

SMA InfoMeat

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Email: sma@tca.net
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Edited by Phyllis Zimmerman

TAHC Postpones Premise ID Requirement

At a meeting last Thursday, commissioners for the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC), the state's livestock and poultry health regulatory agency, postponed taking action on proposed regulations that would require identification of physical locations where livestock, exotic livestock, domestic fowl, and exotic fowl are held, managed or handled. Dr. Bob Hillman, Texas' state veterinarian and TAHC executive director, explained that postponing action that would make premises registration in Texas compulsory by July 1, 2006, does not mean that the issue has been resolved. Commissioners will reconsider the proposed rule at a future commission meeting to be announced. TAHC continues to encourage voluntary premises registration, which currently includes more than 7,000 of the state's 200,000, or more, farms, ranches or other facilities. Premises registration is the foundation for the three-tiered National Animal Identification System (NAIS), which, when fully implemented, is designed to enable animal health officials to trace the movement of diseased or exposed livestock or poultry. USDA has spearheaded NAIS development since 2004, with the cooperation of national species working group committees. In 2005, Texas passed and signed into law HB 1361, authorizing the TAHC to institute an animal ID program consistent with the NAIS, and to collect fees to offset some costs of agency operations. "More than 600 persons submitted comments regarding Texas' proposed premises registration rule during the comment period which ended February 6," said Hillman. Commissioners also heard from nearly 80 persons at the meeting Thursday. "Although the TAHC commissioners recognize the need for an improved animal identification system, they need additional time to consider complaints regarding the \$10 per year fee, concerns about livestock and poultry identification and reporting requirements that, eventually, may be implemented on a national basis; and fears about the potential loss of privacy," he said. Premises registration, the only aspect of the NAIS currently under consideration in Texas, involves providing the TAHC with a contact name, phone number, physical address and the species (but not the number of animals) housed, managed or handled on a site, such as a farm, veterinary clinic, arena, or livestock market. Information is confidential. A unique seven-character premises identification number (PIN) then is issued for the site. All states have begun implementation of premises registration, and some require it. About 200,000 premises in the U.S. now are identified. "National working groups for each involved species are developing recommendations for the second and third tiers of the NAIS, which, depending on the situation, will involve identifying either individual animals, or groups of animals, leaving their premises of origin or moving in commerce. The third tier will involve animal movement reporting and tracking, making it possible to locate diseased or exposed animals quickly," said Hillman. Links to additional information about the NAIS are posted on the TAHC's web site at www.tahc.state.tx.us.

USDA Announces Investigation Results of Ineligible Shipment

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns held a live Web cast last Friday in Washington, D.C. with media representatives announcing the results of the USDA investigation of the ineligible shipment of meat to Japan. Johanns also released a comprehensive 475-page USDA report that details the findings of the investigation and actions taken by USDA. On January 20, an ineligible shipment arrived in Japan. This shipment was prohibited because the vertebral column from a calf under 20 months of age was attached. This action is permissible in the United States, but under an agreement with Japan, this was not eligible for export to that country. The report lists the facts surrounding the ineligible shipment. "The thoroughness of this report demonstrates just how serious we are about addressing this incident and providing assurance to our trading partners that our system is among the best in the world," said Johanns. "I believe our actions fully address the facts that led to this incident and provide added protections on a broader scale to prevent similar problems in the future." The complete report is available at www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Japan_Export_Investigation_Report.pdf.

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39 Attend 2006 Processed Meat School



At the 2006 Processed Meat School, 39 participants learned the properties and functional characteristics of meat and poultry raw materials and non-meat ingredients, the basics of meat and poultry product development, how to formulate and determine the costs of making processed meat products, and the application of the principles of product development. Sponsored by the Southwest Meat Association, Texas Cooperative Extension, and the Texas A&M University department of animal science-meat science section, the workshop was held January 10-12, 2006 and was coordinated by Dr. Wes Osburn, associate

professor and Extension processed meat specialist. Participants worked in teams to produce applewood, cherrywood and hickory smoke flavored hams, jalapeño, cheese and soy beef patties, several varieties of enhanced pork loins, two variations each of polish sausage and frankfurters, and acidified summer sausage. Industry representatives served as technical advisors to assist each team in making their respective products. Team members collected various data regarding their products and determined final product cost and the projected retail product value. All products were evaluated by the attendees and each team gave a report regarding the "lessons learned" during product manufacture. The workshop was also supported by industry sponsors who gave lecture presentations, conducted various demonstrations, and served as technical advisors during product development. Sponsor representatives for this year's workshop included: Terry Thomas - Newly Weds Foods, Wigberto Nunez - Koch Equipment LLC, Xingqui Lou - Proliant, Inc., Jim Anderson and Henry Kammlah - BK Giuliani, Rene Monderen and Lee Galligan - Purac America, Inc., Scott Galpin and Manny Acevedo - Risco USA, Mike Reagan - Dewied International, Charles Giambrone and Russell Wheeler - Rochester Midland Corp., and Courtney Botkin - Mastertaste. Additional support was provided by Terry Roland of Solae, Jason Reicks of Jif-Pak Manufacturing, Inc., Tom Betley of Alkar-RapidPak, and Patrick McGady of Handtmann, Inc. SMA executive director Joe Harris also provided attendees with an update on regulatory issues. Thanks to all participants and sponsors for making the 2006 Processed Meat School a success! (*Prime Cuts, January/2006*)

Harkin Introduces Bill to Amend Packers and Stockyards Act

Last week Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) introduced legislation (S. 2307) to amend the Packers and Stockyards Act. The proposed bill would establish an Office of the Special Counsel within the USDA that would investigate and prosecute violations of the Packers and Stockyards Act. Currently, the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) implements and enforces the Packers and Stockyards Act and its amendments, and conducts investigations to determine compliance of regulations issued under the Act. In a written press release, Harkin said his legislation would shift the burden of proof in proving unfair actions away from the producers and onto the dealers, stockyards, and packers. It would also expand USDA's authority to enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act over the poultry industry and "make it more in line with livestock." The proposed legislation would also make several changes to the Agricultural Fair Practices Act. Harkin claims that the bill would strengthen the ability of producers to succeed in cases involving unfair and manipulative practices by packers and provide needed protections for producers that use agricultural contracts. It is intended to prevent discrimination against producers belonging to an organization or cooperative, provide contract protections ensuring that the contract clearly spells out what is required of the producer, without confidentiality clauses, and protect producers from premature contract termination when they've made a sizable capital investment.



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Briefly . . .

Savell Honored as TAMU Regents Professor: Dr. Jeff Savell, professor and E.M. "Manny" Rosenthal chairholder was named Regents Professor for 2004 – 2005 on Jan. 26, 2006, by the Texas A&M System Board of Regents. In 1997, the Texas A&M University System established the Regents Professor Award to honor individuals at the rank of professor or equivalent who have provided exemplary service as faculty members to their university, agency, community, State of Texas, the nation and/or at the international level. The "Regents Professor" title is retained for the duration of service with the A&M System. Congratulations, Dr. Savell!

FSIS Posts Salmonella Serotype Data on Website: FSIS posted to its website serotype profile data for *Salmonella* isolates from meat and poultry products from January 1998, through December 2004. *Salmonella* testing and serotype data are a basis for comparison with future post-Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point data collection. Along with complementary data from molecular and phenotypic analyses, it also provides an opportunity to examine the association among serotypes isolated on-farm, from meat and poultry products and from human cases of salmonellosis. FSIS keeps abreast of serotypes of emerging concern to human health. The most recent U.S. human health surveillance data reveals that *Salmonella* serotypes Typhimurium, Enteritidis, Newport, Javiana and Heidelberg are the most commonly identified serotypes causing human infection in the United States. The serotype data can be viewed at www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Progress_Report_Salmonella_Testing_1998-2004/index.asp.

Ecolab Wins Award for New Sanitizer: Ecolab, Inc.'s innovative Oasis 146 Multi-Quat Sanitizer, a no-rinse food contact hard surface sanitizer, recently won the 2005 North American Foodservice Grand Prix Award in the cleaning and chemical product category. The awards, presented in January at the Foodservice Interchange Conference in Toronto, Canada, identify and recognize innovative new products within the North American foodservice industry. The new sanitizer is color-coded, making it instantly recognizable to the employee, assuring that they select the right product for the right job, and kills 99.999% of foodborne organisms, as required for food-contact hard surface sanitizers. The Foodservice Grand Prix Awards are hosted annually by the International Foodservice Distributors Association and the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors. Products are ranked upon uniqueness and innovation, product attributes, operator convenience and quality appeal. This is the second consecutive year that Ecolab has won this category.

FSIS Offers Labeling Compliance Policy Guide on Poultry Food Product Dating: FSIS issued Notice 7-06 on February 16, announcing the availability of FSIS' food safety compliance policy guide. The notice titled, *Availability of Labeling Compliance Policy Guide on Poultry Food Product Dating*, explains the current practices and clarifies the requirements of the regulations with regard to the appropriate use of pack dates and slaughter dates on poultry food product labels. The notice is available on FSIS' website at www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/Notice_07-06/index.asp. For a detailed summary of the Notice by legal counsel Olsson, Frank, and Weeda, contact Phyllis at sma@tca.net.

POSITION AVAILABLE

Quik-to-Fix Foods, a subsidiary of Smithfield Foods, is a further processed, value added, multi-protein company looking for a **Quality Assurance Manager**.

This position will be responsible for overseeing plant quality assurance, HACCP, sanitation, microbiology laboratory, and food safety functions in the production environment. The successful candidate will have B.S. degree in a technical discipline directly related to the job (i.e. food or meat science), 2-3 years experience in food industry or an M.S. degree in a scientific field with 1-2 years experience. Contact Laurie Walker, Director of Human Resources, at 972-205-1460 or send resumes to: lwalker@qtffoods.com.

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