

Federal Register Activity

The following notice was published in the *Federal Register* on April 4, 2000:

- [FSIS Notice of public meeting and request for comments--Docket No. 00-012N](#)--"Codex Alimentarius Commission: Twenty-eighth Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labeling"

The Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety, USDA, and the Food and Drug Administration, HHS, are sponsoring a public meeting on April 17, 2000, to provide information and receive public comments on agenda items that will be discussed at the Twenty-eighth Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labeling, which will be held in Ottawa, Canada, May 9-12, 2000. Details about the April 17 public meeting are provided in the attached *Federal Register* notice. For more information, contact:

Patrick Clerkin, Associate U.S. Manager for Codex, at (202) 205-7760.

Third-Party Authorities -- A Clarification

On October 20, 1999, FSIS published in the *Federal Register*, a Final Rule entitled "Sanitation Requirements for Official Meat and Poultry Establishments." This Final Rule converted many of the highly prescriptive sanitation requirements to performance standards. Among the prescriptive sanitation requirements that were eliminated was the regulation requiring the authorization of nonfood compounds prior to their use in a federally inspected meat or poultry establishment (Title 9, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Section 381.60).

The new sanitation regulations (9 CFR, Section 416.4) state that nonfood compounds and processing aids used in an establishment must be safe under the conditions of use. The meat or poultry establishment must have documentation on file establishing the safety of a chemical's use in a food-processing environment. Although FSIS is not requiring that establishments make available any specific type of documentation, some chemical manufacturers and meat and poultry establishments have said that they perceive that third-party certification is required. Therefore, FSIS is aware that there may be a need to clarify our position on third-party certification organizations.

FSIS has had a long history of accepting documentation from third-party authorities to support compliance with regulatory requirements, e.g., to certify the truthfulness of labeling claims. With regard to nonfood compounds, FSIS has stated that it encourages third-party standards-setting organizations and independent laboratories to develop systems for testing and certifying nonfood compounds. However, the Backgrounder on the Final Rule clearly states that the Agency will not sanction any particular organization's certification as definitive evidence of compliance with FSIS requirements.

Meat and poultry manufacturers are responsible for assuring that they use only safe and suitable nonfood compounds. FSIS has developed a Sanitation Performance Compliance Guide to assist meat and poultry establishments in making their own determinations concerning the appropriate use of nonfood compounds. This Guide may be accessed on the FSIS Web site: www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/haccp/haccp-guide.htm. The Guide advises meat and poultry establishments that a "letter of assurance" from the supplier is appropriate documentation for all chemical compounds that are used in areas of food processing, handling, and storage.

For more information, contact: Dr. Robert Post, Director, FSIS Labeling and Additives Policy Division, at (202) 205-0279.

***Editor's Note:** Attachments are sent with faxed versions of this report only. Links will be provided to electronic copy, when available.
