



INDUSTRY NEWS

By David Meeker, APPI President

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CURRENT ASSOCIATION ISSUES

Rendering Code of Practice Equivalent Programs

APPI has examined the documented, audited HACCP program used in some Canadian plants and has determined such plants qualify for Code of Practice (COP) certification without additional third-party auditing. Plants certified in the American Feed Industry Association's Safe Feed/Safe Food program are also considered COP qualified. Equivalent plants can be listed and receive the COP certificate by sending audit documentation and \$100 for administrative costs to APPI in care of David Meeker at the NRA office

REGULATION

APHIS Plans BSE Testing

USDA's APHIS said this week it will begin a new BSE testing regime in mid-February that will obtain 40,000 samples per year, with 15,000-18,000 of those animals collected from condemned livestock at ante-mortem inspections. APHIS said there are two categories of collection points – the nation's biggest kill plants and "all other" establishments – and that sampling procedures at the big plants will not change. At other establishments, APHIS proposes to begin sampling cows condemned for central nervous system disorders (CNS), with samples taken at the plant unless other arrangements are made

Pesticide Tolerances

In a meeting with FDA to discuss a contamination event, we were given several references they use. To determine current EPA pesticide tolerances, they use this site in the electronic Code of Federal Regulations: http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=e04519c67bc8662ba88a21904de302be&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title40/40cfr180_main_02.tpl

In addition, the FDA in the early 1990s established a few enforcement action levels for several old pesticides. These pesticides had been banned for use by the EPA, but were still often found at low levels on various food and feed commodities. These pesticides are typically organochlorine insecticides that are quite persistent in the environment. The website below goes to FDA Compliance Policy Guide 575.100 and it should provide all the FDA pesticide action levels that are currently in place: http://www.fda.gov/ora/compliance_ref/cpg/cpgfod/cpg575-100.html

OTHER ISSUES

BSE Confirmed in Alberta, Canada

Yesterday, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) confirmed the diagnosis of BSE in a mature bull from Alberta. They said, “no part of the carcass entered the human food or animal feed systems. Preliminary information indicates that the age of the animal falls well within the age range of previous cases detected in Canada under the national BSE surveillance program. This signifies that the animal was exposed to a very small amount of infective material, most likely during its first year of life. An epidemiological investigation directed by international guidelines is underway to examine what the animal was fed early in its life and to identify its herdmates at the time. All findings will be publicly released once the investigation concludes. Under Canada’s enhanced feed ban, which comes into effect on July 12, 2007, BSE should be eliminated from the national cattle herd within approximately 10 years. The CFIA expects the periodic detection of a limited number of cases to continue as the level of BSE continues to decline ... The animal was identified at the farm level by the national surveillance program, which has detected all cases found in Canada. The program targets the highest risk cattle populations and has tested roughly 150,000 animals since 2003. The surveillance results reflect an extremely low incidence of BSE in Canada ...” The complete news release is posted at: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anim/heasan/disemala/bseesb/ab2007/9notavie.shtml>

A Possible Cure for vCJD

A study in mice suggests that variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD) may be reversible in its early stages. Scientists from the London-based Medical Research Council’s Prion Unit found that using gene therapy in mice reversed symptoms of the illness including changes in behavior and loss of memory. The article can be found here: <http://www.mrc.ac.uk/NewsViewsAndEvents/News/MRC003484>

Virus May Cause BSE

Researchers at Yale have discovered evidence indicating that a virus - not prions - causes BSE. A neuropathologist at Yale Medical School, said nerve cells infected with vCJD contained a virus-size particle that doesn’t appear in uninfected cells. Cells infected with sheep scrapie contained the same virus. A story in the LA Times is here: <http://www.latimes.com/news/print/edition/asection/la-sci-prion31jan31,1,4192345.story>
The study can be found in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*: <http://www.pnas.org/cgi/content/abstract/0610999104v1>

Study Highlights Milk BSE risk

Scientists working for a Swiss biotech firm say they have managed to detect prion proteins in the milk of cows, as well as that of humans, sheep and goats, for the first time, but it remained unclear whether those detected were harmful or not. In Europe, milk is the only product available for public consumption that is derived from BSE-susceptible animals over thirty months of age. The study is here: <http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=73949&m=1FPD207&c=naetztutwzxeodw>

Permanent Downer Ban Proposed

U.S. Representative Gary Ackerman (D-NY-5) and 74 cosponsors introduced the Downed Animal and Food Safety Protection Act (HR 661) January 25. If enacted, the bill would prohibit downed animals from becoming part of the human food supply. Senator Daniel Akaka (D-HI) is introducing similar legislation in the U.S. Senate. USDA implemented a temporary ban on processing downed cattle for the human food supply after the first case of BSE in 2003.

This bill would make that temporary measure permanent. It would also cover sheep, swine, goats, horses and mules.

NCBA Requests USDA to Phase Out Ethanol Subsidies

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association approved a policy urging the Bush administration to phase out government subsidies for ethanol production, to scrap the 54-cent-per-gallon tariff on imported ethanol, and to transition from corn-based to cellulosic ethanol. Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns, who attended the Cattle Industry Convention, told U.S. cattle producers that the government would encourage alternative methods of making ethanol to protect them from rising corn prices. The proposed 2007 Farm Bill recommends spending \$1.6 billion over the next 10 years on the development of cellulosic ethanol and proposes \$2.1 billion in guaranteed loans for cellulosic projects as well as construction of production plants in rural areas. A story on the NCBA action can be found here:

<http://www.meetingplace.com/MembersOnly/webNews/details.aspx?item=17339>

GAO Bashes U.S. Food Safety System

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) last Wednesday added food safety to its list of critically flawed federal programs. The list, created in 1990, informs lawmakers and their staffs on difficulties in the federal bureaucracy. GAO's director of food and agriculture issues said, "It is a collection of 15 agencies trying to administer some 30 laws, and that results in inefficient use of resources, inconsistent oversight, and overlap and duplication."

High Path AI in United Kingdom

Tests have shown that the avian flu which killed 2600 turkeys at a Suffolk farm is the H5N1 virus. The UK Food Standards Agency advises that avian flu does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers. Like the WHO, the FSA advises proper handling during food preparation. When handling raw poultry, the person involved in the food preparation should wash their hands thoroughly and clean surfaces and utensils in contact with the poultry products. Soap and hot water are sufficient for this purpose. In countries where avian flu is present in poultry, the virus may be present in meat and eggs from affected birds. Controls in place are intended to stop the spread of the disease. Even if virus is present in meat or eggs, several factors will contribute to preventing or limiting its effects on people. First, the virus is easily killed by cooking. Second, even if it is still present after cooking, the virus is destroyed by saliva and by gastric acid, as well as the fact that there are very few receptors the virus needs to enter the body in the gut. Details on the outbreak can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/255bbe>

An article on that is here:

http://www.worldpoultry.net/ts_wo/worldpoultry.portal/enc/nfpb/true/pageLabel/tsge_page_home_content/index.jsp

Small Changes Stop Flu Virus Spread

Two little changes in the virus that caused the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic stopped it from spreading from one animal to another, a finding that may help determine what will cause the next pandemic. Researchers who have been studying a reconstructed version of the 1918 virus found it very easy to stop it from spreading from one infected ferret to another -- although the altered viruses still quickly killed the animals. H5N1 currently kills more than half its human victims but in its current form does not infect people easily. It has only been passed from person to person in extremely rare instances. Scientists want to find out which mutations would make H5N1 pass easily from person to person so they can try to control or at least predict a pandemic. A report of the study is here: <http://www.news-medical.net/?id=21666>

A Cow Slips Through U.K. BSE Age Limit

Meat from cattle born or reared in the United Kingdom before August 1, 1996, cannot be put on the market, according to the United Kingdom's Food Standards Agency regulations on bovine spongiform encephalopathy. In the fourth incident since safety measures were established — the cow in question is believed to have been misidentified as being born in May 1997 at a Welsh farm, as supported by DNA test results received Jan. 16, 2007. FSA officials said the cow tested negative for BSE, and specified risk material was removed, meaning any risk to human health from eating meat from the heifer is low. A news story is here:

<http://www.meatingplace.com/MembersOnly/webNews/details.aspx?item=17302>

USDA's Farm Bill Proposal

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns recently unveiled the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2007 farm bill proposals. The more than 65 proposals correspond to the 2002 farm bill titles with additional special focus areas, including specialty crops, beginning farmers and ranchers, and socially disadvantaged producers. USDA began preparations for the 2007 farm bill in 2005 by conducting 52 Farm Bill Forums across the country. More than 4,000 comments were recorded or collected during forums and via electronic and standard mail. These comments are summarized in 41 theme papers. The Administration's 2007 farm bill proposals would spend approximately \$10 billion less than the 2002 farm bill spent over the past five years (excluding ad-hoc disaster assistance), upholding the President's plan to eliminate the deficit in five years. These savings come mainly from the commodity programs which will be very controversial. Overall, these proposals would provide approximately \$5 billion more than the projected spending if the 2002 farm bill were extended. The proposals are available at <http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>

Other Farm Bill Highlights in the USDA proposal (funding reflects ten year totals):

- * Increase conservation funding by \$7.8 billion, simplify and consolidate conservation programs, create a new Environmental Quality Incentives Program and a Regional Water Enhancement Program
- * Provide \$1.6 billion in new funding for renewable energy research, development and production, targeted for cellulosic ethanol, which will support \$2.1 billion in guaranteed loans for cellulosic projects and includes \$500 million for bio-energy and bio-based product research
- * Target nearly \$5 billion in funding to support specialty crop producers by increasing nutrition in food assistance programs, including school meals, through the purchase of fruits and vegetables, funding specialty crop research, fighting trade barriers and expanding export markets
- * Provide \$250 million to increase direct payments for beginning farmers and ranchers, reserve a percentage of conservation funds and provide more loan flexibility for down payment, land purchasing and farm operating loans
- * Support socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers by reserving a percentage of conservation assistance funds and providing more access to loans for down payments, land purchasing and farm operating
- * Strengthen disaster relief by establishing a revenue-based counter-cyclical program, providing gap coverage in crop insurance, linking crop insurance participation to farm program participation, and creating a new emergency landscape restoration program
- * Simplify and consolidate rural development programs while providing \$1.6 billion in loans to rehabilitate all current Rural Critical Access Hospitals and \$500 million in grants and loans for rural communities to decrease the backlog of rural infrastructure projects
- * Dedicate nearly \$400 million to trade efforts to expand exports, fight trade barriers, and increase involvement in world trade standard-setting bodies

* Simplify, modernize, and rename the Food Stamp Program to improve access for the working poor, better meet the needs of recipients and States, and strengthen program integrity
From this site: http://www.agweb.com/get_article.aspx?src=gennews&pageid=134166

Food Defense Plans for Meat and Poultry Plants

The USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service has posted this document on its website. FSIS says the plan was “developed in consultation with very small, small and large meat and poultry processors and that the document provides an easy, practical and achievable three-step method for creating a food defense plan ... Food defense is not the same as food safety. Food defense focuses on protecting the food supply from intentional contamination, with a variety of chemicals, biological agents or other harmful substances by people who want to do us harm ... Food safety addresses the accidental contamination of food products during processing or storage by biological, chemical or physical hazards ...” The resources for small meat plants is here http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Small_Very_Small_Plant_Outreach/index.asp

Copper Alloys Surfaces Touted as Pathogen Killers

Three types of alloy surfaces containing at least 90 per cent copper completely eliminate E. coli O157:H7, according to a UK study of the pathogen-killing properties of the metal. The study could counter a current trend in the food processing sector to use equipment made of stainless steel in their plants. Stainless steel is believed to be easier to clean and does not corrode as easily as copper under the frequent chemical cleanings needed to remove harmful pathogens, but copper alloys are proven to have significant disinfection ability at both room and refrigerated temperatures. The article can be found here: <http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=73977&m=1FPD207&c=naetzutwzxeodw>

Survey Finds Strong Public Support for Science

According to a recent poll commissioned by Research!America, more than half of Americans (52%) don't believe the U.S. is performing well in science and math education compared to other nations, but they know science is very important (85%). Most (87%) rate being a scientist as one of the most prestigious careers, yet 75% can't name a living scientist. Sixty-four percent don't think average Americans are knowledgeable about science, and 76% think it is very important that young people are encouraged to pursue scientific careers, and that more opportunities for these careers are created. The poll also found that nearly all (97%) think it is important that the U.S. be a global leader in scientific research. Most (97%) also believe scientific research is important to the U.S. economy, as are the biotech and pharmaceutical industries specifically (94%). Ninety-four percent also say investing in scientific research is important in terms of job creation and higher incomes.

United States Climate Action Partnership

The Pew Center on Global Climate Change is a founding member of the United States Climate Action Partnership (USCAP). USCAP is a new alliance of major businesses and leading climate and environmental groups that have come together to call on the federal government to enact legislation requiring significant reductions of greenhouse gas emissions. Details: <http://ealert.pewclimate.org/ctt.asp?u=436317&l=136216>