



InfoMeat

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FSIS Announces Public Meeting on Retail Lists During Recalls

Last Thursday, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced a public meeting to solicit comments on a proposed rule that would make public the lists of retailers that have received meat or poultry products voluntarily recalled by a federally inspected establishment. On March 7, FSIS published in the *Federal Register* a proposed rule titled, "Availability of Lists of Retail Consignees During Meat or Poultry Product Recalls." Under the proposed rule, if a product has been distributed to the retail level, FSIS will post a complete list of retail outlets on its website once that list has been verified for accuracy. The proposed rule applies only to meat and poultry products. The public meeting will be held Monday, April 24, 9:30 AM - 12 PM, in the conference room at the south end of the cafeteria in the USDA South Building, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, D.C. An agenda will be available on FSIS' website at www.fsis.usda.gov/News/Meetings_&_Events/. To facilitate easy access to the South Building, pre-registration is required for this meeting, and all participants should enter the South Building at the Wing 2 entrance on C Street, SW. To pre-register, please contact Diane Jones at 202-720-9692 or e-mail: Diane.Jones@fsis.usda.gov.

SMA, NMA Leaders Visit Washington, D.C.

Southwest Meat Association and National Meat Association again teamed up to visit and meet with various legislators and regulators in our nation's Capitol last week. The three-day trip involved representatives from nearly 20 companies. Meeting with Secretary Johanns, industry representatives offered praise for the job the Secretary is doing and expressed concerns facing the industry today. Johanns assured members that the industry's problems are, and will continue to be, acted on by the department with all the forceful, effective guidance he has shown thus far. In other USDA meetings, members met with GIPSA Administrator James Link, APHIS Administrator Dr. Ron DeHaven, FSIS Administrator Dr. Barbara Masters and staff, and AMS Deputy Administrator Barry Carpenter and staff. Members learned that FSIS believes that effective food safety comes from regulatory transparency, cooperation and proactive communications. FSIS is particularly interested in assisting small businesses in meeting their regulatory requirements under HACCP and in establishing a high confidence of food security nationwide. FSIS is examining how best to organize and implement risk-based inspection and FSIS Administrator Masters indicated that the Agency is taking some serious, positive steps toward making adjustments in overtime billing. Members also met with two Assistant Chief Counsels from the Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Advocacy, which is currently seeking input in its review of a pending FSIS rule on the availability of lists of retail consignees during meat or poultry product recalls. At APHIS, members learned that the risk assessment for resuming further cattle imports from Canada has been slowed. The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) reported that it is looking at ways to streamline the Export Verification process to reduce costs. GIPSA indicated it has no intention of delaying its Livestock and Meat Marketing Study, despite the grave concerns industry has with data collection. NMA's PAC hosted a popular, well-attended reception for House Majority Leader John Boehner, who has been a strong supporter of agriculture and our industry. And lastly a couple of special guests spoke to the group. Neil Newhouse, an influential pollster from Public Opinion Strategies, Inc., spoke about the upcoming elections and presidential race and Bill Pickle, Sergeant-at-Arms of the U.S. Senate, provided an original insider's view of Capitol Hill. Members were also able to visit with their individual Congressional representatives. It was a busy, non-stop event, with great opportunities to meet the government officials who are responsible for industry policy. *(Many thanks to Jeremy Russell at NMA for this summary.)*

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USDA Releases NAIS Implementation Plan

Last week Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns released the implementation plan that outlines timelines and benchmarks for the establishment of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS), along with a plan for the initial integration of private and state animal tracking databases with NAIS. "Developing an effective animal identification system has been a high priority for USDA and we've made significant strides toward achieving a comprehensive U.S. system," said Johanns on Thursday. "We recognize that this represents one of the largest systematic changes ever faced by the livestock industry and we have welcomed suggestions from stakeholders to ensure that we continue to gain momentum. The plan we are releasing today will guide our efforts as we continue to work with our State and industry partners to implement a nationwide system." The implementation plan sets an aggressive timeline for ensuring full implementation of the NAIS by 2009. Several important components have already been accomplished, including the development of premises registration systems in each State and the issuance of guidelines for the manufacture and distribution of animal identification numbers. More than 235,000 premises are currently registered. USDA also released the general technical standards for animal tracking databases that will enable integration of private systems with the NAIS. Private database owners are invited to submit applications for system evaluation to USDA and offer feedback as the final technical requirements are established. USDA will then enter into cooperative agreements with owners of databases that meet the standards. The application for system evaluation and a draft cooperative agreement are available on the NAIS web site at www.usda.gov/nais. By early 2007, USDA expects to have the technology in place, called the Animal Trace Processing System or commonly known as the metadata system, that will allow state and federal animal health officials to query the NAIS and private databases during a disease investigation. The animal tracking databases will record and store animal movement tracking information for livestock that state and federal animal health officials will query for animals of interest in a disease investigation. Training sessions will be offered to organizations interested in distributing animal identification number (AIN) tags as either a tag manager or tag reseller. Two USDA-sponsored web conferences about the administration of AIN tags and a demonstration of the AIN Management System are scheduled for Thursday, April 13 at 1 PM, and Wednesday, April 26 at 1 PM, EDT, with details available on the NAIS web site.

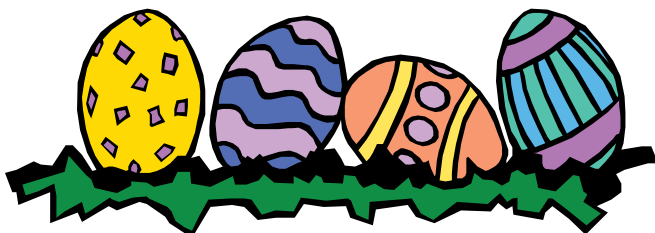
Court Denies R-CALF Injunction to Block Canadian Cattle

A U.S. District Judge in Montana has denied the cattleman's group R-CALF's request for a permanent injunction blocking the importation of Canadian cattle. Judge Richard Cebull originally granted the temporary injunction in March 2005, stalling government plans to reopen the border for four months until an appeals court overturned the order. Cebull said his "hands are tied" by the previous appeals court ruling that found USDA officials had a firm basis for reopening the border. Canada's Agriculture Minister Chuck Strahl welcomed Cebull's decision as a "great development." "Canada and the U.S. continue to have the same risk status," he said. "Both our countries have adopted extensive complementary and parallel measures to protect human and animal health, as well as food safety, based on internationally recognized science standards." Trade in cattle younger than 30 months, thought to be at lower risk for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), resumed last July. USDA is now working on a new rule to allow importation of cattle older than 30 months of age and their beef products, as well as breeding animals. R-CALF said that it will not give up and will now target government plans to resume trade in older cows and beef products.

Office Holiday

The SMA office will be closed Friday, April 14, in observance of Good Friday.

Happy Easter!



Advance Food Co. has the following positions available:

- **Food Safety Manager** - BS degree with a minimum 5-7 years of managerial experience.
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- **Sanitation Director** - Oversee sanitation program for all facilities.

If interested, please apply online at www.advf.com, send resumes to Careers@advf.com or contact Nancy Correa at 580-213-4122

FSIS Issues New Temperature Guidelines for Cooked Poultry

FSIS issued a news release on April 5 to advise consumers that cooking raw poultry to a minimum internal temperature of 165 °F will eliminate all pathogens and viruses such as *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and the avian influenza virus. FSIS recommends the use of a food thermometer to monitor internal temperature. The National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF) held public meetings from March 21-24, to discuss cooking parameters for seafood, consumer guidelines for the safe cooking of poultry products and the food safety importance and public health significance of *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis*. "The Committee was asked to determine a single minimum temperature for poultry at which consumers can be confident that pathogens and viruses will be destroyed," stated Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Richard Raymond. "The recommendation is based on the best scientific data available and will serve as a foundation for our programs designed to reduce foodborne illness and protect public health." FSIS will use NACMCF's recommendation to further guide consumers in the preparation of poultry products to ensure microbiological safety. While NACMCF has established 165 °F as the minimum temperature at which bacteria and viruses will be destroyed, consumers may choose to cook poultry to higher temperatures. The news release is available at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/NR_040506_01/index.asp.

Briefly . . .

APHIS Authorizes Funding for NAIS Field Trials: USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will award \$3 million in funds to a number of States and Tribes to conduct field trials to analyze information pertaining to animal identification. Field trials will focus on the evaluation of new technologies for animal identification and automated data collection. APHIS will also fund an economic study focusing on the cost of NAIS implementation within a state; the development of procedures to measure the performance of ID devices and a bi-state study to develop NAIS recommendations regarding livestock exhibitions. \$27 million has already been awarded to advance the national animal identification initiative, primarily for premises identification and registration. APHIS is currently preparing a summary report on what has been accomplished through previously funded field trials and pilot projects.

Guidance Available on SRM Removal for Beef Tongue: An SMA beef packer member recently raised a question about the removal of tonsils as part of the procedures to comply with specified risk material requirements. We remind members that tonsil material, including palatine and lingual tonsils must be removed from the tongues of all cattle. FSIS has posted guidance on its website that includes photographic documentation of exactly what needs to be removed. Members can review the guidelines at: www.fsis.usda.gov/OFO/TSC/removal_of_tonsils.htm.

IKE Scenario Available Online: FSIS has made Interactive Knowledge Exchange (IKE) scenario 03-06, Clarification of the Appeal Process for FSIS Personnel and Industry (example: Appeal Granted). This scenario is the first of two which focus on the appeals process. The scenario can be viewed on the FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/FSIS_Employees/IKE_Scenarios/index.asp.

Employees/IKE_Scenarios/index.asp. If you have any questions or comments regarding this IKE scenario, contact the Technical Service Center at 800-233-3935 or by e-mail at ike@fsis.usda.gov.

FSIS Issues Notice on Salmonella Verification Sampling of Turkey: FSIS issued Notice 20-06 on April 4, titled, "Salmonella Verification Sampling of Turkey Carcasses." This notice provides inspection program personnel who receive sample collection request forms with information and instructions for conducting the *Salmonella* verification sampling of turkey carcasses. The notice is available on FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/Notice_20-06/index.asp.

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