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Focus on China



Authorities release new standards for food safety seals

Shanghai authorities on Tuesday issued a set of standards regarding food safety seals for takeaway and online-delivery orders.

The standards clarify for the first time the definition of reusable smart food safety seals – they should feature smart technology that prevents food packages from being opened without authorization of customers during the delivery. The seals should also be made of eco-friendly materials and have the ability to be reused tens of thousands of times.

Standards also stipulate quality indicators of disposable food safety seals, such as the stickiness of the seals to make sure they can only be used once.

The standards state that more information can be added to the barcodes on seals to improve the safety of delivery services.

In addition, the standards stipulate that for takeaway food that do not use food safety seals, the catering service providers shall be the primary party held accountable when accusations of food contamination arise, while for food takeaway food that use food safety seals, online food trading platforms shall be the primary party held accountable for related safety disputes.

The city promoted safety seals in the food delivery industry in August 2019. Over 40 million seals produced by related institutions have since been distributed to catering companies, under the guidance of Shanghai Administration for Market Regulation.

Vice-premier stresses roles of leading agricultural enterprises in modernization

Chinese Vice-Premier Hu Chunhua on Thursday called for efforts to give better play to the roles of leading agricultural enterprises in facilitating the development of modern agriculture and bringing faster progress in raising the level of agricultural modernization.

Hu, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks while presiding over a symposium in Harbin, capital city of Northeast China's Heilongjiang province.

It is necessary to give better play to the enterprises' demonstration role in the development of modern agricultural production, Hu said, urging them to take the lead in carrying out standardized production, improve the quality control system, use modern facilities and equipment, and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of production and management.

Hu also said the leading firms should strengthen capacity for innovation, promote the transformation of scientific research achievements, and help farmers apply new varieties and technologies.

After the symposium, Hu inspected the progress in the research and development of African swine fever vaccine at a veterinary research institute in Harbin, where he stressed efforts to actively advance the process while ensuring the vaccine will be safe and effective, so as to contribute to the healthy development of the hog industry.

Imports from 56 cold-chain food makers halted due to virus risk



China halted imports from 56 cold-chain food manufacturers in 19 countries as of Monday due to potential risks of COVID-19 infections, the General Administration of Customs said on Tuesday.

The suspension was issued to foreign producers who had reported confirmed cases in their employees, and 47 voluntarily suspended shipments to China, the administration said in an article published on its official website.

The administration has stepped up monitoring and testing on imported cold or frozen products amid rising concerns over the virus' ability to spread through food products or packaging. Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of the virus through food.

As of Monday, the administration had taken over 500,000 samples from imported products, their packaging and the interior of containers; six samples taken in Dalian, Northeast China's Liaoning province, and Xiamen, East China's Fujian province, tested positive for the virus.

All other samples tested negative, it added.

The administration has held 121 video conferences with their counterparts in 99 countries and regions and urged overseas food producers to strengthen their preventive measures against the disease.

To date, 2,020 companies from 38 countries and regions have been approved to ship meat imports to China. From January to August, the country imported 6.58 million metric tons of meat products, exceeding last year's total import volume.

International News

FDA Announces FSMA Food Traceability Proposed Rule, A Major Milestone in the New Era of Smarter Food Safety

Today, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced a proposed rule to establish additional traceability recordkeeping requirements for certain foods. The FDA also published a draft “Food Traceability List,” which describes the foods that would be subject to the proposed requirements. The list includes leafy greens, fresh cut fruits and vegetables, some types of fish, shell eggs, nut butters, and more.

The proposed rule, “Requirements for Additional Traceability Records for Certain Foods” (Food Traceability Proposed Rule) is a key component of the FDA’s New Era of Smarter Food Safety Blueprint and would implement Section

204(d) of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). If finalized, the proposal would standardize the data elements and information firms must establish and maintain, and the information they would need to send to the next entity in the supply chain to facilitate rapid and accurate traceability. While limited to only certain foods, this proposal lays the foundation for a standardized approach to traceability recordkeeping, paving the way for industry to adopt, harmonize, and leverage more digital traceability systems in the future. Where possible, FDA has drawn on existing consensus standards that industry members may already be using.

Existing FDA regulations require much of the food industry to establish and maintain records to identify the immediate previous sources and the immediate subsequent recipients of foods (commonly referred to as “one-up, one-back” recordkeeping). These requirements form a baseline for traceability recordkeeping, but they provide limited information to effectively and rapidly link shipments of food through each point in the supply chain. This – and the fact that recordkeeping systems can be largely paper-based and lack a universal lexicon throughout industry– can make it difficult to trace a product to its original source when necessary.

As a result, many foodborne illness outbreak investigations have been slowed, resulting in more illnesses and economic loss. Improved traceability, as envisioned by the proposed rule, would allow the FDA to more quickly identify the source of a contaminated product, reduce the scope of product recalls, and conduct more timely root-cause investigations to learn more about how contamination occurred in order to prevent future outbreaks.

At the heart of the proposal is a requirement for those who manufacture, process, pack, or hold a food on the Food Traceability List (FTL) to establish and

maintain records associated with specific Critical Tracking Events (CTEs): growing, receiving, transforming, creating, and shipping. For each CTE, entities would be required to establish and maintain records containing Key Data Elements (KDEs). Examples of KDEs include the traceability lot code, the date the product was received, the date the product was shipped, and a product description. The traceability lot code is an important KDE throughout the supply chain intended to establish critical linkages that will help to facilitate rapid traceback and traceforward investigations during foodborne illness outbreaks and recall events. In addition, those subject to the rule would also be required to create and maintain records related to their internal traceability program, which would help regulators better understand a firm’s recordkeeping practices and traceability operations.

The proposed rule would require records to be maintained as either electronic, original paper records, or true copies. In addition, the proposal states that in the event of a foodborne illness outbreak, a product recall, or other threat to public health, the FDA could require that firms submit, within 24 hours, an electronic sortable spreadsheet containing relevant traceability information for specific foods and date ranges. More generally, the FDA encourages all food businesses to maintain their traceability records electronically whenever possible, to expedite the identification of traceability information when needed to address threats to public health.

The requirements of the proposed rule would only apply to foods that are on the FTL, which includes foods that have listed foods as ingredients. The proposed rule includes several exemptions, including that the additional traceability records would not be required after a kill-step (a process that significantly minimizes pathogens in a food) is applied to a food, but documentation of the

kill-step application would have to be established and maintained.

The proposed rule and draft Food Traceability List are available for public comment for a 120 days from the date of publication. The FDA will also be holding three public meetings during the public comment period. Information about the public meetings will be provided in a forthcoming announcement.

FDA's FY 2018 Pesticide Analysis Demonstrates Consistent Trends



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration today issued its annual Pesticide Residue Monitoring Program Report for FY 2018. The Pesticide Residue Monitoring Program is administered by the FDA to ensure that FDA-regulated foods in U.S. commerce comply with the pesticide tolerances, or maximum residue levels, set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The agency tested for a total of 809 pesticides and industrial chemicals across

4,896 domestic and imported food samples collected in FY 2018 between October 1, 2017 and September 30, 2018 under the residue monitoring program. Of the samples tested, 4,404 were human foods and 492 were animal foods. In FY 2018, the majority of samples tested were in compliance with the tolerances set by the EPA.

Of the 1,448 domestic human food samples analyzed, 96.8% were in compliance and 47.1% had no detectable residues. Of the 2,956 human food import samples analyzed, 87.1% were in compliance and 47.2% had no detectable residues. The violation rate (12.9%) for imported human foods sampled was slightly higher than in previous years (FY 2012-2017), due in part to a higher violation rate for cilantro and radishes, which were targeted for increased sampling based on previous findings.

Of the 264 domestic animal food samples analyzed, 96.2% were in compliance and 39.8% had no detectable residues; and of the 228 imported animal food samples analyzed, 96.5% were in compliance and 50% had no detectable residues.

Growers often use pesticides to protect their products from insects, weeds, fungi, and other pests. Trace amounts of pesticides, or pesticide chemical residues, may remain in or on some foods. The role of the FDA is to ensure that pesticide chemical residues in or on foods comply with the limits (tolerances) established by the EPA based on the applicable federal safety standard. Samples are considered violative if:

- They contain a pesticide chemical residue above an existing EPA tolerance; or
- They contain a pesticide chemical residue for which the EPA has not established a tolerance or a tolerance exemption for the specific

pesticide/commodity combination

The FDA's Pesticide Residue Monitoring Program employs a three-fold strategy to enforce EPA's pesticide tolerances in human and animal foods. The program selectively monitors a broad range of domestic and import commodities for residues of over 800 different pesticides and selected industrial compounds. The FDA may also carry out focused sampling surveys for specific commodities or selected pesticides of special interest. In addition, the FDA monitors the levels of pesticide chemical residues in foods prepared for consumption in its Total Diet Study (TDS), an ongoing program that monitors contaminants and nutrients in the average U.S. diet.

In 2018, the FDA expanded testing of glyphosate and certain acid herbicides to the full range of commodities in the sampling scope. Testing for glyphosate, glufosinate, and selected acid herbicides is now part of FDA's routine regulatory monitoring program.

Starting with the FY 2018 results, the FDA stopped including TDS pesticide results in the annual Pesticide Residue Monitoring Program Report. TDS pesticide results from FY 2018 on will be posted on the FDA's TDS website, along with additional information about the history and design of the TDS.

In FY 2018, the FDA conducted a focused field assignment to analyze pesticide levels in animal derived foods ("Domestically Produced Animal-Derived Foods" assignment). For this field assignment the FDA collected and analyzed 215 samples including 99 whole milk, 69 shell eggs, 36 honey, and 11 game meat samples. No violative pesticide residues were found in any of the animal-derived food commodities. Residues of five pesticide chemicals were found in domestic honey, mostly at trace levels.

The FDA takes very seriously the responsibility it shares with the EPA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to keep foods free of unsafe levels of pesticide chemical residues. The findings in this report demonstrate that levels of pesticide chemical residues measured by the FDA generally are below EPA's tolerances, and therefore at levels that are not concerning for public health.

Germany part of resurgent hepatitis A outbreak

The resurgence of a hepatitis A outbreak linked to strawberries underlines the importance of complete traceback of implicated products during outbreaks, according to researchers.

Following outbreaks linked to frozen strawberries in Sweden and Austria in 2018, 65 cases of the same hepatitis A virus (HAV) strain were detected in Germany between October 2018 and January 2020.

The HAV subgenotype IB strain caused outbreaks in Sweden from June to July and Austria from July to September 2018, affecting 20 people in Sweden and 14 in Austria. In Sweden, the outbreak strain was detected in frozen strawberries and the contaminated batch was withdrawn from sale. Traceback investigations from Sweden and Austria identified a Polish producer as the source for implicated frozen strawberries.

German outbreak

Shortly afterward, cases with the identical virus sequence appeared in Germany. The Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) and all federal public health authorities were informed by the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) and sequencing of samples from hepatitis A cases was intensified.

A first wave of cases started in 2018 and a second wave began in July 2019. The

first case-control study was conducted by RKI and included all 21 primary outbreak cases in Germany with disease onset in 2018 and 237 people as controls, according to the study published in Eurosurveillance.

Overall, 30 cases including 27 confirmed and three probable, from 11 states had disease onsets between Aug. 29 and Dec. 22, 2018. Of confirmed cases, three were likely secondary infections.

The second case-control study was done by the State Office for Health and Social Affairs Berlin and included the first 11 outbreak cases of the second peak in the city and 103 controls.

During the second wave, 33 cases including 31 confirmed and two probable from seven states had disease onsets between June 13 and Sept. 29, 2019. One probable and one confirmed case likely were secondary infections. Twenty were in Berlin and five from the neighboring state Brandenburg. Eight cases were notified from five other states in Germany and one person reported travel to Berlin.



Frozen strawberries from Poland or Egypt?

Of all 65 patients, the median age was 48 years with a range of 1 to 77 years old and 45 percent were female. More than three quarters of patients were hospitalized.

From interviews with 46 cases, 34 reported definite and four had possible consumption of items containing frozen strawberries. Frozen strawberry cake was the most commonly mentioned such product; 27 cases reported definite and five had possible consumption.

Of 27 people with definite consumption of such cake, 26 gave details on the type, with 25 identifying strawberry cake(s) from one brand spontaneously or in product picture-assisted recall. Some of the cakes are ready to eat after thawing and do not require oven cooking.

Trace back investigations revealed the Polish producer involved in the outbreaks in Sweden and Austria received frozen strawberries from Egypt via a German wholesaler that also delivered them to a cake manufacturer. A retention sample of frozen strawberries of that batch provided by the German distributor was negative for HAV.

Evidence needed to prompt recall

A sample of frozen strawberries from a patient in Berlin tested negative for HAV. Samples of two frozen strawberry cakes from the implicated brand also tested negative. Detection of HAV in food samples, especially berries, is known to be difficult, according to researchers.

Food authorities have not issued product recalls from the German market in relation to the outbreak. Researchers said preventive measures should not solely

rely on microbiological findings but include epidemiological evidence.

Contamination of berries can occur in various ways. The most likely route is contaminated water used for irrigation or processing of fruits. The outbreak subgenotype IB strain is similar to circulating strains in Egypt which might indicate that production and/or contamination of strawberries could have occurred in that country and not in Poland as suggested by the Swedish and Austrian investigation, according to the study.

One person had disease onset in January 2020. They likely consumed a frozen strawberry cake of the implicated brand in the incubation period as it had been bought in summer 2019. It can take months for symptoms to begin.

The Netherlands reported two cases with an identical sequence: one with disease onset in September 2018 after travel to Germany and one in May 2019. Both had eaten strawberries. Italy also had two cases in August and September 2019; both had consumed frozen berries.

“Many uncertainties remain regarding distribution routes, mechanism of contamination, role of other frozen strawberry products in the outbreak and, if one or multiple shipments were involved,” said researchers.

USDA food safety agencies announces plan to reduce Salmonella

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Office of Food Safety (OFS) and the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has a plan to decrease Salmonella, one of the leading causes of foodborne illnesses.

The Roadmap to Reducing Salmonella: Driving Change through Science-Based Policy outlines programs and policies that are science based, data driven, and promote innovation to reduce Salmonella in meat, poultry, and egg products.

“This roadmap represents FSIS’s commitment to lead with science and data in all that we do. It puts us on a course to aggressively target Salmonella and other foodborne pathogens,” said USDA’s Under Secretary for Food Safety Mindy Brashears. “I look forward to a continued partnership with the food safety community in driving a science-based approach to protecting public health.”

OFS and FSIS will discuss the Salmonella roadmap at a virtual public meeting next week. Also scheduled to participate in the meeting are the USDA’s Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The public meeting continues Under-Secretary Brashears’ vision of building relationships, influencing behavior change, and leading with science to enhance food safety.

Stakeholders are invited to participate in the public meeting and comment on the Salmonella roadmap and on the science that drives FSIS’ Salmonella reduction efforts. The public meeting has reached its capacity for oral comments. Interested parties can still submit written comments on or before Sept. 25, 2020, at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

China refuses imports from Fort Smith and Springfield poultry plants in U.S.

For the second time since June, China has suspended imports from a U.S. poultry plant where employees became infected with the coronavirus.

First to face suspension was poultry from a Tyson Foods plant in Springdale, AR, which was suspended by the Chinese government in June for similar reasons. The second such action came a few days ago when China suspended imports from an OK Foods poultry plant in Fort Smith, AR because of coronavirus cases among employees.

China, the world's top importer of meat and poultry products, has refused imports from some foreign plants in an effort to control the spread of COVID-19.

“We don't think that either one of these two are justified, especially considering the fact that the virus cannot be transmitted in poultry meat,” said Jim Sumner, president of the USA Poultry & Egg Export Council.

Imports from the OK Foods, which is owned by Mexico's Industrias Bachoco, were suspended by GACC, China's customers authority. According to USDA, the Arkansas plant became ineligible to ship products to China on Sept. 13.

The Sept. 13 suspension was included on a list of recent changes to approved meat imports published on Sept. 15 on the website of China's General Administration of Customs.

The Arkansas Department of Health reports 234 OK Foods employees were infected with the virus from the onset of the pandemic last March through Aug. 31. Currently, however, the number of active cases is less than five.

“We feel this action is very unfortunate and that it is not justified,” Sumner added., “One reason we feel it is unjustified is that we know, based on several research findings, that the virus can't be transmitted in poultry.”

Broiler exports to China in July were 34,623 tons and valued at \$57.6 million, reports USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service data.

China previously asked companies to sign and provide letters attesting that China's products are not a risk for COVID-19. The US Department of Agriculture advises companies not to sign such letters or give a statement.

“It is important to note that the World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USDA and the US Food and Drug Administration

agree that there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food,” said Gary Mickelson, a spokesperson with Tyson regarding the ban on its poultry.

“At Tyson, we're confident our products are safe and we're hopeful consultations between the US and Chinese governments will resolve this matter,” he said.

China in 2019 lifted a four-year ban on poultry from 172 US-based plants that began in response to a 2015 outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) resulting in the culling of 50 million birds in the United States. The United States was confirmed HPAI-free in 2017.

NSW agency releases annual food testing figures



More than 4,000 samples were taken during efforts to investigate outbreaks, according to an Australian state's annual food testing report for 2018 and 2019.

The New South Wales (NSW) Food Authority reported 4,010 food and environmental samples were submitted for testing between July 2018 and June 2019 as part of foodborne illness investigations, compared to 591 samples between July 2016 and June 2017.

One example described in the latest report was an increase in Salmonella Enteritidis cases since mid-2018. More than 100 locally produced, imported foods and environmental samples were tested for Salmonella, including fresh and dried vegetables, seafood, spices, egg-containing foods, nuts and eggs. Environmental tests were swabs, stock feed, water, and poultry fecal samples as well as eggs.

During the investigation, another 2,072 samples from egg primary production companies were tested, including eggs and environmental samples. Salmonella Enteritidis was found on 13 properties in NSW and one in Victoria interconnected by movements of people, eggs or equipment. It was detected in NSW poultry for the first time in September 2018. More than 220 illnesses were reported in Australia including 193 in NSW linked to the outbreak.

Salmonella and eggs

The NSW Department of Primary Industries increased surveillance and monitoring at egg farms and issued biosecurity directions to certain properties, including quarantining them to prevent movement of eggs into the market.

Other actions included farm depopulation, decontamination and disinfection. The Biosecurity (Salmonella Enteritidis) Control Order was issued in August 2019 to assist in raising long term biosecurity standards. Surveillance and monitoring at egg farms was set to continue in 2020.

Meanwhile, Salmonella Typhimurium cases plateaued or rose slightly in 2018-19.

Much of this was linked to one egg farm, which was the source of 20 percent of all such cases in NSW, according to the report. Several visits detected the same type of Salmonella Typhimurium linked to the human cluster. Illness was not helped by poor handling of eggs in some businesses, including failure to clean and sanitize surfaces or equipment, and use of raw egg products.

The farm implemented additional cleaning and sanitizing of farm grading equipment and is looking at vaccinating birds to reduce Salmonella Typhimurium. These measures appear to have been successful, with a decrease in this type of salmonellosis cases in NSW.

RTE food and chicken sampling

DTS Food Assurance is the primary testing provider. Between July 2018 and June 2019, 6,431 samples were submitted for testing: 5,438 to DTS where 10,756 individual tests were conducted and 993 samples to other laboratories.

Other work saw 162 ready-to-eat food samples randomly collected from 71 businesses and tested. Three products from three manufacturers were non-compliant as two samples of soft cheese contained E. coli greater than the regulatory limit of 10 colony forming units per gram (cfu/g). One gelato had E. coli above this limit. Follow-up actions included inspections from the Food Authority, re-sampling of product for analysis and ongoing compliance activities.

In total 196 whole chickens and chicken portions were collected from processing plants and 312 chicken portions from retail outlets. At processing plants, Salmonella was detected in 21.4 percent of samples and Campylobacter was found in 86.7 percent of samples. At retail, 25.8 percent of samples tested positive for Salmonella and Campylobacter was detected in 89.9 percent of samples.

A retail survey looked at if and how *Campylobacter* is transferred to ready-to-eat (RTE) products. It involved 22 councils, 169 retail food premises with 593 swabs taken and 281 food samples analyzed. Of 258 RTE chicken and pate samples, two were contaminated with *Campylobacter* at less than 100 cfu/g. A further 11 samples contained *E. coli* at 3 to 93 most probable number per gram (MPN/g).

Checks during audits and for *Listeria* in melon

During the 2018 to 2019 fiscal year, 76 samples of pipis, a type of edible clam, were tested for three main algal toxin groups: amnesic shellfish toxin, paralytic shellfish toxins, and diarrhetic shellfish toxins found in NSW coastal waters. Of these, diarrhetic shellfish toxins were detected in 13 samples. The Algal biotoxins in wild harvest shellfish project is planned to continue into 2019-2020.

Samples taken during audits are usually raw meat that have failed a field test for sulphur dioxide (SO₂), which is not permitted in this product. Between July 2018 and June 2019, 1,598 audits of licensed retail meat businesses were conducted and 31 samples of raw meat from 14 butchers were tested for SO₂ after positive field tests. Twenty-eight of these from 13 butchers were positive, with values ranging from 13 to 3,600 mg/kg.

Another project was a review of *Listeria* in rockmelon, also called cantaloupe, packhouses and melons. More than 940 melon and environmental samples were collected to monitor prevalence of *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Salmonella*, and standard plate count pre- and post-wash. Only one sample was positive for *Listeria monocytogenes*, which was a boot swab taken from a dis-used cool room. The only *Salmonella* detected was in untreated water.

Judge leaves USDA to decide on ‘Product of USA,’ but FTC might lend a hand on the labels



The latest attempt to force the USDA to reinstate country of origin labeling (COOL) rules fell short. A federal judge in New Mexico granted motions on Aug. 27 by defendants Tyson Foods Inc., Cargill Meat Solutions, JBS USA, and National Beef Packing Co., to dismiss the two consolidated cases involving the long-fought COOL issue.

USDA enacted COOL rules in 2013 that required meat to be labeled with where an animal was born, raised, and slaughtered. Canada and Mexico claimed they were harmed economically by the COOL labeling scheme and challenged the USDA rule before the World Trade Organization (WTO) and won. The WTO's ruling permitted Canada and Mexico to impose billions in punitive tariffs unless the United States repealed the COOL rule.

By late 2015, Congress folded by eliminating COOL, and the USDA watered down its labeling requirements to Canada's and Mexico's liking. Critics say meat sold under "Product of USA" labels routinely includes foreign product. That's because the "Product of the USA" label can be used if the product is processed in the United States even if it is of foreign origin.

The consolidated cases that the judge tossed united cattle producers and consumers in claiming "Product of USA" labeling amounts to fraudulent and misleading practice because cattle raised in a foreign country and imported for slaughter and processing can qualify for the label, fooling consumers.

The judge, however, did not see it that way and found the governing statute for labeling leaves the matter within the USDA's jurisdiction. And, the judge ruled the USDA is within its authority of regulated country-of-origin labeling and it was not necessary to determine if that labeling might be misleading.

The plaintiffs are reviewing their prospects for appeal. The USDA is also planning on rulemaking that might result in a tougher standard for use of a "Product of USA" labeling standard.

Also, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is currently accepting comments through Sept.14 on its proposed "Made in USA Labeling Rule."

The FTC wants to strengthen "Made in USA" labeling requirements to reserve the USA label only for products in which, among other things, all significant processing that goes into the product occurs in the United States, and all or virtually all ingredients of the product are made and sourced in the United States.

The FTC is specifically seeking public comments on whether there are any current statutes, rules, or policies that may conflict with the the commission's

proposal.

It appears to set up a conflict between the USDA and the FTC. The FTC wants to ensure that only products actually made in the USA bear a "Made in the USA" label, while the USDA policy that says a foreign beef product that enters the USA and is subject to only minor processing, such as being taken out of a big box and packaged in smaller boxes, can bear a "Product of USA" label.

USDA puts inspectors on egg "patrol" and gives egg producers more flexibility



Federal egg inspections are getting an update for the first time in 50 years, according to USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS).

The new egg inspection rule will take effect at 83 USDA-inspected eggplants as soon it is published in the Federal Register.

Egg producers, under the new rule, will be able to use food safety procedures designed to accommodate their specific plant and equipment.

The change was carried forward from its first roll out in 2018 by the Trump administration. It comes as egg producers are trying to recover from the losses they experienced during the pandemic. Consumer advocates throughout have complained about the changes over their food safety concerns.

Production of egg substitutes, which previously were regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), will now fall under USDA oversight. FSIS inspectors will make one visit during each shift rather than being on-site whenever eggs are being processed.

The egg inspection changes are part of the FSIS modernization program already implemented for poultry and swine.

“We feel very confident that, based on the once per shift that we have them there, we’ll still be able to verify that they’re producing safe products,” says FSIS Administrator Paul Kiecker. He says FSIS personnel will “patrol” multiple plants daily.

Some consumer groups question whether a patrol system will be effective as a continuous inspection. Kiecker says the change will use inspectors more effectively. Egg producers will be responsible for implementing plans for sanitation and food safety management systems known as Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points.

HACCP planning puts more responsibility on egg producers to ensure they are producing safe products, according to the FSIS Administrator.

USDA said the changes in egg products inspection methods are the first since

Congress passed the Egg Products Inspection Act (EPIA) in 1970. The Egg Products Inspection Regulations final rule aligns the egg products regulations to be consistent with current requirements in the meat and poultry products inspection regulations.

“Requiring egg product plants to develop food safety systems and procedures similar to meat and poultry requirements is a significant milestone in modernizing our inspection system,” said Kiecker. “FSIS is continuing to carry out its public health mission to prevent foodborne illness.”

Under the new rule, federally inspected egg products plants are required to develop and implement Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) systems and Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs). FSIS will continue to test for Salmonella and Listeria monocytogenes (Lm) in egg products. FSIS requires that plants produce egg products that meet food safety standards and are edible without additional preparation and nothing in the final rule changes those requirements.

Under the HACCP system, plants will be able to tailor a food safety system that best fits their particular facility and equipment. Furthermore, by removing prescriptive regulations, egg products plants will have the flexibility and the incentive to innovate new means to achieve enhanced food safety.

In addition, FSIS will be assuming regulatory authority over egg substitutes and freeze-dried egg products, which pose the same risk as egg products and will be inspected in the same manner, enhancing the existing food safety system.

The agency has also realigned the regulations governing the importation and inspection of foreign egg products more closely with the regulations governing the importation of foreign meat and poultry products. FSIS will notify foreign

countries of the regulatory changes. Countries that have ongoing equivalence and most countries that have requested initial equivalence for egg products already have HACCP implemented for egg products for their domestic products.

Survey identifies main food safety concerns for consumers



Six in 10 people said they would never go to a restaurant again if they contracted a foodborne illness while eating there, according to a survey.

Surveyed consumers said their top food safety concerns included restaurant kitchen and wait staff hygiene, foodborne outbreaks, illness from contaminated food, and recalls.

Findings come from the food safety supply chain vision study by Zebra Technologies. It details the views of consumers and food and beverage

companies on safety, traceability and transparency.

Slightly more than 80 percent of consumers said companies have an important role to play in food safety and an ethical responsibility to ensure safe handling of food. Seventy percent of consumers said it is important to know how their food and ingredients are manufactured, prepared, and handled.

Less than a quarter of consumers said they have complete confidence in the safety of their food, based on information currently available to them. An average of 20 percent of consumers place complete trust in companies and brands to ensure food safety compared to 37 percent of industry representatives, who are reportedly more informed.

North American highlights

The survey included 4,957 consumers and 462 food and beverage firms from 15 countries in the manufacturing, transportation and logistics, retail and wholesale distribution markets in North America, Latin America, Asia-Pacific and Europe. They were interviewed in January 2020 by Azure Knowledge Corporation.

In North America, almost two thirds of consumers cited fear of foodborne illness as the primary reason for wanting more information about their food source. The average trust level in companies and brands to ensure food and beverages are safe is higher in industry decision-makers (45 percent) than consumers (18 percent).

Almost seven in 10 industry representatives said the sector is prepared to manage food traceability and transparency, but only 35 percent of consumers agree. Only 13 percent of the public felt industry was extremely prepared today to manage traceability and be transparent about how food goes through the supply chain, whereas 27 percent of decision-makers reported feeling this way.

Half of surveyed decision-makers said meeting consumer expectations will remain a challenge in the next five years.

“Findings from our study show that while the industry is taking measures to ensure a more transparent supply chain, more work needs to be done in order to increase consumer confidence and improve food traceability. Businesses naturally have more information available to them but can improve consumers’ faith in their food sources by providing them access to the same information,” said Mark Wheeler, director of supply chain solutions at Zebra Technologies.

Regional reaction

Businesses in Latin America take food safety and transparency more seriously, while attitudes around the value of technology to food safety are more relaxed in Europe.

Seventy-nine percent of consumers in Latin America reported having access to accurate information about where their food came from was important. Almost nine in 10 cited restaurant kitchen staff hygiene as their top concern for food-related issues.

In Europe, only 15 percent of surveyed consumers completely trust food and beverage distributors to ensure products are safe for consumption. More than six in 10 listed a foodborne outbreak as their top concern for food-related issues.

Nearly three-quarters of consumers in Asia Pacific listed illness and death caused by contamination as their biggest concern for risks posed by the food supply chain.

FDA flexes FSMA permanent injunction muscles for the first time



More than two years after sending a warning letter to the firm — and more than nine years after gaining the power to do so — the FDA has today, for the first time, issued a consent decree of permanent injunction against a firm and grower for violating public safety standards under the Produce Safety Rule.

The action regarding Fortune Food Product Inc., an Illinois-based processor of sprouts and soy products, involves violations of the sprouts portion of the Produce Safety Rule, which is part of the 2011 Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).

“This action also follows several inspections conducted by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration), which found that the company failed to comply with Produce Safety and Current Good Manufacturing Practice regulations. In July 2018, the FDA sent a warning letter outlining food safety violations,” according

to today's announcement regarding the consent decree.

U.S. District Judge John Robert Blakey in the Northern District of Illinois entered the consent decree of permanent injunction, on Sept.15, between the United States and Fortune Food Product Inc., its majority owner Steven Seeto and its supervisor Tiffany Jiang.

The consent decree prohibits the defendants from growing, harvesting, packing, and holding sprouts and soy products at or from their facility, or any other facility until certain requirements are met. The consent decree requires the defendants to, among other things, take corrective actions and notify the FDA before operations may resume.

In the formal complaint against the business, the U.S. Department of Justice said the FDA staff conducted multiple inspections. They documented unsanitary conditions showing that sprouts and soy products may have become contaminated with filth or may have been rendered injurious to health.

“The action marks the first consent decree of permanent injunction against a firm or grower for violating public safety standards under the Produce Safety Rule enacted under the Food Safety Modernization Act of 2011,” according to the FDA statement.

The sprout specific portion of the Produce Safety Rule requires certain sprout operations to take measures to prevent the introduction of dangerous microbes into seeds or beans used for sprouting. They must also test spent sprout irrigation water or, in some cases, in-process sprouts for the presence of certain pathogens; test the growing, harvesting, packing, and holding environment for the presence of the *Listeria* species or *Listeria monocytogenes*; and take corrective actions when needed.

No confirmed illnesses related to Fortune Food's products have been reported to the FDA. Consumers who think they may have been sickened by these products should seek the assistance of a health care professional and contact the FDA to report problems with this or any FDA-regulated product.

About *Listeria* infections

Food contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes* may not look or smell spoiled but can still cause serious and sometimes life-threatening infections. Anyone who has eaten any of the implicated products and developed symptoms of *Listeria* infection should seek medical treatment and tell their doctors about the possible *Listeria* exposure.

Also, anyone who has eaten any of the recalled products should monitor themselves for symptoms during the coming weeks because it can take up to 70 days after exposure to *Listeria* for symptoms of listeriosis to develop.

Symptoms of *Listeria* infection can include vomiting, nausea, persistent fever, muscle aches, severe headache, and neck stiffness. Specific laboratory tests are required to diagnose *Listeria* infections, which can mimic other illnesses.

Pregnant women, the elderly, young children, and people such as cancer patients who have weakened immune systems are particularly at risk of serious illnesses, life-threatening infections, and other complications. Although infected pregnant women may experience only mild, flu-like symptoms, their infections can lead to premature delivery, infection of the newborn, or even stillbirth.

MARKET NEWS

Safety Alerts

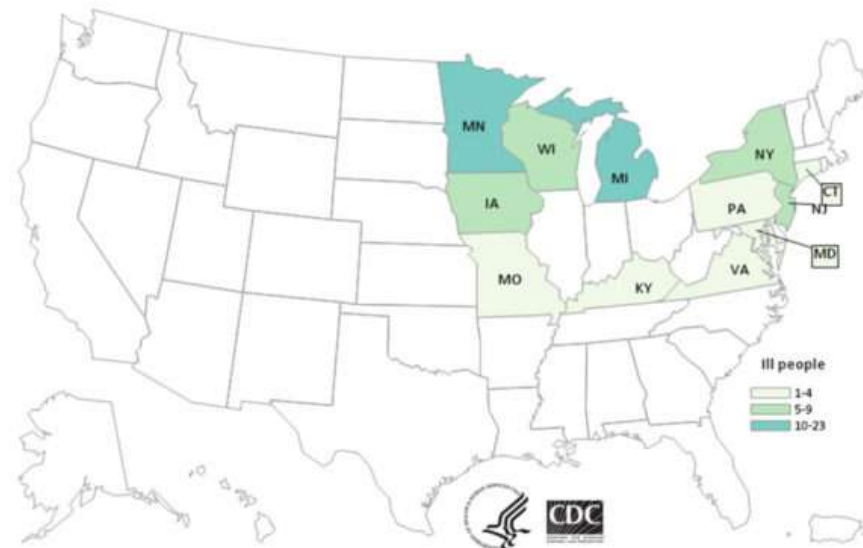
Date	Brand Name(s)	Product Description	Product Type	Recall Reason Description	Company Name
09/23/2020	Shirakiku	Dried Fungus (also known as Black Fungus or Kikurage)	Food & Beverages,	Product has the potential to be contaminated with Salmonella	Wismettac Asian Foods, Inc.
09/21/2020	Homestead Creamery	Chocolate Ice Cream	Food & Beverages,	Undeclared pecans	Homestead Creamer
09/21/2020	Trader Joe's	Southwest Style Sweet Potato Saute Bowl	Food & Beverages, Allergens, Prepared Food	Undeclared milk and egg	GHSW, LLC
09/11/2020	Goodie Girl	Goodie Girl GF Magical Animal Crackers	Food & Beverages, Allergens, Snack Food Item	May Contain Undeclared Wheat	Goodie Girl Tribeca LLC
09/10/2020	Pretty Thai	Pretty Thai Sweat Chili Sauce	Food & Beverages,	May contain Pretty Thai Peanut Sauce	Pretty Thai
09/03/2020	Fresco	Ancient Grain Jackfruit Bowl	Food & Beverages,	Due to undeclared fish	Fresco Foods, Inc.
09/02/2020	Family Pet, Heartland Farms, Paws Happy Life	Dog Food	Animal & Veterinary, Food & Beverages, Pet Food, Ingredients	Elevated levels of aflatoxin	Sunshine Mills, Inc.
08/28/2020	Signature Select	Chewy Granola Bars - Chocolate Chip	Food & Beverages, Allergens, Snack Food Item	Undeclared peanuts	TreeHouse Foods, Inc.
08/26/2020	Schaws Sauce	Sweet and Sassy Barbecue and Basting Sauce & Sweet with Heat Barbecue and Basting Sauce	Food & Beverages,	Undeclared soy and anchovies	Schaws Sauce
08/26/2020	Ronzoni	Smart Taste Extra Wide Noodle	Food & Beverages,	Undeclared egg.	RIVIANA FOODS INC.
08/26/2020	Back to Nature	Organic Rosemary & Olive Oil Stoneground Wheat Crackers	Food & Beverages,	Undeclared milk	B&G Foods

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08/25/2020	Hostess	Raspberry Zingers	Food & Beverages,	Potential to contain mold	Hostess Brands LLC
08/25/2020	Crazy Fresh and Quick & Easy an Unbranded and Bountiful Fresh gift baskets	Peach Salsa and Gift Baskets	Food & Beverages,	Potential for Salmonella contamination	Russ Davis Wholesale
08/24/2020	Lay's	Lay's Barbecue Flavored Potato Chips	Food & Beverages, Allergens, Snack Food Item	Product may contain undeclared milk.	Frito-Lay North America
08/24/2020	Nature's Menu	Nature's Menu Super Premium Dog Food with a Blend of Real Chicken & Quail	Animal & Veterinary, Food & Beverages, Pet Food	Salmonella	Sunshine Mills, Inc.

Enterprise News

U.S. company shipped peaches around the globe; Salmonella outbreak ongoing



A California fruit company shipped peaches, now linked to a Salmonella Enteritidis outbreak in the U.S. and Canada, to at least 14 other countries around the world.

The fresh peaches shipped by Wawona Packing Co. and Prima Wawona were distributed in bags and in bulk bins, according to an update from the Food and Drug Administration.

“Information received by FDA indicates that recalled Wawona peaches were shipped to foreign consignees in Australia, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El

Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, and the United Arab Emirates,” according to the update.

“FDA is sharing distribution information directly with foreign food safety authorities in these jurisdictions.”

At least two countries have issued recall alerts for the peaches — New Zealand and Singapore.

In the update the FDA renewed its warning to consumers about the California peaches. Recalled bagged peaches packed or supplied by Prima Wawona from June 1 to Aug. 19 should not be eaten and should be thrown away. Recalled loose/bulk peaches packed or supplied by Prima Wawona from June 1 to Aug. 3 should not be eaten and should be thrown away. Consumers and retailers who cannot determine whether the peaches they have on hand are included in the recall are urged to discard them.

The outbreaks in the United States and Canada have sickened 111 people, 78 in the U.S. and 33 in Canada.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports the outbreak illnesses began on dates ranging from June 9 through Aug. 3. Ill people range in age from 1 to 92 years old. Some illnesses might not yet be reported because of the time it takes between when a person becomes ill and when the illness is laboratory confirmed and reported to the CDC. This takes an average of two to four weeks.

About Salmonella infections

Food contaminated with Salmonella bacteria does not usually look, smell, or taste spoiled. Anyone can become sick with a Salmonella infection. Infants, children, seniors, and people with weakened immune systems are at higher risk

of serious illness because their immune systems are fragile, according to the CDC.

Anyone who has eaten any recalled products and developed symptoms of Salmonella infection should seek medical attention. Sick people should tell their doctors about the possible exposure to Salmonella bacteria because special tests are necessary to diagnose salmonellosis. Salmonella infection symptoms can mimic other illnesses, frequently leading to misdiagnosis.

Symptoms of Salmonella infection can include diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and fever within 12 to 72 hours after eating contaminated food. Otherwise, healthy adults are usually sick for four to seven days. In some cases, however, diarrhea may be so severe that patients require hospitalization.

Older adults, children, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems, such as cancer patients, are more likely to develop a severe illness and serious, sometimes life-threatening conditions.

Salmonella concerns prompt recall of organic microgreens

A Canadian company is recalling organic microgreens because of possible contamination with Salmonella, according to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

The agency is urging consumers to check their homes for the Picoudi brand microgreens and immediately discard them if they have them on hand. The company Les Jardins Picoudi shipped the implicated sprouts to Quebec and New Brunswick, according to the recall notice.

Inspectors from the CFIA as well as staff from the Quebec agriculture department (MAPAQ) are investigating the situation in search of the source of

the contamination.

“This recall was triggered by MAPAQ. A food safety investigation is being conducted. If other high-risk products are recalled, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) will notify the public through updated food recall warnings,” according to the recall notice.

“The CFIA is verifying that industry is removing the recalled products from the marketplace. There have been no reported illnesses associated with the consumption of these products.

The recalled microgreens are:

Brand	Product	Size	UPC	Codes
Picoudi	Organic Broccoli Microgreens	35 g	8 13526 00001 6	3 233
Picoudi	Organic Broccoli Microgreens	75 g	8 13526 00011 5	3 233
Picoudi	Organic Arugula Microgreens	35 g	8 13526 00006 1	3 233
Picoudi	Organic Arugula Microgreens	75 g	8 13526 00016 0	3 233

Brand	Product	Size	UPC	Codes
Picoudi	Organic Coriander Microgreens	35 g	8 13526 00005 4	3 233
Picoudi	Organic Coriander Microgreens	75 g	8 13526 00015 3	3 233

Possible Listeria contamination prompts recall of squash noodle medley

Giant Food is recalling Giant Food brand squash noodle medley because of possible Listeria contamination.

The product was sold in stores from Aug. 8 – 19. Giant Food officials encourage customers who may have purchased the product not to consume it.

The recalled product is:

UPC #68826718585 with an Aug. 19 “best enjoyed by” date.

Giant removed the product from stores after being notified by the supplier that a regulatory sample of the product tested positive for Listeria. Giant did not report what supplier or ingredient is involved.

Again, customers who purchased the affected product should not consume it and may return it to their local Giant Food store for a full refund. Customers may

also contact Giant Food's Customer Support Center at 888-469-4426.

About Listeria infections

Food contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes* may not look or smell spoiled but can still cause serious and sometimes life-threatening infections. Anyone who has eaten any of the recalled products and developed symptoms of Listeria infection should seek medical treatment and tell their doctors about the possible Listeria exposure.

Also, anyone who has eaten any of the recalled product should monitor themselves for symptoms during the coming weeks because it can take up to 70 days after exposure to Listeria for symptoms of listeriosis to develop.

Symptoms of Listeria infection can include vomiting, nausea, persistent fever, muscle aches, severe headache and neck stiffness. Specific laboratory tests are required to diagnose Listeria infections, which can mimic other illnesses.

Pregnant women, the elderly, young children, and people such as cancer patients who have weakened immune systems are particularly at risk of serious illnesses, life-threatening infections and other complications. Although infected pregnant women may experience only mild, flu-like symptoms, their infections can lead to premature delivery, infection of the newborn or even stillbirth.

Salmonella finding prompts recall of dried, imported, edible fungus

A California company has initiated a recall for imported dried fungus because state officials found Salmonella in the food product.

Wismettac Asian Foods Inc., Santa Fe Springs, CA, is recalling Shirakiku brand imported dried fungus, also known as black fungus or kikurage, from restaurants in 31 states, the District of Columbia and one Canadian province.



The recall comes following the California Department of Public Health's discovery of the presence of Salmonella in the product. The manufacturer has been made aware of the issue, and is conducting an investigation to determine the cause of the issue so corrections can be implemented, according to a recall notice posted by the Food and Drug Administration.

Officials with Wismettac Asian Foods Inc. reported distributing the fungus to restaurants in Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Washington DC, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin and British Columbia in Canada.

Item	Item	Pack	UPC	Product	Lot	Package
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MARKET NEWS

Number	Description	Size	Code	Code	Photo
#60403	BLACK FUNGUS (KIKURAGE) 5LB	5 LB	00074410 604035	All Lots with Item #60403 on the package	Click here

Beyond Meat to open production facility in China

Beyond Meat will become the first multinational plant-based meat producer to bring a major production facility into China.

The Californian company's wholly-owned Chinese subsidiary has inked an agreement with Jiaying Economic & Technological Development Zone (JXEDZ) to design and develop manufacturing facilities in the JXEDZ.

This included a state-of-the-art production facility to manufacture plant-based meat products including beef, pork and chicken under the Beyond Meat brand in China.

The production facilities will be located in the JXEDZ, a historic and commercially important development zone with ready access to Shanghai.

“China is one of the world's largest markets for animal-based meat products, and potentially for plant-based meat,” said Ethan Brown, CEO and founder of Beyond Meat.

“We are delighted and confident that after several months of productive and

collaborative discussions, we will partner with the JXEDZ to develop two production facilities, including one of the world's largest and technologically advanced plant-based meat factories.

Candy Chan, General Manager for Beyond Meat in China, added: “With its expertise in the food industry, proximity to Shanghai, and excellent logistics and people capabilities, the JXEDZ will be the perfect partner and location for our ambitious plans for the China market.”

Work is ongoing on the project, and trial production is expected to commence within months with full scale production in early 2021.

MARKET NEWS - REPLY

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