

USDA TO CONVENE A VIRTUAL TOWN HALL ON SALMONELLA



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The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that its Office of Food Safety (OFS) and the department's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) will hold a virtual public meeting on Salmonella contamination of food. The USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also will participate in the September 22nd meeting, to which the public and all food industry stakeholders are invited.

At the meeting, the USDA will discuss its commitment to reducing contamination by focusing on science, building relationships, and influencing behavior to decrease Salmonella infections and save lives. The week before the public meeting, OFS will release its "*Roadmap to Reducing Salmonella: Driving Change through Science-Based Policy*," describing how the department will advance science-based programs and policies and promote innovation to reduce Salmonella in meat, poultry, and egg products.

Salmonella continues to present significant challenges to America's food chain. The USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) recently published its *Salmonella Verification Testing Program* report for July 28, 2019 through July 25, 2020. The report lists salmonella testing results for each sample collection category by food establishment, and is accessible online at: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/dbd62f69-3971-4a9d-b6d7-792c3c504076/establishment-categories-202008.xlsx?MOD=AJPERES>

The public meeting is a part of the USDA's efforts to be transparent and to share data with stakeholders, including regulated establishments, other government agencies, industry groups, and the public. There is no fee to register for the public meeting, but pre-registration is mandatory for participants attending. All those interested in attending must register online at <https://ems8.intellor.com?do=register&t=1&p=831058>. Because the meeting is going to be virtual, participants will need to be able to utilize the Webex online conferencing link provided by email following registration for the meeting.

Stakeholders will have an opportunity to provide oral comments during the September 22nd public meeting, but must notify FSIS during registration if they wish to speak at the meeting. Questions must be submitted by September 10, 2020 to FRN@usda.gov.

Additionally, FSIS is seeking comments on the Salmonella initiatives to be addressed at the public meeting. Industry, interested individuals, organizations, and other stakeholders are invited to participate in the public meeting and to comment on the *Roadmap* data and science that drive FSIS' Salmonella reduction efforts. Interested parties should submit comments on or before September 25, 2020 at <http://www.regulations.gov>

If you have questions regarding the upcoming September 22nd USDA-hosted virtual conference, or on Salmonella safety issues generally, please contact GrayRobinson's Nationwide Food Law Team via email at foodlaw@gray-robinson.com or by telephone at (866) 382-5132.



Richard M. Blau leads GrayRobinson's Nationwide Alcohol Beverage and Food Law Department, focusing on the laws that govern the manufacture, importation, processing distribution, marketing, sale and consumption of foods and beverages. Richard devotes a substantial portion of his practice to trade regulation, legislative lobbying, brand development and protection, M & A compliance guidance, litigation and mediation involving the members of the food industry.