

FSIS REPORT TO THE CONFERENCE FOR FOOD PROTECTION
August 28-29, 2007

NEW FSIS ADMINISTRATOR

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced the appointment of Alfred Almanza as the Administrator for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), a USDA agency which protects public health, through inspection of domestically produced and imported meat, poultry and egg products. Johanns said that "Alfred Almanza is an experienced and effective leader who has established and maintained a high standard of excellence during almost 30 years with FSIS. He has a strong record as an FSIS manager for recruiting and training the most qualified individuals in order to improve the safety of FSIS regulated products, and does not hesitate to take swift and strong regulatory action in order to protect public health."

Almanza served most recently as the Dallas District Manager, which includes more than 350 federally-inspected establishments. He is a native of Texas and joined FSIS in 1978, serving in a variety of positions, including Slaughter Inspector, Labor Relations Specialist, Special Assistant to the District Manager and Deputy District Manager.

Public Health Based Inspection in Slaughter Plants

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) held a public meeting to discuss Public Health Based Inspection in Slaughter Plants on August 7, 2007.

FSIS intends to enhance its inspection system and to implement new, science-based policies. To meet the realities of food safety and public health challenges, FSIS is considering proposing a new inspection system in slaughter establishments that will improve public health. Although rulemaking is not expected immediately, FSIS is seeking public input on the ideas, concepts, data, and analyses that it will use to form the basis for a technical plan and, in turn, to inform the rulemaking process.

The agency's thinking has evolved and benefited from its experience with the HACCP-based Inspection Models Project (HIMP). The new system will provide more time and more flexibility than the current systems for FSIS personnel to conduct focused off-line verification activities according to risk factors at each establishment and at points in slaughter and processing where food safety hazards, and associated risks, may be introduced. The public meeting afforded FSIS and its stakeholders an opportunity to discuss the rationale and process for the agency's enhanced approach, as well as for the Agency to present the background that has lead the Agency to its current thinking on the concept. In addition, the Agency presented the scientific foundations for future decision-making, including how to address *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* and the use of generic *E. coli* as an indicator of process control.

The meeting was held Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2007, from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. at George Mason

University, School of Public Policy, Arlington Original Building, Room 244, 3401 Fairfax Drive, Arlington, Virginia 22201.

Comments on these papers and questions may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- Electronic mail: Comments may be submitted to riskbasedinspection@fsis.usda.gov.
- Mail, including floppy disks or CD-ROM's: Send to Ellyn Blumberg, RBI Public Meeting, United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, 14th & Independence Avenue, SW., Mail Drop 405 Aerospace, Washington, DC 20250.
- Hand- or courier-delivered items: Deliver to Ellyn Blumberg at 901 D Street, SW., Washington, DC. Have security guard call (202) 690-6520. Fax documents to (202) 690-6519. All submissions received must include the Agency name and docket number FSIS-2007-0026.

Castleberry Food Company Recall of Canned Meat Products

Castleberry's Food Company, an Augusta, GA., establishment owned by Bumble Bee Foods, LLC, is voluntarily expanding its [July 19 recall](#) of canned meat products that may contain *Clostridium botulinum*, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service announced today.

The recall is being expanded after information gathered by the Food and Drug Administration and FSIS indicated that processing malfunctions at the establishment have existed longer than initially estimated. For that reason, Castleberry's has agreed to recall all of the products that may still be in commerce, regardless of the "best buy" date stamped on the bottom of the can.

The problem was discovered during an investigation into illnesses in Indiana and Texas. The investigation led to a recall by FDA of three types of meatless hotdog chili sauce. The FDA's recall release can be found at www.fda.gov. That recall is also being expanded to include all meatless products produced at the plant that might still be in commerce.

Consumers who have any of these products or any foods made with these products are advised to throw them away immediately. Consumers are also advised to double bag the cans in plastic bags that are tightly closed then place in a trash receptacle for non-recyclable trash outside of the home. Additional instructions for safe disposal can be found at www.cdc.gov/botulism/botulism_faq.htm

FSIS Publishes Final Rule Prohibiting Processing of "Downer" Cattle

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) today announced a permanent prohibition on the slaughter of cattle that are unable to stand or walk ("downer" cattle) when presented for pre-slaughter inspection. The inability to stand or walk can be a clinical sign of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE).

Under the rule, cattle that are injured after they pass pre-slaughter inspection will be reevaluated to determine their eligibility for slaughter. Veal calves that cannot stand because they are tired or cold may be set apart and held for treatment and re-inspection.

The rule published in the July 13 Federal Register makes permanent what had been an [interim final rule](#) prohibiting slaughter of non-ambulatory cattle in the United States. The final rule becomes effective Oct. 1, 2007.

FSIS Directive 10,000.1

Policy on Use of Results From Non-FSIS Laboratories

On May 11, FSIS issued a directive describing the decision-making process the agency uses when determining whether it is appropriate to accept results from a non-FSIS laboratory.

The directive also covers results from State and local government laboratories, academic laboratories and private sector laboratories.

Periodically, results from non-FSIS laboratories are presented to FSIS, such as from outbreak or illness investigations. If FSIS decides to accept the results from the non-FSIS laboratory, it may take action (e.g. request a recall or detain product) based on those results.

For more information about this issue, contact the Technical Service Center at 1-800233-3935.

FSIS Notice 18-07

Routine Sampling of Beef Manufacturing Trimmings Intended for Use in Raw Ground Beef

On March 1, FSIS issued a notice instructing inspection program personnel that effective March 19, 2007, a new sampling program will begin where they will perform routine verification sampling of beef manufacturing trimmings intended for use in raw ground beef or beef patty products at the slaughter establishments that produced those trimmings. This notice also informs them how to collect samples under this new sampling program and the use of FSIS Form 10,210-3, Sample Request Form, in

reporting the results.

A training CD is available and should be sent along with sample collection materials. This training should be completed as soon as practical. If the CD is not included with the sample collection materials, it can be obtained by e-mailing the Continuing Education and Distance Learning mailbox in Outlook at:

CEDL@fsis.usda.gov.

For more information on this issue, contact Jennifer Webb at 202/720-4138.

FSIS Notice 17-07

Follow-up Sampling of Certain Raw Ground Beef Products After An FSIS Verification Sample Tests Positive For E. coli 0157:H7

On March 1, FSIS issued a notice stating that the Agency will begin performing routine follow-up sampling at the originating slaughter establishments that produced and supplied the carcasses that provided the beef manufacturing trimmings or other raw ground beef or beef patty components used in the production of ground beef that FSIS found positive for E.coli 0157:H7.

The new sampling is a follow-up to the FSIS verification sampling at establishments that grind beef or at retail stores.

For more information on this issue contact Jennifer Webb at 202/720-4138

The comments will also be posted on FSIS' Web site at:

[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/
2007_Notices_Index/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/2007_Notices_Index/index.asp).

For further information contact: Keith Payne for technical information at (202) 690-6522 or e-mail keith.payne@fsis.usda.gov; Sally Fernandez for meeting information at (202) 690-6524, Fax (202) 690-6519, or e-mail sally.fernandez@fsis.usda.gov

