



Release No. 0304.10

Contact:  
Catherine Cochran (202) 720-9113

## **USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service Announces Public Meetings to Gather Input on New Draft Validation Guidance**

WASHINGTON, June 4, 2010 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) today announced it will hold a series of public meetings to discuss and receive public input on the Agency's draft proposed guidance concerning Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) Validation. FSIS made a preliminary draft of the validation guidance available in March in order to hear from the public earlier in the guidance development process, as requested by a number of stakeholders. The guidance does not create any new requirements on establishments, but rather clarifies existing requirements and provides direction on how processors, especially small processors, can meet them.

"USDA is deeply committed to enhancing food safety in a way that supports small processors," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "FSIS' transparent and open process for developing this guidance is designed to ensure that the agency can effectively help establishments of all sizes improve the safety of their products and reduce the incidence of foodborne illness."

The series will kick off with the first public meeting being held from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on June 14, 2010, in the USDA South Building, Jefferson Auditorium, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250.

Comments on the preliminary draft are due June 19th. FSIS will review the public comments on the preliminary guidance, and then announce an updated draft document in the Federal Register in July for a second round of comments. As part of the second comment period, FSIS will hold two additional public meetings. Each meeting will include presentations, a question and answer period, and a public comment period.

"The guidance is being created to help establishments understand existing requirements, and they do not impose new testing or microbiological requirements on establishments," said FSIS Administrator Al Almanza. "By receiving public input, we can ensure the guidance is helpful to plant owners and operators."

The preliminary draft guidance and more information on validation are available on the FSIS website at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/HACCP\\_Validation/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/HACCP_Validation/index.asp). FSIS encourages establishments and the public to submit comments by June 19, 2010 to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Room 2-2127, George Washington Carver Center, 5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Mailstop 5474, Beltsville, MD 20705-5474.

FSIS will issue a press release with the details on the second and third public meetings once they are finalized.

Pre-registration for these meetings is encouraged. To pre-register, access the FSIS website at [www.fsis.usda.gov/News/Meetings\\_&\\_Events](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News/Meetings_&_Events). Please indicate interest in providing public comment on the registration form. For any additional information regarding the registration process, contact Sheila Johnson, Congressional and Public Affairs Office, at 202-690-6498 or by email at [Sheila.Johnson@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:Sheila.Johnson@fsis.usda.gov)