

Emergency Management, VS, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 41, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231; (301) 734-8073.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases (the Committee) is to advise the Secretary of Agriculture regarding program operations and measures to suppress, control, or eradicate and outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, or other destructive foreign animal or poultry diseases, in the event these diseases should enter the United States. The Committee also advises the Secretary of Agriculture of means to prevent these diseases.

Done in Washington, DC, this 25th day of May 2005.

Michael James Harrison,

Assistant Secretary for Administration.

[FR Doc. E5-2768 Filed 5-31-05; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 05-022N]

Codex Alimentarius Commission: 28th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

AGENCY: Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is sponsoring a public meeting on June 9, 2005. The objective of the public meeting is to provide information and receive public comments on agenda items and draft United States' positions that will be discussed at the 28th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) to be held in Rome, Italy, July 4-9, 2005. The Under Secretary for Food Safety recognizes the importance of providing interested parties with the opportunity to obtain background information on the 28th Session of CAC and to address items on the agenda.

DATES: The public meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 9, 2005, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The public meeting will be held in Room 107A, Whitten Building, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC. The Codex documents pertaining to the agenda items for the 28th CAC Session, are accessible via the World Wide Web at the following

address: <http://www.codexalimentarius.net/current.asp>. To submit comments on this notice, please send them, to the FSIS Docket Clerk and reference Docket #05-022N. All comments submitted in response to this notice will be available for public inspection in the Docket Clerk's Office between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: F. Edward Scarbrough, Ph.D., U.S. Manager for Codex, U.S. Codex Office, FSIS, Room 4861, South Agriculture Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250, Telephone (202) 205-7760; Fax: (202) 720-3157; Electronic mail: ed.scarbrough@fsis.usda.gov. Persons requiring a sign language interpreter or other special accommodations should notify Dr. Scarbrough at the above number.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Codex was established in 1962 by two United Nations organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Codex is the major 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, USDA, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) manage and carry out U.S. Codex activities.

Issues To Be Discussed at the Public Meeting

The Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is sponsoring a public meeting on June 9, 2005. The objective of the public meeting is to provide information and receive public comments on agenda items and draft United States' positions that will be discussed at the 28th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) to be held in Rome, Italy, July 4-9, 2005. The Under Secretary for Food Safety recognizes the importance of providing interested parties with the opportunity to obtain background information on the 28th Session of CAC and to address items on the agenda. The following

items from the Draft Provisional Agenda for the 28th Session of the CAC will be discussed at the public meeting:

- (1) Procedural Matters
 - (A) Amendments to the Procedural Manual
 - (i) Amendments to the Rules of Procedure
 - (ii) Other amendments to the Procedural Manual
- (2) Codex Standards and Related Texts
 - (A) Draft Standards and Related Texts at Step 8 of the Procedure (including those submitted at Step 5 with a recommendation to omit Steps 6 and 7 and those submitted at Step 5 of the Accelerated Procedure)
 - (B) Proposed Draft Standards and Related Texts at Step 5
 - (C) Withdrawal or Revocation of existing Codex Standards and Related Texts
 - (D) Proposals for the Elaboration of new Standards and Related Texts and for the Discontinuation of Work
- (3) Program and Budgetary Matters
 - (A) Financial and Budgetary Matters—Proposed Budget 2006/2007
 - (B) Strategic Planning of the Codex Alimentarius Commission
 - (C) Proposed Schedule of Codex Meetings 2005-2007
- (4) Policy and General Matters
 - (A) Implementation of the Joint FAO/WHO Evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius and other FAO and WHO Work on Food Standards (including the Review of Codex Committee Structure and Mandates of Codex Committees and Task Forces)
 - (B) Matters arising from the Reports of Codex Committees and Task Forces
 - (C) Relations between the Codex Alimentarius Commission and other International Organizations
 - (D) FAO/WHO Project and Trust Fund for Enhanced Participation in Codex
 - (E) Other Matters arising from FAO and WHO
- (5) Elections and Appointments
 - (A) Appointment of Regional Coordinators
 - (B) Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons and Election of Members of the Executive Committee
 - (C) Designation of Countries responsible for Appointing the Chairpersons of Codex Committees and Task Forces

These issues and draft United States' positions on these issues will be described and discussed, and attendees will have the opportunity to pose questions and offer comments. Comments on the issues and draft positions should be mailed or sent electronically to the U.S. Codex Manager (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**). Please state that your comments relate to CAC activities and specify which issues your comments address.

Additional Public Notification

Public awareness of all segments of rulemaking and policy development is important. Consequently, in an effort to ensure that the public and, in particular,

minorities, women, and persons with disabilities are aware of this notice, FSIS will announce it on-line through the FSIS web page located at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations/2005_Notices_Index/.

FSIS also will make copies of this **Federal Register** publication available through the FSIS Constituent Update, which is used to provide information regarding FSIS policies, procedures, regulations, **Federal Register** notices, FSIS public meetings, recalls, and other types of information that could affect or would be of interest to our constituents and stakeholders. The update is communicated via Listserv, a free electronic mail subscription service for industry, trade, and farm groups, consumer interest groups, allied health professionals, scientific professionals, and other individuals who have requested to be included. The update is available on the FSIS web page. Through Listserv and the web page, FSIS is able to provide information to a much broader, more diverse audience.

In addition, FSIS offers an electronic mail subscription service which provides an automatic and customized notification when popular pages are updated, including **Federal Register** publications and related documents. This service is available at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/news_and_events/email_subscription/ and allows FSIS customers to sign up for subscription options across eight categories. Options range from recalls to export information to regulations, directives, and notices.

Customers can add or delete subscriptions themselves and have the option to protect their accounts with passwords.

Done at Washington, DC, on May 26, 2005.

F. Edward Scarbrough,

U.S. Manager for Codex Alimentarius.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 05-017N]

Availability of Question and Answer Documents

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The Food Safety and Inspection Service is announcing the availability of two question and answer (Q&A) documents concerning FSIS Directives 5000.2 ("Review of

Establishment Data by Inspection Program Personnel"), 6420.2 ("Verification of Procedures for controlling Fecal Material, Ingesta, and Milk in Slaughter Operations"), and 10,010.1, Revision 1 ("Microbiological Testing Program and Other Verification Activities for *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 in Raw Ground Beef Products and Raw Ground Beef Components and Beef Patty Components") (see **ADDRESSES**). The Agency is announcing the availability of these documents now because they contain information about *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) O157:H7, which is particularly relevant at this time because the United States is in the seasonal period when the prevalence of *E. coli* O157:H7 may be higher than during other times of the year.

ADDRESSES: The Q&A documents are available in 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. They are also available on the Internet at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/fsisdirectives/10010_1/Ecoli_QA.pdf and http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/fsisdirectives/10010_1/Directives_Q&A.pdf.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rachel Edelstein, Regulations and Petitions Policy Staff, Food Safety and Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (202) 720-5627.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Significance of *E. Coli* O157:H7 and FSIS' Actions To Address the Pathogen

Exposure to *E. coli* O157:H7 has been linked to serious, life-threatening human illnesses (hemorrhagic colitis and hemolytic uremic syndrome). In the United States, outbreaks of human illnesses caused by foodborne *E. coli* O157:H7 infection have often been linked to ground beef.

FSIS administers a regulatory program under the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) (21 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) to protect the health and welfare of consumers by preventing the distribution of meat products that are unwholesome, adulterated, or misbranded.

In 1994, FSIS notified the public that raw ground beef products contaminated with *E. coli* O157:H7 are adulterated within the meaning of the FMIA (21 U.S.C. 601(m)(1)), unless the ground beef is further processed to destroy this pathogen. On January 19, 1999, FSIS published a policy statement in the **Federal Register** that explained that, if non-intact beef products (e.g., beef that has been mechanically tenderized by needling or cubing) or intact cuts of muscle that are to be further processed

into non-intact product prior to distribution for consumption are found to be contaminated with *E. coli* O157:H7, they must be processed into ready-to-eat product, or they would be deemed to be adulterated (64 FR 2803).

In the October 7, 2002, **Federal Register**, FSIS informed the public that *E. coli* O157:H7 prevalence may be higher in April through September than during other times of the year, based on several studies and establishment testing data (67 FR 62332).

Availability of Qs&As

FSIS is making available two documents that include Qs&As concerning FSIS Directives 5000.2, 6420.2, and 10,010.1, Revision 1. The Qs&As address concerns that were raised by interested parties at public meetings conducted by FSIS in 2004. At those meetings, FSIS presented information on these directives to the public, particularly small and very small plants. The Qs&As regarding Directive 10,010.1, Revision 1, provide information on establishment verification testing for *E. coli* O157:H7, establishment controls for *E. coli* O157:H7, and establishment responsibilities in the event that the establishment finds raw beef product positive for the pathogen or positive in a screening test for the pathogen.

The information concerning *E. coli* O157:H7 is particularly relevant at this time because the United States is in the seasonal period when the prevalence of this pathogen may be higher than during other times of the year. Based on information from the Qs&As, establishments may decide to take actions to improve their *E. coli* O157:H7 verification testing programs or their controls to address the pathogen.

Additional Public Notification

Public awareness of all segments of rulemaking and policy development is important. Consequently, in an effort to ensure that the public and in particular minorities, women, and persons with disabilities, are aware of this notice, FSIS will announce it on-line through the FSIS web page located at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations/2005_Notices_Index/index.asp.

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