



International HACCP Alliance
120 Rosenthal Center
2471 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-2471
Telephone: 979-862-3643
FAX: 979-862-3075
<http://haccpalliance.org>

December, 2005

Alliance News Lines

Strategic Planning Meeting for Small and Very Small Plants Held

A strategic planning meeting for small and very small plants was hosted by the HACCP Alliance on December 7-8, 2005, in Westlake, Texas. Alliance members representing industry associations, universities and government agencies participated in the meeting. Several key government personnel participated, including Dr. Richard Raymond, Under Secretary for Food Safety, and Dr. Barbara Masters, FSIS Administrator. Representatives from APHIS and FDA also provided valuable input into the meeting.

The requirements of the Pathogen Reduction/HACCP rule have not changed since it was released in July 1996. However, today we have a much better understanding of the regulatory requirements, and we recognize that there are areas that small and very small plants need assistance to ensure compliance. Therefore, the goals of the meeting were to:

1. Determine the needs of the small and very small plants.
2. Identify the best methods/tools for meeting those needs
3. Identify specific actions to be taken by all interested parties

Key needs were identified and specific actions were developed to address each need. The needs include supporting documentation for HACCP and food safety systems, additional guidance materials, a method for capturing FSIS questions and answers, ensuring the delivery of a consistent message, further educational activities for industry and agency, and information on the appeal process. One of the key phrases that was used often during the discussion was the need to "Educate before you Regulate."

A document outlining the details of the plan is being developed and will be posted on the Alliance's web site. For additional information, contact Kerri B. Harris, 979-862-3643.

Industry Best Practices for Holding Tested Products Available

A new set of industry best practices for holding tested meat and poultry products has been developed and released by eight trade associations. The associations that developed the new best practices include: the American Association of Meat Processors, American Meat Institute, Food Products Association, National Chicken Council, National Meat Association, National Turkey Federation, North American Meat Processors Association and Southwest Meat Association. The project was facilitated by the International HACCP Alliance.

The document is designed to detail best practices that can be used throughout the food production system to ensure that products being tested for pathogens or other adulterants are held until results are received. The document outlines key issues to assist plants in developing plant-specific procedures, and covers both raw and ready-to-eat meat and poultry products.

General points covered in the "best practice" document include: communication with inspection personnel; test and hold planning; physical control of the products held; limited physical space; maintaining control of products being held; products with limited shelf-life; production lots and raw materials; filling orders; and recordkeeping. To obtain a copy of "Industry Best Practices for Holding Tested Products," go to <http://haccpalliance.org/alliance/bestpractices.html>.



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Alliance News Lines, page 2

EIAO/FSRE Program for Industry Held November 1-3, 2005

Approximately 200 people participated in the Industry Session for FSRE/EIAO training on November 1 - 3, 2005, in College Station, Texas. The program was conducted by FSIS personnel and included a condensed version of the USDA/FSIS Enforcement Investigation and Analysis Officer (EIAO) Educational Program and the Food Safety Regulatory Essentials (FSRE) program. The three-day program focused on the EIAO Work Methods and Administrative Enforcement Activities and the FSRE portion focused on elements being taught to inspectors from FSIS Directive 5000.1, Revision 1 and current regulatory information on *E. coli* O157:H7 and *Listeria monocytogenes*.

Texas A&M University Closed for the Holidays

Texas A&M University and its affiliated offices in College Station, Texas, will be closed for the holidays from Friday, December 23, 2005, until Monday, January 2, 2006. Due to these office closures, the International HACCP Alliance will have limited mail delivery during the holidays. However, the HACCP Alliance staff will check e-mail, voice mail, and facsimile transmissions during the university's holiday break. So, please leave a message on our telephone, send a fax, or e-mail, and someone will reply as soon as possible.

Information