

# Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 98-046N]

#### Codex Alimentarius: Meeting of the Codex Committee on General Principles

**AGENCY:** Office of the Undersecretary for Food Safety, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Office of the Undersecretary for Food Safety is sponsoring a public meeting on August 14, 1998, to provide information and receive public comments on agenda items to be discussed at the Thirteenth Session of the General Principles Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, which will be held in Paris, France, September 7-11, 1998.

**DATES:** The public meeting is scheduled for Friday, August 14, 1998, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The public meeting will be held in the Washington Plaza Hotel, 10 Thomas Circle, NW, Massachusetts Avenue and 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005. Written comments should be sent to: Patrick J. Clerkin, Associate U.S. Manager for Codex, U.S. Codex Office, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Room 4861, South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-3700.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Patrick J. Clerkin, Associate U.S. Manager for Codex, U.S. Codex Office, Food Safety and Inspection Service; Telephone: (202) 205-7760; Fax: (202) 720-3157.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) was established in 1962 by two United Nations organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the

World Health Organization. Codex is the principal international organization for encouraging fair international trade in food and protecting the health and economic interests of consumers. Through adoption of food standards, codes of practice and other guidelines developed by its committees, and by promoting their adoption and implementation by governments, Codex seeks to ensure that the world's food supply is sound, wholesome, free from adulteration and correctly labeled. In the United States, the U.S. Department of Agriculture; Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services; and the Environmental Protection Agency manage and carry out U.S. Codex duties.

The Codex Committee on General Principles was established to develop principles for procedural and general matters referred to it by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. These matters have included the establishment of general principles defining the purpose and scope of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the nature of Codex standards and the forms of acceptance by countries of Codex standards, and the development of guidelines for Codex committees.

The Undersecretary for Food Safety recognizes the importance of providing interested parties the opportunity to obtain background information on the Thirteenth Session of the General Principles Committee of Codex and to address items on the agenda. For this reason, the Office of the Undersecretary is holding this public meeting and seeking oral comments or written submissions on the agenda items presented.

#### Issues To Be Discussed at the Public Meeting

The following specific issues will be discussed during the public meeting:

1. Adoption of the Agenda.
2. Matters referred by the Codex Alimentarius Commission and other Codex Committees.
3. Risk Analysis.
  - a. Definitions related to Risk Management.
  - b. Working Principles for Risk Analysis.
  - c. Food safety objectives.
  - d. Measures intended to facilitate consensus.
5. Review of the General Principles of Codex.

- a. Consideration of special treatment for developing countries.

- b. Revision of the Acceptance Procedure.

6. Review of the status and objectives of Codex texts.

7. Review of the Statements of Principles on the Role of Science and Extent to which Other Factors are taken into Account—Application in the case of Bovine somatotropin and Porcine somatotropin.

8. Revision of the Procedural Manual.

- a. Procedures concerning the participation of international non-governmental organizations.

- b. Other aspects.

9. Review of the Code of Ethics for International Trade in Foods.

Done at Washington, DC.

**F. Edward Scarbrough,**

*U.S. Manager for Codex.*

[FR Doc. 98-21282 Filed 8-7-98; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 98-047N]

#### Meeting: The Food Safety Regulatory Workforce of the Future

**AGENCY:** Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is holding a public meeting to solicit comment and to discuss the workforce of the future for the regulation of meat, poultry, and egg products. The Agency's food safety program continues to change to reflect an increased focus on food safety beyond slaughtering and processing plants. In all likelihood, there will be major changes in the regulatory program of the future and in the workforce needed to achieve improved food safety. As FSIS considers its long-range objectives and strategic plans for the future, it would like the views and recommendations of the public.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held on August 14, 1998, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Washington Plaza Hotel, 10 Thomas Circle, NW, Washington, DC 20009; telephone (202) 842-1300. To register

for the meeting, contact Ms. Jennifer Callahan of the FSIS Planning Staff at (202) 501-7138 or by FAX at (202) 501-7642. Persons requiring a sign language interpreter or other special accommodation should contact Ms. Callahan at the above numbers.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Pathogen Reduction/Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (PR/HACCP Systems) final rule was published on July 25, 1996. The rule calls for the development of a comprehensive HACCP-based farm-to-table food safety system. The rule requires implementation of HACCP systems in all meat and poultry establishments to reduce the risk of foodborne disease. In addition, the rule requires that each establishment develop and implement written sanitation standard operating procedures (SOPs), that slaughter establishments conduct regular microbial testing, and that slaughter establishments and establishments producing raw ground products meet pathogen reduction performance standards for *Salmonella*.

The sanitation SOPs and the *E. coli* process control regulations went into effect on January 27, 1997. The *Salmonella* pathogen reduction performance standards requirements will be applicable simultaneously with HACCP implementation dates. Large plants implemented HACCP systems in January 1998, and small plants will begin implementing HACCP in January 1999. The deadline for very small establishments, those with fewer than 10 employees or annual sales of less than \$2.5 million, is January 2000.

Other changes are being considered for implementation in the future. FSIS plans to test alternative modes of conducting inspection, employing new validated pathogen reduction intervention technologies, and identifying other consumer protection activities to achieve a higher degree of food safety from farm to table. The Agency also is evaluating its human resources to determine new skills its dedicated workforce will need in the future and the type of training that will be required for its employees.

The meeting is open to the public. FSIS is interested in receiving comments and recommendations from all of its stakeholders on the nature and scope of the food safety regulatory system for the future.

Done in Washington, DC, on August 4, 1998.

**Thomas J. Billy,**  
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 98-21362 Filed 8-7-98; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 98-029N]

#### Availability of Report of the Recall Policy Working Group

**AGENCY:** Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Meeting Notice; Request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is making available for public comment a report entitled "Improving Recalls at the Food Safety and Inspection Service." Recalls are initiated by a firm, either on its own or at the request of FSIS, to remove from commerce any meat, poultry, or egg product that there is reason to believe is adulterated or misbranded. The report, which was prepared by an FSIS Working Group, assesses the Agency's recall policy and procedures for before, during, and after a recall is initiated and provides concrete, practical recommendations for improving the Agency's recall process within FSIS' current statutory authority. FSIS also is holding a public meeting to discuss the report and the comments from the public about the Agency's recall policy.

**DATES:** Written comments must be received on or before October 9, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on October 5 at the Doubletree Hotel Park Terrace, 1515 Rhode Island Avenue, Washington, DC 20005. A block of rooms will be held under USDA/FSIS until September 5, 1998. Please call the hotel directly at 800-222-TREE to make a reservation. To register for the meeting, contact Ms. Mary Gioglio by telephone at (202) 501-7244 or (202) 501-7138 or by FAX at (202) 501-7642. If a sign language interpreter or other special accommodation is necessary, contact Ms. Gioglio at the above numbers by September 30, 1998.

Single copies of the report of the Recall Policy Working group are available from the FSIS Docket Clerk in the FSIS Docket Room, Room 102, Cotton Annex, 300 12th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20250-3700, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Persons also may request the report by writing to the above address or calling the Docket Room at (202) 720-3813 during the designated hours.

Submit one original and two copies of written comments on the report to the FSIS Docket Clerk, Docket #98-029N, at the above address. All comments

received in response to this notice will be considered part of the public record and will be available for viewing in the Docket Room between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mr. Philip S. Derfler, Associate Deputy Administrator, Office of Policy, Program Development, and Evaluation, at (202) 720-2710 or FAX (202) 720-2025.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** During 1997, industry initiated several major Class I recalls at FSIS' request, one of which involved more than 25 million pounds of ground beef believed to be contaminated with *E. coli* 0157:H7. As a result of these recalls, concerns were raised about the Agency's policy regarding recalls, the process for identifying affected product, industry's recordkeeping practices, and public and interagency notification problems. On September 24, 1997, FSIS held a public meeting on its recall policy and procedures to determine whether changes are needed. Approximately 30 people made oral presentations at the meeting, and the Agency received a small number of written comments after the meeting.

In November 1997, FSIS created a Working Group to assess its current recall policies and practices, to consider the oral and written comments that the Agency had received, and to develop a set of recommendations on how recalls should be accomplished. The Working Group focused on three major topics: how FSIS administers recalls; how FSIS communicates with consumers, industry, and other Federal and State agencies about recalls; and how FSIS should proceed after the recalled product is removed from commerce. Based on a comprehensive review of the issues, the Working Group has determined that the Agency's recall policy and procedures are basically sound, but that improvements can be made to make them more consistent with the Pathogen Reduction/Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point approach to inspection. The Working Group has submitted its report to the FSIS Administrator.

On May 13 and 14, 1998, FSIS presented a draft of the Working Group's report to the Meat and Poultry Inspection Advisory Committee for comments and suggestions. Generally, the Committee strongly endorsed the report, although at least one Committee member dissented.

As a result of the Committee's discussion and deliberations, the Working Group has made a small number of changes to the report to clarify the group's recommendations. In