

USDA response to Heavy Table article

6/10/10

Hi Angelique –

The USDA's Office of Communications asked me to provide you with a statement from the Department's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) regarding the HACCP validation guidance.

We also issued a press release on 06/04/10 announcing a June 19th public meeting on HACCP validation -- the first in a series of meetings. Here's a link to the release: <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=2010/06/0304.xml>]

Here is our statement on HACCP validation guidance:

“USDA is deeply committed to enhancing food safety in a way that supports small processors and the growing consumer demand for locally produced meats. We have taken a number of steps to expand opportunities for local processing, including issuing compliance guides for mobile processing units and offering webinars to help support on-farm processing.

“As part of our overall food safety strategy, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) recently released the HACCP Validation draft guidance. The guidance was created to help establishments understand an existing food safety requirement that directs establishments to assess whether its food safety processes are functioning to produce safe food. The guidance document does not impose any additional requirements, and its purpose is to help establishments comply with existing requirements.

“FSIS published this draft document in order to hear from the public and we welcome comments to the draft guidance. The draft guidance is easily available on the FSIS website. FSIS will be sending a letter and Q&A document to all establishments this month to clarify questions from the document, along with a copy of the draft compliance guide. We are encouraging establishments to submit comments by the June 19th deadline to: Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Room 2-2127, George Washington Carver Center, 5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Mailstop 5474, Beltsville, MD 20705-5474.”