions on joining the event. To register by phone instead, call 800-336-3747. To register online, visit the FSIS website at [www.fsis.usda.gov/News\\_&\\_Events/Reg\\_012308\\_Web\\_Seminar/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Reg_012308_Web_Seminar/index.asp).

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## USDA Proposes Changes to Animal Transport Regulations

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service seeks comments on a proposal to amend the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) regulations for transportation of live animals excluding marine mammals. The goal of the proposed rule is to remove the current ambient temperature requirements for various stages in the transportation of regulated animals. If accepted, this proposed rule would replace those requirements with a single performance standard under which the animals would be transported under climatic and environment conditions that are appropriate for their welfare making acclimation certificates for live animals other than marine mammals unnecessary. This proposal also would require transport compartments on aircraft to be opened during prolonged layovers, as well as the use of ground equipment to maintain appropriate conditions in the cargo hold during layover. Finally, the proposed rule, if finalized, would eliminate the requirement for acclimation certificates for animals other than marine mammals. Notice of this proposed rule was published in the January 3 *Federal Register*, and the deadline for comments is March 4. For more information, visit [www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/content/2008/01/live\\_animal\\_req.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/content/2008/01/live_animal_req.shtml).

## FSIS Announces Phone System Changes at OPPED

FSIS has made changes to the telephone system in its Omaha, Nebraska offices to improve customer service and address recent changes to the Policy Development Division (PDD), formerly the Technical Services Center, and other program areas. Through a series of menus and sub-menus, callers are now informed on how to reach the most suitable contact for their question. Within the Office of Policy, Program and Employee Development (OPPED), the PDD answers technical questions related to general domestic inspection policies and on FSIS issuances, such as directives, notices and interactive knowledge exchange (IKE) scenarios. Calls related to international inspection policies, such as export-related questions, are directed to the Office of International Affairs (OIA). Callers with labeling and sampling questions should be aware of the following changes: OPPED Labeling and Program Delivery Division (LPDD) in Washington, D.C., responds to labeling questions; OPPED Risk Management Division (RMD) in Washington, D.C., responds to sampling questions. Calls are automatically forwarded free of charge to LPDD and RMD staff when customers use the PDD toll-free number (800-233-3935) and follow the menu options. Callers can also find additional information and answers to commonly asked questions on the FSIS website.

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### **Welcome, New Member!**

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Buddy's Natural Chicken is a family owned, USDA inspected poultry processor founded by Buddy Lindeman in 1987. Located in Gonzales, Texas, Buddy's Natural Chickens are raised without antibiotics, without hormones, without growth stimulants, without animal by-products and are raised humanely. Buddy's owns our own hatchery and processing plant, manages the farms, distributes our products in our own trucks, and above all, owns and operates the feed mill to assure strict specifications for our product. We're not just "natural chicken," we're Buddy's Natural Chicken!



**Register now for “Developing & Implementing HACCP Plans for the Meat Industry”**

to be held at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, **February 12-14, 2008**, hosted by SMA and the Texas A&M Department of Animal Science. The course provides hands-on training in developing a HACCP program for all types of meat slaughtering and processing facilities.

**Registration forms are available on our website or by contacting the SMA office.**

**Sign up today!**

**Briefly . . .**

Palesano Relocates to Texas: SMA is pleased to announce that our VP of Technical Services, Bobby Palesano, has relocated and now makes his home in College Station, TX! Bobby will be splitting his office hours between SMA and the International HACCP Alliance, so please feel free to call on him for help with any regulatory issues. You may reach him through the SMA office or on his mobile phone at 979-676-1877. Welcome back to Texas, Bobby!

USDA Releases 2006 Animal Health Report: The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently released the 2006 U.S. Animal Health Report, a national overview of domestic animal health in the United States. The report addresses the many components of the U.S. animal health infrastructure; approaches to animal disease surveillance, control and eradication; animal population demographics and new initiatives. In addition, the report describes significant epidemiologic events during the year, a chapter on animal health research underway by collaborating agencies within USDA and U.S. schools of veterinary medicine, and a new chapter on international collaboration and capacity-building projects.

U.S. Customs Names New Deputy Executive Director : U.S. Customs and Border Protection has named the new official in charge of inspecting agricultural imports to keep out foreign pests and diseases. Kevin Harriger, a former USDA official and the current director of policy and planning for Customs and Border Protection’s agriculture programs, was named to the new position in an agency statement last Wednesday. The post, deputy executive director of operational oversight for agriculture, was created last year by Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. Harriger previously worked for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), which was partially merged into Customs and Border Protection when the Department of Homeland Security was set up in 2003.

FDA Announces Leadership Changes: Last week Commissioner of Food and Drugs Andrew C. von Eschenbach, M.D., announced two major changes in the agency’s senior leadership team. Effective today, Stephen F. Sundlof, D.V.M., Ph.D., is moving from director of FDA’s Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) to director of FDA’s Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN). Bernadette Dunham, D.V.M., Ph.D., who is deputy director of CVM, will assume directorship of CVM, also effective Monday. For over a decade, Sundlof has served as the director of CVM and has overseen the regulation of feed, including food additives, and drugs intended for animals. As deputy director of CVM since 2006, Dunham has played a critical role, and provided executive leadership, in coordinating and establishing center policy in research, management, scientific evaluation, compliance, and surveillance.



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