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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

9 CFR Parts 309, 310, 381, and 417

[Docket No. 98-039N]

HACCP-Based Meat and Poultry Inspection Concepts: In-Plant Slaughter Inspection Models Study Plan

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is making available for comment a paper describing the plan for evaluating new livestock and poultry slaughter inspection models in certain establishments operating under Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) systems. The paper was prepared for use by establishments slaughtering certain market classes of animals and participating in the Agency's HACCP-Based Inspection Models project and by the FSIS project team. During this project, FSIS will test and evaluate new approaches to fulfilling inspection requirements by plants and FSIS inspectors. The project will also test new FSIS food safety and other consumer protection activities in transportation and distribution channels. The new models are intended to help the Agency determine how best to maintain and improve upon the level of protection provided by current inspection procedures, and at the same time use its resources more effectively. The paper outlines the approaches that will be used by the participating establishments and by the FSIS inspectors assigned to these plants. The paper also describes the organoleptic and microbiological evaluations to be conducted by the FSIS project team.

DATES: To receive full consideration, comments should be received by September 28, 1998.

ADDRESSES: The document "HACCP-Based Inspection Models Project: In-plant Slaughter" may be viewed in the FSIS Docket Room, Room 102 Cotton Annex Building, 300 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20250-3700. An electronic version of the document is available on-line at FSIS's homepage at "http://www.fsis.usda.gov." Written comments on the document may be sent in triplicate to FSIS Docket Clerk, DOCKET #98-XXXN, Room 102 Cotton Annex Building, 300 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20250-3700.

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:

Background

FSIS is conducting a project to develop and test new models for the inspection of certain meat and poultry products produced under the Agency's "Pathogen Reduction; Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Systems" (PR/HACCP) final rule (61 FR 38806; July 25, 1996). FSIS will also test a new in-distribution inspection concept; however, the paper described here only concerns the in-plant slaughter phase of the project. The inspection models project was announced in a June 10, 1997, **Federal Register** notice, "HACCP-Based Meat and Poultry Inspection Concepts," requesting public comments on the design and development of new inspection models for slaughter and processing under HACCP systems of young, healthy, uniform animals (62 FR 31553). The project has been a subject of discussion at several public meetings during the past year.

The HACCP-Based Inspection Models project is intended to produce a flexible, more efficient, fully integrated system of oversight and controls. FSIS expects this system of establishment controls and Agency oversight and verification, to yield increased food-safety and other benefits to consumers. The new system should enable certain establishments to better meet their responsibilities under the PR/HACCP regulations and permit FSIS to deploy its inspection resources more effectively both in-plant and in-distribution.

In the inspection models for selected market classes that FSIS is developing, slaughter process control will be an industry responsibility subject to FSIS oversight and verification. The models, when refined, should enable FSIS to: (1) maintain and enhance the food-safety and other consumer protection benefits of the current carcass inspection system; (2) effectively and efficiently oversee, evaluate, and verify industry implementation of the PR/HACCP regulations; and (3) ensure that meat and poultry products are transported and distributed under conditions that will not render them adulterated. The project will thoroughly test the Agency's ability to achieve these objectives using the new models in certain market classes of livestock and birds.

Establishments participating in the project will carry out food-safety-related and other consumer protection activities. Establishment employees will conduct anatomical and pathological examinations of carcasses, and FSIS inspectors will oversee, evaluate, and verify the effectiveness and reliability of the establishments' slaughter process controls.

The paper "HACCP-Based Inspection Models Project: Inplant Slaughter" outlines the establishment process-control responsibilities and FSIS inspection activities to be carried out during the in-plant phase of the project, and describes the microbial and organoleptic evaluation procedures which the project team will carry out.

Done, at Washington, D.C., July 22, 1998.

Thomas J. Billy,
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 98-20173 Filed 7-28-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

9 CFR Parts 309, 310, 381, and 417

[Docket No. 98-009N]

HACCP-Based Meat and Poultry Inspection Concepts: Diseases and Conditions Identifiable During Post-Mortem Inspection

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is making available for comment a paper that lists two categories of livestock and poultry diseases and conditions observed at post-mortem inspection. One category is comprised of diseases and conditions that the Agency believes pose food safety risks or hazards. The other category is comprised of diseases and conditions that present other consumer protection issues. FSIS has developed the list as part of its HACCP-Based Inspection Models Project.

DATES: To receive full consideration, comments should be received by September 28, 1998.

ADDRESSES: The document "HACCP-Based Inspection Models Project: Diseases and Conditions Observable in Meat and Poultry" may be viewed at the FSIS Docket Room, Room 102 Cotton Annex Building, 300 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20250-3700. An electronic version of the document is available on-line at FSIS's homepage at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>. Written comments on the document may be sent in triplicate to FSIS Docket Clerk, DOCKET #98-009N, Room 102 Cotton Annex Building, 300 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20250-3700.

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:

Background

FSIS is carrying out a project to develop and test new methods for the inspection during slaughter of certain market classes of animals and their meat and poultry products produced under the Agency's "Pathogen Reduction; Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Systems" (PR/HACCP) final rule (61 FR 38806; July 25, 1996). This project is designed to develop, in plants, these approaches to slaughtering inspection of young, healthy and uniform animals and birds that are consistent with the HACCP/PR regulation, and to explore the possibility of redeployment of some inspection resources from these plants in ways that will enhance food safety protection all along the farm-to-table continuum. It will also help define the respective responsibilities of FSIS and the regulated industry in slaughter and processing establishments, and in distribution channels outside of inspected establishments.

In a June 10, 1997, **Federal Register** notice, "HACCP-Based Meat and Poultry Inspection Concepts," FSIS requested public comment on the design and development of new inspection models for slaughter and processing in a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) environment (62 FR 31553). This notice summarized the National Academy of Sciences and General Accounting Office's recommendations that FSIS reduce its reliance on organoleptic (sensory) inspection and redeploy its resources to utilize regulatory approaches that are based on risks. To accomplish these objectives, new inspection models or methods must be developed, and these must be consistent with the meat and poultry inspection laws as well as systems put in place by the PR/HACCP final rule.

A June 24-25, 1997, public meeting, which the notice announced, provided a forum for dialogue between FSIS and all parties interested in the project. This project has also been discussed at the September 9-11, 1997, January 13-14, 1998, and May 12-14, 1998, meetings of the National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection. It will also be discussed at FSIS' July 27 public meeting on its HACCP-based Inspection Models Project for Slaughtering establishments.

Diseases and Conditions that Pose Food Safety Risks vs. Ones That Pose Other Consumer Protection Issues

As part of the development of new inspection models or methods that are consistent with the meat and poultry inspection laws and with systems put in place by the PR/HACCP final rule, animal diseases and conditions observable at post-mortem inspection that pose food-safety hazards or risks need to be distinguished from diseases and conditions that present other consumer protection issues. In the past, the Agency has not made this distinction because, under the traditional approach to inspection, resources are not assigned according to public-health risk.

HACCP, however, focuses on hazards. The diseases and conditions listed in the paper are examples of potential hazards that, in the future, establishments might consider when conducting their hazard analyses and in developing their HACCP plans or, with respect to the non-food-safety-related conditions, in developing slaughter process control programs.

The first category of diseases and conditions listed in the paper is comprised of diseases and conditions that pose food-safety hazards or risks

(within the meaning of 9 CFR 417.1 and 417.2(a)); the second is comprised of animal diseases and conditions that pose other consumer protection issues. Meat and poultry products affected by diseases and conditions in either category are to be removed from the human food supply in the interests of consumers, because diseases and conditions in either category would adulterate the food.

Because FSIS has not previously delineated these categories, and because establishments are not now expected to have categorized diseases and conditions in this manner, FSIS determined that it would be useful to have a broad base of comments on the list. The list was developed by Agency experts based, in part, on informal consultations with their colleagues outside the Agency and the Government.

In the course of the HACCP-Based Inspection Models project, the volunteer establishments will decide how best to remove adulterated carcasses and parts from the food supply, and FSIS will decide how best to verify that only safe, wholesome products are entering commerce. These decisions will depend, in part, on knowing which diseases and conditions affect food safety (controlled by HACCP systems) and which are aesthetic conditions (but are subject to slaughter process controls). The paper, "HACCP-Based Inspection Models Project: Diseases and Conditions to be Removed from Meat and Poultry" is intended to inform project participants and the public of the Agency's views on this subject. The paper is available for review at the location indicated above in **ADDRESSES**.

Done at Washington, DC, on: July 22, 1998.

Thomas J. Billy,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 98-20172 Filed 7-28-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 21

Existence of Proposed Airworthiness Design Standards for Acceptance Under the Primary Category Rule

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Proposed airworthiness standards for acceptance under the primary category rule; request for comments.
