

SMA InfoMeat

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FSIS Announces Regulatory Education Sessions

As part of the initiative to enhance outreach to assist small and very small plants outlined in the FSIS strategic implementation plan, FSIS will hold several regulatory education sessions for the owners and operators of small and very small plants in Texas, Georgia, Wisconsin, New York and California. The sessions will bring industry and inspection personnel together to promote a uniform understanding of the regulations, covering a regulatory walk-through of the sanitation standard operating procedures, hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) system, and Rules of Practice requirements. The regulatory education sessions will be held at the following locations:

- Dallas, TX - Tuesday, August 22, 6:30 - 8:30 PM, at the Embassy Suites Dallas Market Center, 2727 Stemmons Freeway, Dallas, Texas 75207;
- Atlanta, GA - Wednesday, August 23, from 6:30 - 8:30 PM, at the Sheraton Atlanta Downtown, 165 Courtland Street, Atlanta, Georgia 30303;
- Madison, WI - Tuesday, September 12, from 6:30 - 8:30 PM, at the Howard Johnson Hotel, 3841 E. Washington Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin 53704;
- Austin, TX - Thursday, September 14, from 6:30 - 8:30 PM, at the MCC Building Auditorium, University of Texas J.J. Pickle Research Campus, 3935 West Braker Lane, Austin, Texas 78759;
- Albany, NY - Tuesday, September 19, from 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 PM, at the Crown Plaza Albany Hotel, State and Lodge Streets, Albany, New York 12207; and
- Covina, CA - Wednesday, September 20, from 5:00 - 7:00 PM, at the Embassy Suites Hotel Los Angeles - Covina, 1211 E. Garvey Street, Covina, California 91724.

To register by phone, call 800-336-3747. Online registration forms can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Outreach_Sessions_SVS_Plants/index.asp.

Test and Hold Practices Can Prevent Recalls

SMA legal counsel, Dennis Johnson, Esq. of Olsson, Frank and Weeda, P.C. recently pointed out that in a one week period (July 31-August 5) there were three *E. coli* O157:H7 recalls by small grinders in Georgia, Texas and Tennessee. The recalls were based on positive FSIS samples (the establishments did not hold product pending results), and in the case of the last recall, there was carry-over of product from the positive day to the next. This makes four *E. coli* O157:H7 recalls in one month, including a recall earlier in July by a Maryland firm which, likewise, did not hold product. The failure to hold sampled products, and the resulting recalls, continues to be a concern of FSIS. In the past, the agency has expressed a willingness to undertake rulemaking if this type of recall continues. In that regard, SMA and several other industry groups published guidelines to assist processors in developing procedures for ensuring tested product are held. "Although none of the recent recalls involved SMA members, I think it is important to remind everyone that we really need to be diligent on this issue if we don't want to see future rulemaking that could withhold the mark of inspection from sampled products until a negative result is obtained," said SMA Executive Director Joe Harris. If you or anyone you know needs a copy of the "Industry Best Practices for Holding Tested Products" guidelines, they are available on our website at www.southwestmeat.org.

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Feed Recalled for Ruminant Material

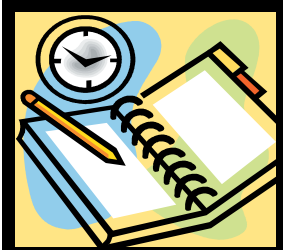
Thousands of tons of livestock feed are being recalled in the U.S. by producers and distributors due to the “possibility” that “a small amount” of banned bovine material, likely intended for poultry feed, was mixed into cattle feed, according government and industry officials. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said Friday that two types of feed supplements, one containing ruminant material and one without, may have been produced with the same equipment in an Alabama factory, presenting a possibility of “cross-contamination” of feed products. Cattle and other ruminants aren’t allowed to consume any ruminant material under the agency’s 1997 feed ban that was implemented to prevent the spread of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in the U.S. In June, FDA announced a recall for feed supplements made by H. J. Baker & Bro. Inc., and now FDA is releasing recall notices for individual feed producers that used the H.J. Baker supplements. Kentucky-based Burkmann Feeds LLC has recalled an unknown amount of custom feed which may contain ruminant-derived meat and bone meal. Vita Plus Corp. of Wisconsin has recalled roughly 14,000 tons, although the company only added the supplements in question to about 600 tons. The FDA also asked Alabama-based Tucker Milling LLC, which makes feed for birds and fish, to recall product because it wasn’t labeled “Do not feed to ruminants.” Cross-contamination is a “modest” but real threat in the potential spread of BSE if cattle are fed the ruminant material, according to a risk study performed by Harvard University.

USDA, DOI Brief Media on AI Surveillance Program

The U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Interior today announced that routine surveillance has indicated the presence of H5 and N1 avian influenza subtypes in samples from two wild mute swans in Michigan, but testing has ruled out the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain that has spread through birds in Asia, Europe and Africa. Test results thus far indicate this is low pathogenicity avian influenza, which poses no threat to human health. The swans were sampled as part of the expanded avian influenza surveillance program and showed no signs of sickness. Additionally, genetic analysis of the virus conducted at USDA’s National Veterinary Services laboratories (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa, suggests that it is similar to a low pathogenicity strain that has been found in North America. The confirmatory testing underway will clarify whether one or more strains of the virus are present, the specific subtype, as well as pathogenicity. These results are expected within two weeks and will be made public when completed. Dr. Ron DeHaven, the administrator of APHIS, Dr. Sue Haseltine, associate director for Biology at the U.S. Department of the Interior, and Dr. Bill Raub, science advisor to the Secretary at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services participated in the media briefing this morning, and announced that this finding was no surprise, given the increased disease surveillance testing performed on wild birds in the United States. To read a transcript, go to www.usda.gov/wps/portal/ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?contentidonly=true&contentid=2006/08/0297.xml.

First U.S. Beef Shipments Sell Out in Japan

Anyone who thought Japanese consumers wouldn’t want U.S. beef found out differently last Wednesday. Over five tons of U.S. beef, the entire first shipment, was completely sold out in less than a day. “A lot of people looked at different polls at the height of political pressure to reopen the market, and didn’t think Japanese consumers really wanted U.S. beef,” said Phil Seng, president and CEO of the U.S. Meat Export Federation. “But polls don’t always gauge individuals’ thinking.” USMEF representatives who were at the Tokyo area Costco stores where the beef was being sold saw tremendous lines with consumers buying three or four packages of beef. Seng described it as a “buying frenzy” and said it is very encouraging for U.S. beef exporters. “We are looking forward to supplying Japan with more beef,” Seng said. “Beef consumption has dropped by about seven pounds and our job is not only to make that up, but also supplant some of our competition that has been very active in the past three years.” One method USMEF is using is the “We Care” campaign that is designed to help re-establish the high quality image of U.S. beef. The campaign, with support from the U.S. government, beef producers and exporting companies, began August 4 and gives Japanese audiences information demonstrating the U.S. beef industry’s commitment to taking the proper steps in assuring food safety, quality and taste.



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

to be held at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, September 12-14, 2006, hosted by SMA and the Texas A&M Department of Animal Science. Registration forms are available on our website, or by contacting the SMA office.

Sign up today!

APHIS Proposes to Amend BSE Minimal-Risk Region Final Rule

Last Tuesday the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) displayed a proposed rule that would amend APHIS' final rule on the importation of animals and animal products from BSE minimal risk regions (hereinafter "BSE final rule"). Specifically, the proposed rule would remove several restrictions regarding the identification of animals for import, the importation of hide-derived gelatin, and the importation of certain non-ruminant material because the restrictions are not necessary to prevent the introduction of BSE into the U.S. Comments on the proposed rule must be received by October 10, 2006. Currently, the BSE final rule provides that bovines, sheep and goats imported from a BSE minimal risk region must be individually identified by means of an official eartag of the country of origin. The proposed rule would allow for other means of official identification such as tattoos and possibly registered brands when accompanied by a certificate of inspection from a recognized brand inspection authority. The proposed rule would also permit the importation of gelatin derived from hides (provided that the gelatin has not been commingled with materials ineligible for entry into the U.S.) and would eliminate the current restriction that non-ruminant material (e.g., processed animal protein, tankage, offal, certain tallow, processed fats and oils) processed in BSE minimal risk regions be processed in facilities that do not process material derived from ruminants for minimal risk regions. The agency believes that requiring non-ruminant materials to be processed in separate facilities from ruminant materials in BSE minimal risk regions is inconsistent with other provisions in APHIS' BSE final rule.

Briefly . . .

FSIS Seeks Comments On TSC: FSIS is seeking comments as part of its efforts to improve its Technical Service Center (TSC) operations. FSIS is particularly interested in improving TSC programs that assist small businesses. FSIS is reviewing the organization, operations and services provided by its TSC in Omaha, NE, with the intent of improving TSC programs that provide technical advice, guidance and information to FSIS personnel, the regulated industry and the general public. The agency is accepting comments until August 30, through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov or by electronic mail at: fsis.regulationscomments@fsis.usda.gov.

FSIS Posts Second Quarterly Progress Report on *Salmonella* Testing of Raw Meat, Poultry Products: On August 11, FSIS posted on its website the second quarterly progress report on *Salmonella* testing of selected raw meat and poultry products. This quarterly report provides preliminary data for April through June 2006. In February 2006, FSIS posted in the *Federal Register* its intention to publish results quarterly and to change how it used the results from its *Salmonella* verification sampling program for meat and poultry establishments as a way to enhance public health protection. The report is available at: www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Q2_2006_Salmonella_Testing/index.asp.

FSIS Revises Directive on Food Defense Verification Procedures: Last week the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) issued Directive 5420.1, Revision 3, Homeland Security Threat Condition Response – Food Defense

Verification Procedures. The Directive describes the emergency Food Defense Verification Procedures that inspection program personnel will follow when the Department of Homeland Security declares a threat condition of Yellow, Orange or Red. The Directive explains how threat conditions will be communicated to field personnel, provides instructions for responding to threat conditions and reviewing establishment food defense plans, and provides instructions for documenting Food Defense Verification Procedures. The Directive may be viewed at: www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FSISDirectives/5420.1Rev3.pdf. For a detailed summary of this Directive by SMA legal counsel Olsson, Frank and Weeda, P.C., please email Phyllis at sma@tca.net.

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