



# InfoMeat

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Edited by Phyllis Zimmerman

## **FSIS Proposes Guidelines Governing Petitions for Rulemaking**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) recently announced a proposed rule to establish guidelines for the formal submission of petitions for rulemaking. The proposed rule will help ensure that all petitions filed with FSIS contain information that the agency needs to proceed with its consideration in a timely manner. This measure will support FSIS' food safety mission by providing for expedited review of petitions that request actions that are intended to enhance the public health by removing or reducing potential food safety hazards. Under this proposed rule, FSIS will consider the technical merits of the proposal, data submitted in support of the requested action, whether the requested action will be an appropriate use of agency resources and the degree to which the requested action is consistent with agency priorities. The proposed rule will benefit both prospective petitioners and FSIS by facilitating a standardized review and evaluation of rulemaking petitions filed with the agency. By encouraging consistency in the content of rulemaking petitions and the submission of adequate supporting documentation, the proposed rule is expected to reduce the administrative costs to FSIS associated with the review and evaluation of rulemaking petitions. Comments on the proposed rule must be received on or before March 13, 2006, and must be sent to Docket Clerk, #00-019P, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, 300 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, Room 102 Cotton Annex, Washington, D.C., 20250. Comments will also be posted on the Agency's web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations\\_&\\_policies/2006\\_Proposed\\_Rules\\_Index/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/2006_Proposed_Rules_Index/). For further information, contact Lynn Dickey, Ph.D., Director, Regulations and Petitions Policy Staff, Office of Policy, Programs, and Employee Development, Food Safety and Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture at 202-720-5627.

## **Negotiations Continue to Reopen South Korean Beef Market**

Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns and U.S. Trade Representative Rob Portman announced that Korea and the United States have agreed on an initial import protocol, an important step in re-opening Korea's market to U.S. beef. "We welcome the conclusion of our technical negotiations in Seoul. This paves the way for the reopening of Korea's beef market, and we anticipate that trade will resume toward the end of March after Korea completes its import procedures," said Secretary Johanns. "Korea has been our third largest market for beef exports, so regaining this market has been a priority for the Administration." The initial agreement will allow the United States to export boneless beef from cattle less than 30 months of age under a Beef Export Verification Program. Ambassador Portman said, "Although we appreciate this step toward normalized beef trade with Korea, we are extremely disappointed that Korea did not fully open its market to all U.S. beef products. We will continue to urge Korea in the strongest terms to open its market without delay to U.S. bone-in beef, variety meats, and offal. Together these products historically accounted for approximately 50 percent of U.S. beef exports to Korea." Korea has prohibited imports of U.S. beef and beef products since December 2003, following the detection of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in the U.S. herd. In 2003, before the ban took effect, the United States exported \$815 million worth of beef and beef products to Korea, of which \$449 million was boneless beef. Secretary Johanns added, "As we continue discussions with Korea, I urge Thailand, China, Taiwan, Singapore and others to comply with science-based international guidelines and reopen their markets to U.S. beef." The United States has been working with Korea and other countries around the world to remove the remaining restrictions on imports of U.S. beef. Since the closing of many export markets in December 2003, the U.S. has recovered access to markets valued at over \$3.2 billion, or 82% of the 2003 export value of \$3.9 billion.

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## FSIS Rule Raises Inspection Fees through 2008

Last Friday, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) published a final rule in the *Federal Register* to raise the fees it charges meat and poultry establishments, egg product plants, importers, and exporters for providing voluntary inspection services, overtime and holiday inspection services, and laboratory services. The agency is raising the fees to account for national and locality pay increases and inflation. The final rule, which becomes effective February 13, 2006, is available at: [www.fsis.usda.gov/Frame/FrameRedirect.asp?main=/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/03-027F.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Frame/FrameRedirect.asp?main=/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/03-027F.htm). In the past, FSIS raised fees on an annual basis. The final rule provides for annual increases for the next three years in order to provide the industry more timely cost information. The agency will continue to perform a yearly cost analysis to determine whether the fees established are adequate to recover the costs of the provided services and will initiate another rulemaking if the agency determines that a fee established either will exceed the agency's costs to provide that service or does not adequately cover the agency's costs of providing the service.


The fee increases (per hour per employee) are as follows:

	<u>Current</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
Base rate	\$43.64	\$47.79	\$48.84	\$49.93
Overtime and Holiday Rate	\$50.04	\$56.40	\$57.65	\$58.93
Laboratory Services Rate	\$61.80	\$67.83	\$69.31	\$70.82

The annual fee for initial laboratory accreditation and maintenance of the accreditation is \$4,000 for FY 2006, \$4,500 for FY 2007 and \$4,500 for FY 2008.

**Welcome, New Member!**

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## A Message from FSIS:



United States Department of Agriculture

Dear SMA Members:

We are writing to congratulate and to thank you on your continued commitment to food safety and to HACCP. We all should be proud that HACCP has been credited by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for dramatic reductions in illnesses from *E. coli* O157:H7, *Listeria monocytogenes* and other bacteria. We especially congratulate your industry for your incredible efforts relative to reducing *E. coli* O157:H7. As you well know, after FSIS' comprehensive risk assessment on *E. coli* O157:H7 was completed, all beef slaughter and processing establishments were required to reassess their HACCP plans. The hard work of both industry and FSIS is reflected in the improvements we have seen; the United States is now below the "Healthy People" 2010 goal of illnesses from *E. coli* O157:H7 of 1 case per 100,000 persons.

We need to ensure this progress continues. HACCP is the regulatory standard that all plants are required to comply with to protect public health, and we know it works. However, HACCP systems can always be improved, and they must be improved for progress to occur. Science is always evolving.

The series of outreach/listening sessions that have been held in Montana, California and Pennsylvania are helping to further enhance HACCP systems in plants. We believe these frank and open discussions and exchange of technical information will foster continued improvements in food safety and public health.

For example, FSIS recognized, based on information received at the outreach/listening sessions, the need to update its outreach strategy from one focused on initial development of a HACCP plan, to an outreach strategy that is geared toward the scientific basis for the HACCP plan. In other words, we need to shift from "execution" of HACCP plans to "design" of those plans. FSIS especially wants to continue to work with small and very small plant owners and operators so they can continue to enhance the design of their food safety systems.

We recognize that this challenge will require an even stronger partnership with industry associations, universities, and extension offices. The International HACCP Alliance hosted a two day meeting of these partners to help develop a strategy to do this. FSIS appreciates the key role the Southwest Meat Association played in this meeting. While the final report is still being prepared, we are moving ahead with implementing many of the suggestions that were made there.

Making certain that the nation's food supply is safe makes good business sense as well as good public health sense. We realize plant owners and operators must have the necessary tools for success, so education through outreach is an important focus for us. Likewise, plant owners and operators must seek this education and these tools and follow them. Public health is our responsibility and we will take regulatory action as necessary. An ongoing partnership is the only way to ensure that the nation's food supply is as safe and secure as possible. We appreciate your industry's commitment to our mutual goal of protecting the food supply.

Richard A. Raymond, M.D.  
Under Secretary  
Office of Food Safety

Barbara J. Masters, D.V.M.  
Administrator  
Food Safety and Inspection Service



### Register now for "Developing & Implementing HACCP Plans for the Meat Industry"

to be held at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, **March 7-9, 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!**

## Singapore Lifts Ban on U.S. Beef

According to report by Agence France-Presse (AFP), Singapore has lifted a two-year ban on U.S. beef imports imposed since December 2003 after a case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) was detected in Washington state. "The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) will be lifting the ban on beef imports from the United States of America," the government agency said today. "With the lifting of the ban, de-boned beef cuts from young cattle (less than 30 months old) from the U.S. will be allowed for import into Singapore," it said. The city-state carried out a full assessment of the risk of BSE from U.S. beef imports and was satisfied with the safeguards to ensure that the meat was safe for consumption, the AVA said. Singapore's Health Minister Khaw Boon Wan said in a statement to parliament that the country will assess whether imports from other BSE-affected countries could be resumed. "It is in our interest to import meat from as many sources as possible as this would enhance our supply resilience," Khaw said. Before the ban, the U.S. was a small supplier of beef to Singapore, accounting for only five percent or 1,009 tons of local beef supply, according to the AVA. Singapore, which has virtually no agricultural sector, currently imports most of its beef from Australia and New Zealand. It consumed 20,392 tons of beef worth \$68 million (U.S.) in 2005.

### Briefly . . .

FSIS Issues Notice on Food Labeling - Definition of the Term: "Healthy": On January 11, FSIS published a *Federal Register* notice titled, "Food Labeling; Nutrient Content Claims, Definition of the Term: 'Healthy'." This notice announces that FSIS' regulations will continue to provide that individual meat and poultry products bearing the claim "healthy" (or any other derivative of the term "health") must contain no more than 480 milligrams (mg) of sodium; and that meal-type products bearing the claim "healthy" (or any other derivative of the term "health") must contain no more than 600 mg of sodium. FSIS is deferring indefinitely, until further notice, implementation of the requirements that individual meat and poultry products bearing the claim "healthy" (or any other derivative of the term "health") contain no more than 360 mg of sodium and that meal-type products bearing the claim "healthy" (or any other derivative of the term "health") contain no more than 480 mg of sodium. The Agency is accepting comments until February 10. The notice is available on the FSIS website at: [www.fsis.usda.gov/Frame/FrameRedirect.asp?main=/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/05-0331F.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Frame/FrameRedirect.asp?main=/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/05-0331F.htm).

United States Animal Identification Organization Forms: A new nonprofit organization has been formed to manage the animal identification (ID) database as prescribed by the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). The United States Animal Identification Organization (USAIO) is an independent organization working with all segments of the animal industry and with animal health authorities to manage the industry-led animal ID movement database, according to its chairman, Charles Miller. "The first board meeting was held January 10, 2006, where members of the board were elected," he said. Initial directors include Miller, a cow-calf producer from Nicholasville, KY; Rick Stott, a Boise, ID beef producer; and Lance Kuck, a bison producer from Bassett, NE. According to Miller's statement, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been submitted by the USAIO to the USDA to form a strategic partnership and fulfill Secretary Johanns' directive for the industry to develop the database repository. "USAIO looks forward to engaging all the interested parties to provide an effective, efficient, and inexpensive database for the NAIS," Miller added.

Export Requirements Updated: The Library of Export Requirements has been updated to reflect changes in export requirements for the following: European Union, Hong Kong, Japan, Mexico, Poland, and Vietnam. Complete information can be found at: [www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations/Export\\_Information/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations/Export_Information/).



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