

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Food Safety and Inspection Service****[Docket No. FSIS-2005-0048]****Public Meeting on Advances in Post-Harvest Reduction of Salmonella in Poultry****AGENCY:** Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.**ACTION:** Notice.

SUMMARY: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is announcing that it will hold a public meeting on *Salmonella* Interventions in Poultry Slaughter and Processing on February 23 and February 24, 2006, in Atlanta, Georgia. The meeting will consist of presentations on research and practical experiences aimed at reducing the presence of *Salmonella* and other enteric microorganisms in poultry slaughter and processing.

DATES: The public meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 23, 2006, from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. e.s.t., and Friday, February 24, 2006, from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. e.s.t.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held at The Loudermilk Center, 40 Courtland Street, NE., Atlanta, GA 30303. A tentative agenda will be available on the FSIS Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/>. The official transcript of the meeting, when it becomes available, can be accessed in the FSIS Docket Room, Room 102 Cotton Annex Building, 300 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20250 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

FSIS invites interested persons to submit comments on this notice. Comments may be submitted by any of the following methods:

Federal eRulemaking Portal: This Web site provides the ability to type short comments directly into the comment field on this Web page or attach a file for lengthier comments. FSIS prefers to receive comments through the Federal eRulemaking Portal. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and, in the "Search for Open Regulations" box, select "Food Safety and Inspection Service" from the agency drop-down menu, then click on "Submit." In the Docket ID column, select the Docket Number FSIS-2005-0048 to submit or view public comments and to view supporting and related materials available electronically.

Mail, including floppy disks or CD-ROM's, and hand- or courier-delivered items: Send to Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety

and Inspection Service, 300 12th Street, SW., Room 102 Cotton Annex Building, Washington, DC 20250-3700.

Electronic mail: fsis.regulationscomments@fsis.usda.gov.

All submissions received must include the Agency name and Docket Number FSIS-2005-0048. All comments submitted in response to this notice, as well as research and background information used by FSIS in developing this document, will be posted to the regulations.gov Web site. The background information and comments also will be available for public inspection in the FSIS Docket Room at the address listed above between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. William Shaw at (202) 205-0695. E-mail: william.shaw@fsis.usda.gov or Dr. Patty Bennett at (202) 205-0296. E-mail: patricia.bennett@fsis.usda.gov.

Pre-registration is encouraged for this meeting. To pre-register, contact Diane Jones at (202) 720-9692 or by e-mail at diane.jones@fsis.usda.gov. Persons requiring a sign language interpreter or other special accommodations should also contact Diane Jones using the contact information above as soon as possible.

This public meeting will also be available Live Online via NetMeeting. For questions regarding NetMeeting contact Sharon Randle at (202)690-6530.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The scientific community continues to work with establishments to investigate methods to reduce the presence of food safety hazards at federally inspected meat and poultry establishments through the use of antimicrobial interventions and enhanced sanitary dressing practices. A food safety hazard is defined in 9 CFR part 417 as any biological, chemical, or physical property that may cause a food to be unsafe for human consumption. Establishments are required to consider any hazards that could arise before, during, or after the slaughter and processing of meat and poultry products and develop a plan designed to prevent, eliminate, or minimize the likelihood that these hazards will occur. A prudent establishment will employ sound technologies, practices, and other means to control pathogen hazards at the pre-harvest stage, during slaughter, and during processing to minimize contamination of the edible tissue.

Future hazard reduction interventions will likely arise from approaches that are being researched or from new approaches that will be added to the

scientific community's research agenda. It is important, therefore, for establishments to be aware of the research that is being conducted, so that they can (1) identify their needs, (2) highlight matters that are not under investigation, (3) provide input on the economic impact of implementing new practices in their facilities, and (4) explain the impact of food safety hazards on the marketability of their products.

Salmonella, a group of bacteria that can cause diarrheal illness in humans, is the most frequently reported cause of foodborne illness. Contaminated foods are often of animal origin, such as beef, poultry, milk, or eggs, but all foods, including vegetables, may become contaminated.

FSIS Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) verification testing for all meat and poultry product categories has shown a continuous decline in *Salmonella* positive samples for beef product classes. However, since 2002, FSIS has seen an increase in *Salmonella* positive samples for broiler production classes. Agency data show that *Salmonella* percent positive in "A" set verification sampling for broilers from establishments of all sizes increased from 11.5% in 2002 to 12.8% in 2003 to 13.5% in 2004. Although the overall percentage of positive samples in verification testing is still below the national baseline prevalence figures, the continuing upward trend in recent years is a source of significant concern.

Consequently, on August 25 and 26, 2005, FSIS held a public meeting on advances in pre-harvest reduction of *Salmonella* in poultry at the Russell Research Center in Athens, Georgia. FSIS is announcing that it will hold a second public meeting on *Salmonella* controls, focusing on interventions during broiler slaughter as well as further processing of ground chicken and turkey. This meeting will discuss interventions to reduce *Salmonella* on broilers, ground chicken, and ground turkey. The meeting will include technical presentations on the opportunities for affecting *Salmonella* levels at each step in the slaughter process, emphasizing aspects where biological hazards associated with *Salmonella* are critical and require interventions. There will also be panel discussions of the possible approaches that are presented and opportunities for the audience to ask questions of presenters and panelists. The meeting will conclude with presentations outlining FSIS policy initiatives to encourage reduction of *Salmonella* positive regulatory verification samples.

Additional Public Notification

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

FSIS will also 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 e-mail subscription service consisting of industry, trade, and farm groups, consumer interest groups, allied health professionals, scientific professionals, and other individuals who have requested to be included. The update also 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 e-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 password protect their account.

Done at Washington, DC on February 7, 2006.

Barbara J. Masters,
Administrator.

[FR Doc. E6-1936 Filed 2-10-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-DM-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Northeast Yaak SEIS; Kootenai National Forest, Lincoln County, MT

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare a supplemental environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Northeast Yaak project. The Northeast Yaak project includes urban interface fuels treatments, vegetation management, watershed rehabilitation activities, wildlife habitat improvement, and access management changes, including road decommissioning. The project is located in the Northeast Yaak planning subunit on the Three Rivers Ranger District, Kootenai National Forest, Lincoln County, Montana, and northeast of Troy, Montana. The Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS for this project was published in the **Federal Register** (70 FR 14315) on March 25, 2005, and the notice of the Final EIS (70 FR 38131) on July 1, 2005. The Record of Decision on this project was administratively appealed to the Regional Forester per 36 CFR part 215. The Regional Forester reversed the decision on September 26, 2005, citing an inadequate cumulative effects analysis. A Supplemental EIS is being prepared to further address cumulative effects for the Northeast Yaak project.

DATES: Scoping is not required for supplements to environmental impact statements (40 CFR 1502.9(c)(4)). There was extensive public involvement in the development of the proposed action, the Draft EIS and the Final EIS, and the Forest Service is not inviting comments at this time.

ADDRESSES: The line officer responsible for this analysis is: Michael L. Balboni, District Ranger, Three Rivers Range District, 1437 Hwy 2, Troy, MT 59935.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Eric Dickinson, Team Leader, Three Rivers Ranger District, at (406) 295-4693.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The Northeast Yaak project area approximately 26 air miles northeast of Troy, Montana, within all or portions of T37N, R29W-R32W, and T36N, R30W-R31W, PMM, Lincoln County, Montana.

The purpose and need for this project is to: (1) Reduce fuels and the potential for crown fires in the urban interface and other forested areas; (2) manage for more diverse and sustainable vegetative conditions; (3) improve conditions in old growth habitat; (4) improve growing conditions and long-term management of overstocked sapling/pole stands; (5) improve and maintain winter range conditions; (6) improve the quality of grizzly bear habitat; (7) provide for motorized access to National Forest resources for recreation and to meet management objectives, while maintaining wildlife security; (8) continue to decrease cumulative sediment introduction to streams from

roads; and (9) contribute forest products to the economy.

The Northeast Yaak Record of Decision (ROD) was released at the same time as the Final EIS and the legal notice of decision was published in the newspaper of record on June 18, 2005. The ROD selected Alternative C-Modified which authorized the following: (1) Approximately 1,860 acres of commercial timber harvest to reduce fuels, improve forest conditions, and contribute products to the economy (13.5 MMBF/33,000 CCF); (2) an estimated 350 acres of non-commercial fuels reduction treatments; (3) pre-commercial thinning on 286 acres; (4) watershed rehabilitation activities, including decommissioning on approximately 22 miles of road, and another 6.6 miles of road stabilized before being placed in grizzly bear core; (5) opening of 4 miles of the Vinal Lake Road #746 to improve motorized loop access, with a seasonal restriction, and other access management changes; and (6) a project-specific Forest Plan amendment to allow fuels reduction harvest in designated old growth to maintain old growth habitat.

The SEIS is intended to provide additional documentation of the cumulative effects analysis to the public, including information relating to past, ongoing, and reasonably foreseeable actions and the cumulative effects to natural resources.

A Draft SEIS is expected to be available for public review and comment in March 2006; and a Final SEIS in May 2006. The comment period for the Draft SEIS will be 45 days from the date the EPA publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**.

The Forest Service believes it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of draft environmental impact statements must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewer's position and contentions. *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978). Also environmental objections that could be raised at the draft environmental impact statement stage may be waived or dismissed by the courts. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803 F.2d 1016, 1022 (9th Cir. 1986) and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). Because of these court rulings, it is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate by the close of the 45 day comment period so that substantive comments and objections