

designed to help prevent contamination of food products during transportation and storage. The second section of the guidelines deals specifically with food security measures that may be taken to prevent deliberate contamination as part of criminal or terrorist acts. Both sections apply to all points of shipment from the processor to final delivery at the retail store, restaurant, or other facility serving consumers, as well as at any intermediate stops (*i.e.*, intermediate warehouses, transfer, and handling facilities such as airports, break-bulk terminals, rail sidings, etc.) during shipment prior to final delivery. These guidelines are applicable whether the potential contamination occurs due to an intentional or unintentional act. Implementation of these guidelines will assist all participants in the transportation and distribution process in preventing such acts or in responding to them effectively should they occur.

The food safety section of the guidelines has a long history of development by FSIS. In February, 1995, the Pathogen Reduction/HACCP proposed rule (60 FR 6774) was published and in this proposal FSIS stated its commitment to develop standards to help ensure the safe handling of meat and poultry products during transportation and storage. A Technical Analysis Group (TAG) was used by FSIS and the Department of Transportation (DOT) in April 1995, to address the safety of food after it left the production facility and began to move through commerce. The TAG identified the primary hazards associated with the transport of perishable foods and recommended reasonable controls that might be employed by industry to ensure food safety.

Subsequent to the TAG report, FSIS and FDA issued an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) on November 22, 1996 (61 FR 59372), seeking information and comments on approaches the agencies might take to foster food safety improvements that might be needed in the transportation and storage of foods. Responses to the TAG Report and the ANPR were used in the development of the food safety recommendations in the *FSIS Safety and Security Guidelines for the Transportation and Distribution of Meat, Poultry, and Egg Products* now being made available to the public.

The food security section of the guidelines addresses the possibility of deliberate attacks on the domestic food supply by individuals or groups and is a direct result of heightened concerns about homeland security that have resulted since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

Request for Comments and Information

FSIS has decided to collect and analyze more data on the possible impacts of these guidelines before deciding whether it should proceed with rulemaking. The Agency invites public comment on how to strengthen the safety and security of meat, poultry, and egg products during the transportation and distribution process. The Agency is especially interested in informed responses regarding both food safety and food security to the following questions:

- Are there problems regarding food safety and food security in the transportation, distribution, or storage processes that the guidelines fail to address; or if all issues are addressed, are there flaws in the approaches described in the guidelines?
- If the guidelines can be improved, how could they be improved?
- Will transporters, distributors, and storage facilities have difficulty complying with these guidelines? If so, what difficulties do the guidelines pose? Would the guidelines pose greater, or different, difficulties for small firms than for large firms?
- Should the Agency initiate rulemaking to adopt the guidelines as regulations or will the guidelines be sufficiently effective if they are only voluntary?
- Would mandatory implementation of these transportation guidelines have any unusual or particularly significant impacts on any portion of the food distribution chain? If so, who would be affected and how?
- Would mandating these guidelines by regulation increase costs to transportation, distribution, and storage facilities? If so, would this result in increased costs to the consumer as the end user?

FSIS will consider all relevant comments in deciding whether any of the transportation guidelines should be proposed as a regulation. Should the Agency decide to propose a rule, it will summarize all of the comments and information that it receives and include the summary in the proposed rule.

Additional Public Notification

Public awareness of all segments of rulemaking and policy development is important. Consequently, in an effort to better ensure that minorities, women, and persons with disabilities are aware of this notice, FSIS will announce it and make copies of this **Federal Register** publication available through the FSIS Constituent Update. FSIS provides a weekly Constituent Update, which is communicated via Listserv, a free e-mail

subscription service. In addition, the update is available online through the FSIS web page located at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>. The update is used to provide information regarding FSIS policies, procedures, regulations, **Federal Register** notices, FSIS public meetings, industry recalls, and any other types of information that could affect or would be of interest to our constituents/stakeholders. The constituent Listserv consists of industry, trade, and farm groups, consumer interest groups, allied health professionals, scientific professionals, and other individuals that have requested to be included. Through the Listserv and web page, FSIS is able to provide information to a much broader, more diverse audience.

For more information contact the Congressional and Public Affairs Office, at (202) 720-9113. To be added to the free e-mail subscription service (Listsrv) go to the "Constituent Update" page on the FSIS Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/update/update.htm>.

Click on the "Subscribe to the Constituent Update Listsrv" link, then fill out and submit the form.

Done in Washington, DC, on July 29, 2003.

Linda Swacina,

Acting Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

DOC has submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. chapter 35).

Agency: U.S. Census Bureau.

Title: Monthly Survey of Residential Alterations and Repairs.

Form Number(s): SORAR-705.

Agency Approval Number: 0607-0130.

Type of Request: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Burden: 8,400 hours.

Number of Respondents: 2,800.

Avg. Hours Per Response: 15 minutes.

Needs and Uses: The U.S. Census Bureau is requesting a revision of the currently approved collection for the Quarterly Survey of Residential Alterations and Repairs. The form used to collect this information is SORAR-705. The Census Bureau is responsible for preparing estimates of the