

• The Agency's public health mandate requires that it address foodborne illness hazards within each segment of the food production chain and implement or encourage preventive strategies that improve the whole system.

As part of this farm-to-table strategy, FSIS is interested in supporting a series of pilot demonstration projects which may assist food animal producers, markets, the slaughter and processing industry, and the Agency in meeting food safety challenges in a preventive HACCP framework. These projects are intended to develop and foster voluntary food safety measures that can reasonably be taken on the farm, through marketing channels, and during preslaughter preparation to decrease public health hazards in animals presented for slaughter.

Therefore, the Agency has announced in the Commerce Business Daily a series of solicitations for bid on proposals to gain information concerning animal production practices as they pertain to food safety. Briefly, these solicitations are as follows:

Proposals 1-4—Pathogen Reduction in Four Species

FSIS is interested in funding pilot projects that use risk assessment strategies to demonstrate the application, feasibility, and effectiveness of current technologies for controlling contaminants and that emphasize pre-slaughter pathogen reduction. Multi-disciplinary teams in multiple geographical locations are required. Projects must demonstrate multi-geographical and multi-seasonal applicability.

There are four project/species areas of interest: pork, poultry, non-fed beef, and sheep. For poultry, there is information available on intervention methods used to reduce pathogens in/on poultry during production and transportation to slaughter. A possible approach would be to demonstrate whether or not multi-faceted (two or more) risk reduction practices carried out pre-slaughter could reliably reduce carcass contamination. With regard to pork, non-fed beef, and sheep, the Agency is interested in learning the relationship of current production practices to the incidence of pathogens in slaughter facilities. Using animal identification techniques to improve information-sharing between production and slaughter/processing entities is required for non-fed beef and encouraged for pork and sheep.

Proposal 5—Training for Food Animal Producers

FSIS is also interested in learning which training methodologies will work best to maximize the effectiveness of future food safety initiatives directed at food animal producers, particularly small producers. The purpose of these programs is to improve the ability of food animal producers to maintain sustainable operations as they address requirements of slaughter establishments implementing preventive HACCP systems and other food safety responsibilities.

Proposal 6—Survey of Small Producer HACCP Needs

FSIS is interested in supporting a survey of small producers and small and very small slaughter establishments. The purpose of the survey is to determine the needs of producers who supply slaughter establishments as these establishments consider developing pathogen reduction and HACCP systems. Proposals should address multiple geographic locations with a focus on disadvantaged areas and various slaughter classes. The evaluation must include access to and use of veterinary services, knowledge and implementation of commodity food safety/quality assurance programs, and recordkeeping practices for animal drug use.

Done at Washington, DC, on March 24, 1997.

Thomas J. Billy,
Administrator.

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Natural Resources Conservation Service

Changes in the State Technical Guides in Oregon

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service), USDA.

ACTION: Notice of change.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 343 of Subtitle E of the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (FAIRA) that requires the Secretary of Agriculture to provide public notice and comment under Section 553 of Title, United States Code, with regard to any future technical guides that are used to carry out Subtitles A, B, and C of Title XII of the Food Security Action of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3801 *et seq.*), the Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture, gives notice of revisions to all conservation

practices in Section IV of the State technical guides in Oregon. The distribution of these revisions and an updated index of conservation practices standards and specifications will be via Oregon Bulletin OR 450-7-2 dated March 14, 1997.

These revisions to conservation practices in Section IV of State technical guides are subject to these provisions since one or more used or could be used as part of a conservation management system to comply with the Highly Erodible Land Conservation or Wetland Conservation requirements.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Roy M. Carlson, Jr., Leader—Technology Development, USDA-NRCS, 101 SW Main, Suite 1300, Portland, OR 97204-3221. FAX (503) 414-3277 or Internet: rcarlson@or.nrcs.usda.gov.

A copy of the new index and any of the revised items can be obtained from Roy Carlson. These items will also be available at each of the NRCS field offices in Oregon beginning March 31, 1997. Comments can be sent to Roy Carlson at the NRCS state office in Portland, Oregon.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In Oregon, "technical guides" refers to the Field Office Technical Guide maintained at each NRCS field Office in Oregon. The previous revisions to conservation practices in technical guides in Oregon were issued in June 1994. The former Oregon "Index of Conservation Practice Standards and Specifications" was dated June 1994. The revised conservation practices and revised index will be dated March 1997 and include all of the conservation practices and standards and conservation practice specifications. Revisions include word changes, reformatting sections of practice standards to be consistent with new national guidelines, name changes, renumbering, additions, deletions and redating.

Dated: March 25, 1997.

Leonard Jordan,

Asst. State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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Rural Business-Cooperative Service

Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

ACTION: Proposed collection; Comments requested.