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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. FSIS-2014-0008]

Codex Alimentarius Commission: Meeting of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS)

AGENCY: Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is sponsoring a public meeting on September 25, 2014. The objective of the public meeting is to provide information and receive public comments on agenda items and draft United States (U.S.) positions to be discussed at the 21st Session of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex), taking place in Australia, October 13-17, 2014. The Under Secretary for Food Safety recognizes the importance of providing interested parties the opportunity to obtain background information on the 21st Session of the CCFICS and to address items on the agenda.

DATES: The public meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 25, 2014 from 1:00-4:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The public meeting will take place at the Jamie L. Whitten Building, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 107-A, Washington, DC 20250. Documents related to the 21st Session of the CCFICS will be accessible via the World Wide Web at the following address:

<http://www.codexalimentarius.org/meetings-reports/en>.

Mary Stanley, U.S. Delegate to the 21st Session of the CCFICS invites U.S. interested parties to submit their comments electronically to the following email address

Mary.Stanley@fsis.usda.gov.

Call-In Number:

If you wish to participate in the public meeting for the 21st Session of CCFICS by conference call, please use the call-in number and participant code listed below.

Call-in Number: 1-888-844-9904

The participant code will be posted on the web page below:

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/international-affairs/us-codex-alimentarius/public-meetings>.

For Further Information About the 21st Session of the CCFICS

Contact: Mary Stanley, Director, International Relations

and Strategic Planning Staff, Office of Policy and Program Development, Food Safety and Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 2925, South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250; Phone: (202) 720-0287, Fax: (202) 720-4929, Email:

Mary.Stanley@fsis.usda.gov.

For Further Information About the Public Meeting Contact:

Kenneth Lowery, U.S. Codex Office, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 4861, Washington, DC 20250; Phone: (202) 690-4042, Fax: (202) 720-3157, Email: Kenneth.Lowery@fsis.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Codex was established in 1963 by two United Nations organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization. Through adoption of food standards, codes of practice, and other guidelines developed by its committees, and by promoting their adoption and implementation by governments, Codex seeks to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade.

The CCFICS Committee is responsible for:

- (a) Developing principles and guidelines for food import and export inspection and certification

systems with a view to harmonizing methods and procedures which protect the health of consumers, ensure fair trading practices, and facilitate international trade in foodstuffs;

- (b) Developing principles and guidelines for the application of measures by the competent authorities of exporting and importing countries to provide assurance where necessary that foodstuffs comply with requirements, especially statutory health requirements;
- (c) Developing guidelines for the utilization, as and when appropriate, of quality assurance systems to ensure that foodstuffs conform with requirements and to promote the recognition of these systems in facilitating trade in food products under bilateral/multilateral arrangements by countries;
- (d) Developing guidelines and criteria with respect to format, declarations, and language of such official certificates as countries may require with a view towards international harmonization;
- (e) Making recommendations for information exchange in relation to food import/export control;

- (f) Consulting as necessary with other international groups working on matters related to food inspection and certification systems; and
- (g) Considering other matters assigned to it by Codex in relation to food inspection and certification systems.

The Committee is hosted by Australia.

Issues to be Discussed at the Public Meeting

The following items on the agenda for the 21st Session of CCFICS will be discussed during the public meeting:

- Discussion paper on Principles and Guidelines for the Elaboration and Management of Questionnaires Directed at Exporting Countries
- Discussion paper on Principles and Guidelines for Monitoring Regulatory Performance of National Food Control Systems
- Discussion paper on the revision of the Principles and Guidelines for the Exchange of Information in Food Safety Emergency Situations
- Draft amendments to Guidelines for the Exchange of Information between Countries on Rejections of Imported Food

Each issue listed will be fully described in documents distributed, or to be distributed, by the Secretariat prior to the Committee meeting. Members of the public may access or request copies of these documents (see ADDRESSES).

Public Meeting

At the September 25, 2014, public meeting, draft U.S. positions on the agenda items will be described and discussed, and attendees will have the opportunity to pose questions and offer comments. Written comments may be offered at the meeting or sent to Mary Stanley, U.S. Delegate for the 21st Session of CCFICS (see ADDRESSES). Written comments should state that they relate to activities of the 21st Session of the CCFICS.

Additional Public Notification

FSIS will announce this notice online through the FSIS Web page located at

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulations/federal-register>.

FSIS will also make copies of this Federal Register publication available through the FSIS Constituent Update, which provides information on FSIS policies, procedures, regulations, Federal Register notices, FSIS public meetings, and other matters that could affect or would be

of interest to constituents and stakeholders. The Update is communicated via Listserv, a free electronic mail subscription service for industry, trade groups, consumer interest groups, health professionals, and other individuals who have asked to be included. The Update is also available on the FSIS Web page. In addition, FSIS offers an email subscription service which provides automatic and customized access to selected food safety news and information. This service is available at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/programs-and-services/email-subscription-service>. Options range from recalls to export information to regulations, directives and notices. Customers can add or delete subscriptions themselves, and have the option to password protect their accounts.

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call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TTY). USDA is an equal
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Done at Washington, DC on: August 12, 2014

Mary Frances Lowe,

U.S. Manager for Codex Alimentarius

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