

which prohibit the obligation or expenditure of funds in excess of the available appropriation. Thus the Department is required to establish (and if necessary, adjust) rates in such a manner as to not exceed the program appropriation.

Fiscal Year 1997 Level of Assistance

Based on its projection of the number of meals to be claimed during the fiscal year, and in light of constitutional and statutory prohibitions on obligating or spending funds in excess of the available appropriation, the Department announced an initial per-meal reimbursement rate of \$.5857 for Fiscal Year 1997, the highest rate which it believed could be sustained throughout the fiscal year. This initial level of per-meal assistance was announced in the April 8, 1997 **Federal Register** (62 FR 16757).

The Department's meal service projection for Fiscal Year 1997 assumed a slightly higher rate of growth than occurred in the preceding fiscal year. This initial per-meal support level of \$.5857 was sustained throughout Fiscal Year 1997, and thus no adjustment was necessary to keep expenditures within the limit of the \$140 million NPE appropriation established by Pub. L. 104-180. Funds in the estimated amount of \$500 thousand were not paid out for Fiscal Year 1997 and will, in accordance with the legislative mandate in Pub. L. 104-180, be carried over into Fiscal Year 1998 and expended in per-meal reimbursement for that year.

Fiscal Year 1998 Initial Level of Assistance

It is the Department's goal to establish the highest rate that can be sustained throughout the fiscal year so as to maximize the flow of program funds to States during the fiscal year. However, the Department wants also to minimize the possibility of a rate reduction and the hardship it causes to program operators. In order to guard against the need for a reduction, the Department, once again, has projected a slightly higher rate of growth in meal service than occurred in the preceding fiscal year. Based on its projections, the Department announces an initial per-meal support level of \$.5607, which will not be increased, and which will be decreased only if necessary to keep expenditures within the limit of the \$140 million NPE Fiscal Year 1998 appropriation established by Pub. L. 105-86 and the \$500 thousand estimated to be available from Fiscal Year 1997. Any of these funds not paid out for Fiscal Year 1998 reimbursement will, in accordance with Pub. L. 105-86,

remain available through Fiscal Year 1999. In the unlikely event that the rate needs to be decreased, States will be notified directly.

Dated: March 9, 1998.

Yvette Jackson,

Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 98-015N]

The National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection; Nominations for Membership

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Agriculture (USDA) is soliciting nominations for membership on the National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection. The full Committee consists of 16-members, and each person selected is expected to serve a 2-year term.

DATES: The names of the nominees and their typed curricula vitae or resumes must be postmarked no later than June 30, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Nominating materials should be submitted to Ms. Margaret O'K. Glavin, Deputy Administrator, Office of Policy, Program Development, and Evaluation, Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA, Room 350-E, Administration Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-3700.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Michael Micchelli, Evaluation and Analysis Division, FSIS, Room 3833, South Agriculture Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-3700; telephone (202) 720-6269; FAX (202) 690-1030; E-mail: michael.micchelli@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: USDA again is seeking nominees for membership on the National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection. The Committee provides advice and recommendations to the Secretary on the meat and poultry inspection programs, pursuant to sections 7(c), 24, 301(a)(3) and 301(c) of the Federal Meat Inspection Act, 21 U.S.C. 607(c), 624, 645, 661(a)(3) and 661(c) and to sections 5(a)(3), 5(c), 8(b), and 11(e) of the Poultry Products Inspection Act, 21 U.S.C. 454(a)(3), 454(c), 457(b), and 460(e). Nominations

for membership are being sought from persons representing producers; processors; exporters and importers of meat and poultry products; academia; Federal and State government officials; and consumers.

Appointments to the Committee will be made by the Secretary. To ensure that recommendations of the Committee take into account the needs of the diverse groups served by the Department, membership should include, to the extent practicable, persons with demonstrated ability to represent minorities, women, and persons with disabilities. It is anticipated that the Committee will meet at least annually.

Done at Washington, DC, on: March 26, 1998.

Thomas J. Billy,

Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 98-002N]

Pathogen Reduction Performance Standards: Salmonella Testing Data

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: At its December 16, 1997, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) Implementation Meeting, FSIS discussed its strategy for testing raw meat and poultry products to determine establishment compliance with the pathogen reduction performance standards for *Salmonella*. The Agency also presented its views on the public release of *Salmonella* testing results. The issue papers on these subjects that were made available at the meeting are published in this notice.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Patricia F. Stolfa, Assistant Deputy Administrator, Office of Policy, Program Development, and Evaluation, Food Safety and Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250-3700; (202) 205-0699.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On December 16, 1997, in Washington, D.C., FSIS held the first of four one-day meetings to brief managers of large (500+ employees) official meat and poultry establishments on how the Agency will conduct inspection operations after January 26, 1998. This is the date when, under the "Pathogen Reduction (PR); Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Systems"