



News Release

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April 12, 2010

FSIS Extends The Comment Period on Draft Compliance Guide on HACCP Systems Validation 60 Days Making the Deadline June 19, 2010

On March 23, 2010, the American Association of Meat Processors (AAMP) respectfully requested that the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) extend the comment period regarding the draft compliance guide on HACCP systems validation that was released by the Agency through the FSIS Constituent Update (Volume 12, Issue 10) on March 19, 2010. Numerous other national meat and poultry industry trade associations submitted similar extension requests.

AAMP was concerned that the meat industry, specifically the affected group of independent very small and small processors, may not have the ability to provide constructive comments on validation guidance with such a minimal comment period initially provided. It is AAMP's hope that the meat industry will receive, review, and respond to the guidance document appropriately during the comment period.

Within the initial request to the Agency, AAMP requested that the Agency utilize its many existing avenues to communicate the availability of the document to the industry and other potentially affected groups, including the state meat inspection programs.

AAMP believed that the extension would benefit the meat industry and the Agency due to the complexity and seriousness of this issue. Offering additional time for everyone to comment will ensure that all interested parties have the ability to comment appropriately.

FSIS Administrator Alfred Almanza clarified the extension period through the FSIS Constituent Update (Volume 12, Issue 13) on April 9, 2010. The 60 day extension will begin after the original April 19, 2010 deadline, which would make the comments due by June 19, 2010. After that date, FSIS will begin its review on the comments it receives and its process of deciding how it will proceed with respect to the validation of HACCP systems.

The American Association of Meat Processors has already extensively dispersed the guidance document to AAMP members and other meat industry stakeholders. AAMP respectfully requests that you do the same with your members and other industry stakeholders.

If individuals would like to review the draft validation guidance document, it can be downloaded at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/HACCP_Validation_Ltrs.pdf. Other associated validation information can be located on AAMP's dedicated webpage for Validation of HACCP Systems at www.aamp.com/Validation.php.