

listed as benefits not subject to reimbursement.

Section 435—This section contains a description of qualifying quarters of work and disallows any quarter worked by a spouse or parent in which the spouse or parent received a Federal means-tested public benefit.

The law, however, does not include a definition of "Federal means-tested public benefit." Therefore, each Executive Branch agency whose programs may be subject to the PRWORA provisions is responsible for identifying the benefits to which the term applies.

Definition of Federal Means-Tested Public Benefit

The Department has determined that the Food Stamp Program and the block grant food assistance programs in Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are "Federal means-tested public benefit(s)" for purposes of Title IV of PRWORA. Based on the legislative history of PRWORA, the Department interprets the term to refer only to mandatory spending programs. The Department of Health and Human Services (62 FR 45256, August 26, 1997) and the Social Security Administration (62 FR 45284, August 26, 1997) have interpreted the term in a similar fashion. The food assistance programs listed above are mandatory spending programs.

The Department has determined that the following Special Nutrition Programs are either not a Federal means-tested public benefit, or are exempted from the application of the term, for purposes of Title IV of PRWORA.

The Nutrition Program for the Elderly
Food services provided through Summer
Camps pursuant to § 4(c) of the
Agricultural and Nutrition Protection Act
of 1973 (7 U.S.C. 612c note)
Disaster Commodity Distribution
The National School Lunch Program
The School Breakfast Program
The Special Milk Program
The Child and Adult Care Food Program
The Homeless Children Nutrition Program
The Summer Food Service Program for
Children
The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program
for Women, Infants, and Children
The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
The Commodity Supplemental Food Program
The Emergency Food Assistance Program
The Food Distribution Program on Indian
Reservations

Regulatory Impact Analysis

Designation: This action has been designated as significant.

Decrease in Number of Eligible Aliens: Effective August 22, 1996 for applicants

and no later than August 22, 1997 for participating households, PROWRA made most aliens ineligible for food stamps. Exceptions were made for certain asylees, refugees, Cubans, Haitian, Amerasians, deportees, and persons with a military connection. An exception was also made to allow aliens admitted as lawful permanent residents to be eligible if they have earned or can be credited with at least 40 quarters (about 10 years) of qualified work. This notice only affects the eligibility of lawful permanent residents who can be credited with at least 40 quarters of work. After 12/31/96, a quarter cannot count if the person was receiving a Federal means-tested public benefit during that quarter.

Savings: By counting food stamp benefits as a Federal means-tested public benefit, the Federal government may realize an estimated savings of as much as \$10 million a year for 10 years. This occurs because most aliens admitted as a lawful permanent resident became ineligible 8/22/97, thus any period of food stamp participation between 1/1/97 and 8/22/97 would delay their fulfillment of the 40 quarter work requirement; which, in turn, delays their eligibility. This reduces program costs over the 10-year time period. The maximum length of time when participating permanent resident aliens could have been working and their work would not be counted toward the quarters of coverage is 8 months, the time between January 1, 1997, and August 22, 1997. In any one year, the estimated savings come from only those participants who would have achieved their 40 quarters in that year and do not when they are not allowed to include the quarters earned between January 1997 and August 1997 when they also received food stamps. Assuming that among those working, 1/40th are in their 39th quarter, 1/40th are in their 38th quarter, etc., then no more than 4/40th or 10 percent can have their benefits delayed in any year.

Consistency: A Department of Health and Human Service (HHS) notice published on 8/26/97 (62 FR 45256) and a Social Security Administration notice published on 8/26/97 (62 FR 45284) have determined that Federal means-tested public assistance benefits applies to means-tested mandatory spending programs. Therefore, this interpretation is consistent with that of other agencies. The DHHS determined that its notice was economically significant based on \$5.1 billion in savings from all of the alien restrictions contained in PRWORA for purposes of the Medicaid Program rather than just the definition of a Federal means-tested public benefit.

The Social Security Administration did not designate its notice. USDA is designating this notice as significant because it affects the eligibility of aliens, but it is limiting the cost estimate to the costs associated with the provisions concerning the definition of a Federal means-tested public benefit.

Effect on small entities: State and local welfare agencies are affected to the extent that they administer the Program. The notice will affect a number of aliens who could otherwise qualify for food stamp participation. The changes and the resulting decrease in benefits will have a negative secondary effect on revenues of the approximately 190,000 food stamp retailers nationwide.

Dated: June 25, 1998.

Shirley R. Watkins,

Under Secretary, Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 98-031N]

Technologies for the Detection and Reduction of Pathogens To Improve Food Safety

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; Request for Technical Papers and Presenters

SUMMARY: The Food Safety and Inspection Service will hold a conference on "Technology to Improve Food Safety" on July 28, 1998, in Washington, DC. The purpose of the conference is to focus on emerging technologies that aid in the detection of pathogens and on pathogen interventions that help to ensure food safety within the farm-to-table continuum. The emphasis will be on both existing and emerging technologies to detect pathogens, including those which are close to practical application within the farm-to-table continuum.

DATES: The conference will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on July 28, 1998. Abstracts of scientific papers must be received no later than COB July 8, 1998; the final papers no later than COB July 20, 1998. The Conference will be held in two sessions: Technologies for Reducing Pathogens and Technologies for Detecting Pathogens. Please specify for which session the paper is intended. Two copies of the abstracts and final papers should be sent to Ms. Mary Harris at the address below.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in the Federal Hall Ballroom of the Washington Plaza Hotel, 10 Thomas Circle, NW, Washington, DC 20005. To register for the meeting, contact Ms. Harris at (202) 501-7315, FAX to (202) 501-7615, or E-mail to mary.harris@usda.gov. If a sign language interpreter or other special accommodation is necessary, please contact Ms. Harris by July 14, 1998. Ms. Harris' address is FSIS, Franklin Court Building, Room 6904, 1099 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20250-3700. All technical papers, comments, and data about the meeting will be available for public viewing after August 15, 1998, in the FSIS Docket Room, Room 102, Cotton Annex Building, 300 12th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20250-3700.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. William J. Hudnall, Assistant Deputy Administrator, Office of Policy, Program Development, and Evaluation at (202) 205-0495 or FAX to (202) 401-1760.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On April 12 and 13, 1995, FSIS convened a scientific and technical conference in Chicago as part of a series of outreach activities associated with the Pathogen Reduction/Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) proposed rule. The purpose of the conference was to solicit public comment about what actions FSIS should take to encourage innovative technologies that could contribute to overall efforts to improve food safety. The upcoming July 28 conference is intended to be a follow-up to the 1995 conference. FSIS continues to believe that the development and proper use of technology can contribute significantly to ensuring the safety of the food supply, and the Agency will continue to foster such development and use. The upcoming conference will explore current food technology and should stimulate the development of beneficial innovations to ensure food safety, particularly with regard to the reduction of pathogens.

Since the 1995 conference, many meat and poultry plants have implemented 3 interventions, such as steam pasteurization and carcass rinses, that are effective in reducing pathogens on meat and poultry. New developments also have been made in irradiation technology. The conference will provide an opportunity to disseminate information that can lead to the timely introduction of these and other beneficial emerging technologies into more establishments.

1998 Conference Agenda

The conference will consist of two sessions:

Session I: "Technologies for Reducing Pathogens"

This session will cover emerging technologies for reducing pathogens throughout the farm-to-table continuum. FSIS has stressed the importance of a farm-to-table approach to food safety. Although FSIS does not have authority to impose controls at the farm level, it continues to believe that public concerns about pathogens and foodborne illness will stimulate action at this level to help improve food safety. In slaughter and processing plants, the Agency continues to be interested in advances that will enhance the safety of meat and poultry products. In addition, FSIS is working with the Food and Drug Administration and State and local food regulatory officials to ensure that food safety issues are adequately addressed in transport, retail, storage, and food service settings. The Agency remains firmly committed to its farm-to-table strategy.

Session II: "Technologies for Detecting Pathogens"

This session will address both existing and emerging technologies to detect pathogens, including those which are close to practical application within the farm-to-table continuum.

At each session, invited speakers from FSIS, other government agencies, industry, consumer groups, and academia will give presentations. In addition, FSIS is soliciting the submission of technical papers on emerging technology and will invite selected submitters to give 5-minute presentations summarizing their papers. If the same subject is covered in more than one paper, FSIS will have the authors combine their presentations for a single 5-minute presentation or select the author of the first paper submitted on the subject. FSIS will moderate each session and will be joined by a panel consisting of representatives from government agencies, industry, academia, and consumer groups. This panel will have an opportunity to question the presenters and to discuss the technology. Each session will conclude with an open discussion period to allow participants to briefly state their views and ask questions.

Speakers or other interested persons who will require exhibition space or special equipment to enhance their presentations should specify their needs by contacting Ms. Mary Harris at the address above. This request should be

included with the paper. Based on the number of requests for space received by July 8, 1998, FSIS will determine whether it will be able to make exhibition space available.

Done in Washington, DC, on June 26, 1998.

Thomas J. Billy,

Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 98-034N]

Microbiology Laboratory Guidebook

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is making available for purchase the revised, 1998, 3rd edition of the Microbiology Laboratory Guidebook.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Richard P. Mageau, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Office of Public Health and Science, Microbiology Division, Room 3714—Franklin Court, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-3700.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Microbiology Division of the Office of Public Health and Science, FSIS, announces the availability for purchase of the revised, 1998, 3rd edition of the Microbiology Laboratory Guidebook. The Guidebook contains current protocols for analytical tests required by FSIS in its regulation of meat, poultry and egg products. Specifically, microbiological methods are presented for sample preparation, isolation and identification of the major food borne pathogenic microorganisms and their toxins, meat tissue species identification, and the detection of extraneous materials and antimicrobial residues. Media and reagent formulations, and Most Probable Number Tables are contained in an appendix.

This document may be purchased as the Microbiology Laboratory Guidebook, 3rd edition, 1998, stock #001-000-04656-0, at a price of \$57.00 Domestic and \$71.25 Foreign from:

Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954, (Fax) 202-512-2233.