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FSIS Issues IKE on Condensation in Kettle Cooking

FSIS has released the finalized version of its Interactive Knowledge Exchange (IKE), 05-06, "Condensation Over a Kettle Cook Process." This IKE had previously been issued in draft form and describes the process an FSIS inspector should go through when determining if condensation over a cook kettle is a non-compliance. In the situation described, the establishment has modified the vent system, re-built the ceiling area using impervious material and also conducts microbial testing on the ceiling surface after it is cleaned to maintain its ready-to-eat status (where condensation forms when the kettle is open) to determine a baseline and to ensure sanitation standards continue to be followed. In addition, the condensation is wiped immediately using equipment also maintained as RTE. Based on a review of microbial documentation, SSOP documentation and observation, condensation is not considered to be a non-compliance in this situation. View the IKE at: www.fsis.usda.gov/FSIS_Employees/IKE_05-06/index.asp.

USDA Amends Regulations on Swine Imported from EU

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is amending its regulations regarding the importation of animals and animal products into the United States from a region of the European Union (EU). This final rule will apply a uniform set of import requirements for classical swine fever (CSF) to the region consisting of the 15 member states that comprised the EU prior to its expansion on May 1, 2004. These member states (EU-15) are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Ireland, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. According to this final rule, import prohibitions will be placed on all swine and swine products entering the U.S. from any region in any member state of the EU-15 that has been quarantined by the EU due to an outbreak of CSF. Any restrictions due to a CSF outbreak in the EU-15 will be implemented and released by an administrative process rather than a regulatory process. In the event of an outbreak of CSF in domestic swine, importation prohibitions will remain in effect for six months following the depopulation of swine and the cleaning and disinfection of the last infected premise in the restricted zone even if a veterinary authority of the EU-15 member state lifts its designation of the area as a restricted zone before the six months have elapsed. Restrictions in place because of infected wild boar will mimic EU restrictions. APHIS has determined that these changes are necessary in order to prevent the introduction of CSF into the United States while increasing our responsiveness to changes in the CSF situation in the EU. This final rule becomes effective June 19.

FSIS to Conduct On-Site Reviews of State Inspection Systems

In July, FSIS will begin on-site reviews of state inspection systems in Arizona, Montana, Texas and Virginia. FSIS began comprehensive reviews of the 28 state meat and poultry inspection programs in 2003. The reviews were initiated due to an increased agency emphasis on review of all FSIS programs and activities and because report language for the 2002 Farm Bill called for USDA to provide Congress with a report on a full review of state inspection programs. As part of this effort, FSIS created a review manual that contains a two-part methodology for the state reviews: annual self assessments by the states and FSIS on-site reviews. Self assessments are completed each year. To date, FSIS has conducted on-site reviews in 24 randomly selected states and expects to complete its review of all 28 state programs by early 2007.

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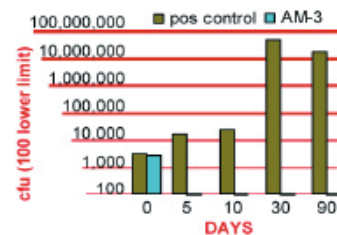
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Sigma Plans New Meat Processing Plant in Oklahoma

Last week Sigma Alimentos, S.A de C. V. (Sigma), the leader in refrigerated foods in Mexico, announced it will build a plant for the production of cold cuts in Seminole, Oklahoma. According to a release from the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, the company expects the new plant to begin operations during the third quarter of 2007. "Our current and potential penetration in our target market, justifies the building of a plant in the U.S." commented Mario Paez, Sigma's President. "We want to be closer to better serve our Hispanic customers. The new plant will join our current 10 distribution centers in operation, plus the ones we plan to open in the near future," he added. The establishment will require an initial investment of approximately \$50 million, which will include a state-of-the-art, highly-automated plant. Construction will begin within the next two months and employment will start at 200 jobs, later expanding to 300. Oklahoma's location was a significant factor in Sigma's decision. "Oklahoma is the perfect place for our purposes," said Paez. "Its strategic location is not only close to production zones for our main raw materials, it also facilitates the distribution of our products to the markets we are currently serving,"

Office Holiday

The SMA office will be closed next Monday,
May 29, 2005 in observance of



SMA wishes everyone a safe and happy holiday weekend! *InfoMeat* will be published on Tuesday.

Welcome, New Member!

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Briefly . . .

APHIS E-System Streamlines Export Process: As part of USDA's overall eGovernment initiative to transform and enhance the delivery of its programs, services and information, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) launched a new electronic system to streamline its export process. The Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance and Tracking system (PCIT), currently in the second phase of a multi-phase effort, is an interactive, web-based system that allows U.S. exporters to apply for phytosanitary certificates online, schedule commodity inspections and printout copies of their certificates. This new system will improve the tracking and trace-back of federal phytosanitary certificates, improve reporting capabilities and reduce the incidence of error or fraud. PCIT also enables APHIS to better manage authorized certification officials' workloads as well as enhance security and accountability for phytosanitary certificates. Many features are included in this phase of PCIT, such as reusable templates for certificate applications so exporters only have to enter the information once. This feature will save customers a tremendous amount of time and effort spent on paper-based applications. More advances are underway, including the ability to apply for more types of certificates as well as a payment engine capability so customers can pay federal fees as part of the on-line process. PCIT is available online at <https://pcit.aphis.usda.gov/pcit/>.

Nickelson Receives NSF Lifetime Achievement Award: NSF International (NSF) recently announced six winners of its Third Annual Food Safety Leadership Awards. Among them, Dr. Ranzell "Nick" Nickelson II, Chief Executive for Science & Health for SMA member Standard Meat Company/Cargill/CTI Foods, was honored for his many contributions in research advancement. Throughout his career, he has been involved in the development of many breakthroughs, including the dramatic reduction in the incidence of *E. coli* O157:H7 in beef and apple juice and *Listeria monocytogenes* in cooked ready-to-eat meats. Dr. Nickelson's thesis at Texas A&M was responsible for the first isolation of *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, bacteria commonly affecting seafood in the Gulf of Mexico. He has also established many food safety controls that are standard practice today. NSF's Food Safety Leadership Awards Program recognizes individuals and organizations for demonstrating excellence in food safety to benefit the consuming public. Dr. Nickelson will be one of the outstanding speakers at SMA's 50th Annual Convention in July. Congratulations, Nick!

Tyson Foods Names New CEO: In keeping with plans for succession of its senior management, Tyson Foods, Inc. announced today that Richard L. Bond has been elected by the Board of Directors as President and Chief Executive Officer of the company and will report to the board. The action, which is effective immediately, was taken today during the board's regular quarterly meeting. John Tyson will continue to serve as Chairman of the Board.

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