

FSIS REPORT TO THE CONFERENCE FOR FOOD PROTECTION
San Antonio, Texas, April 2007

Risk-Based Inspection

Between 1998 and 2000, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) transitioned from an inspection system that relied primarily on sight and smell to detect possible contamination of meat and poultry to Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) in which science and microbiological testing played major roles. HACCP involves consideration of risks in that it requires a plant to identify all the potential hazards that are reasonably likely to occur during its process and then create plans to prevent those hazards during the production of its product. HACCP has led to reductions in foodborne illness, as measured by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Currently FSIS is working with its food safety partners towards a more robust risk-based inspection system (RBI).

With RBI, FSIS intends to better utilize the information regularly collected by inspection program personnel in carrying out daily inspection activities to further improve public health. FSIS intends to allocate inspection resources by taking into account the relative risk of products produced by a plant (product inherent risk [PIR]) and how each plant is controlling risk (establishment risk control (ERC)) in the plant's food safety system. FSIS intends to allocate more inspection resources to those plants needing it most, while continuing to do daily inspection at all facilities. This enhanced inspection will provide greater confidence that meat, poultry, and egg products are safe by proactively identifying and preventing situations that could negatively impact public health.

The RBI system will initially be implemented in FSIS regulated meat and poultry processing facilities. The analytical model used to determine a plant's RBI profile will be continually updated and based on the most recent 6 months of data. The analytical model will include such information as a plant's products, process, production volume, enforcement actions, food safety recalls, verified food safety consumer complaints, public health significant non-compliance records, microbiological testing program results, and the RTE alternative chosen. In the near term, RBI in processing plants is planned to begin at 30 prototype locations beginning mid 2007. After thorough evaluation and recommendations for improvements are made, FSIS hopes to expand the number of locations to 150 by the end of 2007. Longer term, FSIS expects to expand RBI nationwide.

FSIS currently has the risk-based verification program for *L. monocytogenes* (LM) for RTE meat and poultry products, where the frequency of FSIS sampling RTE products are based on the risk-ranking for the products derived from the risk algorithm. The risk algorithm includes the establishment's LM control program, any past FSIS positive or negative test result for LM, enforcement actions, and volume of production. FSIS just started a risk-based verification program for *E. coli* O157:H7 in raw beef products.

FSIS had been holding public meetings on RBI and will be holding the following public meetings:

- **Wednesday, April 25, 2007 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** The meeting will focus on production volume as one element used to calculate inherent risk.
- **Monday, April 30, 2007 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** The meeting will focus on issues surrounding the possible use of industry generated data to inform policy.

All meetings will be held in Room 244 at George Mason University, 3401 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, Va., 22201. Directions to the site, the agenda, and other meeting materials are posted on the FSIS Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>. Additional information on RBI and the related public meetings can be found on the FSIS web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations & Policies/RBI in Processing/index.asp>.

FSIS Directive 7120.1, Amendment 10 Change Transmittal Sheet – “Safe and Suitable Ingredients Used in the Production of Meat and Poultry Products”

On January 18, 2007, FSIS issued a transmittal providing the on-going updates to Attachment 1 for FSIS Directive 7120.1. This update identifies the substances approved for use in meat and poultry products as additives. Because the number of pages increased in Attachment 1, Attachment 2 was also reissued as well. The information is available at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/About FSIS/labeling & consumer protection/index.asp>

FSIS Notice 17-07 Follow-up Sampling of Certain Raw Ground Beef Products After an FSIS Verification Sample Tests Positive for E. coli O157:H7

On March 1, FSIS published a notice instructing district offices on how to initiate follow-up sampling at the originating supply slaughter establishments that produce beef manufacturing trimmings and other ground beef or raw beef components. Upon issuance of this Notice, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) will begin performing routine follow-up sampling of beef manufacturing trimmings and raw ground beef or beef patty components at supplier establishments when FSIS raw ground beef product samples collected at grinding establishments or retail stores are confirmed positive for *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) O157:H7. The notice also instructs inspection program personnel on how to sample under the new sampling program for beef manufacturing trimmings and other raw ground beef patty components.

Details of the Notice are available at:

www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations/2007_Notices_Index.

FSIS Issues A Federal Register Notice on Adjusted Dollar Limitations For Retail Store Operation Exemptions (Federal Register: March 30, 2007, Volume 72, Number 61 [Page 15096-15097])

USDA, Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced calendar year 2007 dollar limitations for retail stores that sell meat and poultry products and qualify for an exemption from federal inspection.

Retail operations are not subject to inspection unless sales to hotels, restaurants and similar institutions exceed 25 percent of total sales or exceed the calendar year dollar limitation.

The dollar limitations for meat and meat food products will remain \$55,100 in 2007, the same amount as in 2006. For poultry products, the dollar limitation will be reduced to \$44,400 from \$45,200. These adjustments are based on changes in the Consumer Price Index.

More details pertaining to the changes in dollar limitations are available at www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations/2007_Notices_Index.