

TRAINING, CERTIFICATION VERIFICATION TOP PRIORITIES FOR HACCP ALLIANCE

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COLLEGE STATION, December 9--The International Meat and Poultry HACCP Alliance plans to offer HACCP training in 1995 for both senior executives and employees responsible for implementing HACCP in their plants, the Alliance board said at its December 1 meeting.

The board agreed the Alliance should immediately begin to host training programs for meat and poultry industry employees, particularly in light of the pending Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) regulation that is expected to mandate the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) system in meat and poultry plants.

"The Alliance's short-term priority is to provide as much basic HACCP training as quickly as possible," said Alliance Executive Director H. Russell Cross. "We will broaden the scope of training to be more product- and process-specific and to ensure the industry has a complete understanding of how to implement a HACCP program that fully meets FSIS requirements." In-plant HACCP consultations and training are also planned by the Alliance.

The Alliance is considering a certification program for individuals who successfully complete approved HACCP coursework. Standardized tests, length of accreditation, continuing education requirements, accreditation for HACCP instructors, and defining and identifying HACCP experts are just some of the areas the Alliance is reviewing.

Establishing verification programs for plants to ensure and "verify" that HACCP plans are in fact working properly is another goal of the Alliance.

"We hope we can develop a standardized verification program that plants can use after the implementation of a HACCP program to ensure its successful operation," Cross said.

The board voted to amend its bylaws to change its board of directors' structure, adding two more director positions to include "other species" producer groups and "other species" slaughter/processing representative. They will join other directors representing the beef, pork and poultry slaughter/processing; food service; retail; professional societies; international; other professional; and service groups. This board structure goes into effect in September 1995.

The HACCP Alliance also announced it is co-hosting a January 9-10 symposium on "Tracing Foodborne Pathogens from Farm to Table: Data Needs to Evaluate Control Options, at the Hotel Washington in Washington, D.C. Sen. Tom Daschle (D-SD) and USDA Acting Under Secretary Michael Taylor are invited speakers at the scientific symposium, which will explore research needs and priorities for developing effective systems for pathogen control.

The HACCP Alliance is a non-profit international organization of industry groups, academia, and professional societies devoted to training, education, research, and communications about HACCP.

HACCP is a risk-based production control system for the food industry that identifies where potential contamination can occur and strictly manages and monitors these points to prevent contamination, helping to ensure an even safer food supply.

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