

September 2020



Welcome to the HCG September Newsletter. The information below, summarized by our team of food safety experts, will help you remain up-to-date on industry news and HCG offerings.

If you need information on something you don't see here, please [contact us](#).



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September is Food Safety Education Month

In September, USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) reminds us to think about health and safety in the kitchen for National Food Safety Education Month. Consumers are encouraged to practice behaviors that will continue to help keep them and their loved ones safe from foodborne illness.

"Consumers play a vital role in reducing foodborne illness - and by providing scientifically accurate and effective food safety information, we can help empower them to adopt and practice safe food handling behaviors in their own homes," said Under Secretary for Food Safety Mindy Brashears. Consumers can find safe food handling information at [HERE](#).

In the food industry, we support those efforts through training our teams to understand and practice safe measures to produce and protect the food our consumers love. Consider motivating and updating your team with one of the courses offered below.

Early Bird Rates for October classes end soon!

Basic HACCP



October, Pleasanton, CA
October 13-16, Virtual
October 28-29, San Diego, CA

Advanced HACCP

September 23-24, - Virtual Spanish

Implementing SQF Systems

October 20-23, Virtual
November 10-13, Virtual
December 8-11, Virtual



Register
Here!

ICMSF Opinion on COVID and Food Safety

Recently the International Commission on Microbiological Specifications for Foods (ICMFS) published a paper ([HERE](#)) regarding the relationship of SARS-CoV-2 to food safety.

The ICMFS believes it is highly unlikely that the ingestion of SARS-CoV-2 will result in illness as there is no documented evidence that food or food packaging is a significant source or vehicle for transmission.

Despite many billions of meals consumed and food packages handled since the pandemic began, **to date there has been no evidence that food, food packaging or food handling is a source or important transmission route for SARS-CoV-2 or COVID-19.**

Based on reports of government organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organizations (FAO) the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 has not been associated with food. Therefore, there are no foods that should be considered a risk or warrant consideration as a vector. Further, ICMFS does not advise food end-product or environmental testing for SARS-CoV-2 virus for reasons of food safety assurance.

This document may be a particularly good reference to provide questioning customers over the safety of food and food packages.

Is COVID Airborne?

With thanks to the Refrigerated Foods Association, HCG would like to share this the link below for access to a webcast regarding airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Notable segments are highlighted in the following text.

To view the webcast recording, use this link:

<https://www.nationalacademies.org/event/08-26-2020/airborne-transmission-of-sars-cov-2-a-virtual-workshop>

You can look at agenda and select what looks particularly interesting by clicking the box at the upper left corner once you get to the above link. We recommend listening to recordings #31-34 (~10 mins each) that summarize the major findings of the entire meeting, addressing Critical Questions (CQ) -

CQ: What size particles are generated by people and how do they spread in air?

CQ: Which size particles are infectious and for how long?

CQ: What behavioral and environmental factors determine personal exposure to SARS-Cov-2?

CQ: What Do We Know About the Infectious Dose and Disease Relationship for Covid-19?

Also, consider video #21 Dr. Miller's talk on built environment (15 minutes). Her talk seems particularly practical.

In a nutshell, 6 feet of physical separation is still important. Experts say that masks may be just as important as distancing especially for the 40% or so of asymptomatic people who are not coughing or sneezing. Loud vocalization and talking may also be an important modifiable risk factor and exposure is a continuous variable.

Stay safe - we are far from through this pandemic.

Time to Renew Your FDA Facility Registration

FDA requires facilities to renew registration in even-numbered years. This year, from October 1 to December 31, it is time to renew your registration.

The 2002 Public Health Service Bio-terrorism Act requires US FDA registration for domestic and foreign food facilities. The Act requires facilities to initially register and comply with biennial registration renewal.

Not sure if you should register? The following facilities are required to register and renew.

- Domestic facilities (human and animal food) that manufacture, process, pack, or hold food.
- Foreign food facilities that manufacture, process, pack, or hold food before exporting food to the U.S.
- Every foreign food facility that exports to the U.S. must also have a U.S. FDA Agent.

The following types of facilities are exempt from registration:

- Farms
- Retail Food Establishments
- Facilities regulated exclusively by the USDA/FSIS.

A more complete description of requirements for registration, renewal, and exemptions may be found in a [Question and Answer Guidance Document](#) from FDA. The document provides good information for facilities that must comply as well as exemptions for facilities.

[Contact HCG for help](#) if you need more information. The failure to register a food facility in accordance with section 415 is a 'prohibited act' of the FD&C Act.



USDA Updates Egg Product Inspection. Are you Ready?

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has announced that it is modernizing egg products inspection methods for the first time since Congress passed the Egg Products Inspection Act (EPIA) in 1970. The Egg Products Inspection Regulations final rule aligns the egg products regulations to be consistent with current requirements in the meat and poultry products inspection regulations.

Under the new rule, federally inspected egg products plants are required to develop and implement Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) systems and Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs). FSIS will continue to test for *Salmonella* and *Listeria monocytogenes* (Lm) in egg products. FSIS requires plants to produce egg products that meet food safety standards and are edible *without additional preparation*. Nothing in the final rule changes those requirements.

FSIS will also be assuming regulatory authority over egg substitutes and freeze-dried egg products, which pose the same risk as egg products and will be inspected in the same manner, enhancing the existing food safety system.

If your company produces egg products, you should ensure alignment with the updated regulations.

The agency has also realigned the regulations for the importation and inspection of foreign egg products with regulations governing the importation of foreign meat and poultry products.

FSIS will notify foreign countries of the regulatory changes. Countries that have ongoing equivalence and those that have requested initial equivalence should consider a review of their egg product HACCP Plans to ensure compliance.

The Egg Products Inspection Regulation can be found [HERE](#)
Need help or advice ? Sign up for a HACCP Class or contact HCG at info@haccpcg.com.

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HACCP Consulting Group, LLC | Cathy Crawford, President | 757-371-5832 | Email Us

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