

*Preparing Small and Very Small Meat and Poultry Establishments
for the Future of HACCP: A Cooperative Approach*

Group I

HACCP Plan Training and Implementation: Basics and Beyond

1. *What do you think about basic HACCP training that is currently provided to small and very small meat and poultry processors?*

Key points noted in discussion

The basic HACCP course (2-3 day course) only provides an introduction to HACCP. It does not prepare HACCP coordinators to write a plan without further advice or information.

Additional discussion:

- Break the information down into smaller parts for training.
- Add more comprehensive Sanitation Standard Operating Procedure (SSOP) training.
- Processors would prefer training programs that relate more to their specific product and process; more practical sessions that provided basic tools, such as forms and checklists and record-keeping materials.
- HACCP courses need to be updated as new information, regulations, notices and compliance guidance are issued.

Basic HACCP Course Availability

2. *How available is a basic HACCP training course in your area? Are courses available to all who need them? And 5. Are you aware of regional differences in the availability of basic HACCP training?*

Key Points noted in the discussion:

Basic HACCP courses are not always available to those that need them. For example, Illinois, Washington, New York do not have courses available at all or only sporadically. Many states/regions only offer the course once per year. There are regional differences in course availability.

Additional discussion:

- There is no emphasis on the part of FSIS staff for industry to do further training.
- It is not cost effective to send people to courses in other parts of the country.

3. *How do you find out about basic HACCP training opportunities?*

4. *What is the best way to inform small plant operators of training opportunities?*

Key Points noted in the discussion

Industry folks see and talk to inspectors every day. Using the FSIS staff in each plant to inform personnel about training opportunities would be most effective.

Additional discussion:

- We find out about basic HACCP training through the meat association (AAMP), Extension offices, state meat associations.
- Extension should send notices regarding training to FSIS and all licensed plants.
- The International HACCP Alliance is “a zero.”
- The new outreach program of FSIS could help with this.
- The Internet is not an effective way to reach all people.

6. *What are participants willing to pay for basic HACCP training?***Key Points noted in the discussion**

The cost of the course itself is not a big issue—the problem is if courses are not local, there are significant costs for travel, hotel, etc. In addition, plants need to factor in the cost of just being away from the plant.

Additional discussion points:

- When the regulation was first introduced there were funds available from FSIS to offset course costs for Extension as well as industry.
- Early on courses were more local
- Perhaps the course cost could be adjusted based on plant size: \$125, 175, or 225
- Introductory HACCP courses should be available locally
- Courses may cost \$495 per person now, while total costs (including travel) are well over \$1,000.
- Materials should be included in the cost of the program.

Effectiveness of Training**7. *After attending a basic HACCP training course, do you believe you were well prepared to write your HACCP plan?*****8. *What additional help did you need with your HACCP plan before you could operate/make the product under USDA inspection?*****Key Points noted in the discussion:**

The basic HACCP course alone is not sufficient to prepare plant operators to write a HACCP plan. Operators often need to come back after original HACCP plans are written and redo them so they are more workable in their operation. Additional help is needed from Extension programs, FSIS or consultants. For some, the only way to get through the plan writing process is when the instructor comes back for individual help.

Additional discussion points:

- Operators need to be motivated and look for answers
- Educational background helpful to understanding HACCP
- FSIS website was helpful when building HACCP plans
- FSIS generic plans are not helpful—they do not fit operations of plants
- Not every state has Extension faculty or staff with expertise to write plans or there may be policies in place that do not allow them to write plans.
- Training provides the theory: theory may not help with practical application

9. What would make basic HACCP courses more useful or effective for small plant operators?

Key Points noted in the discussion:

Training would be more helpful if tailored to each individual type of process, ie hot dog, raw ground.

Develop a program of small, bite size educational modules with pre and post tests to see if information is learned and understood. It would be helpful to have some type of incentive or motivation for employees to complete training.

10. Are there any topics that need to be discussed more thoroughly during a basic HACCP course?

Key Points noted in the discussion:

The basic HACCP course should include more emphasis on SSOPs, SPS, GMPs and prerequisites—more discussion of what belongs in the HACCP program and what belongs in prerequisite programs.

Additional discussion points:

Topics that need discussing differ with each type of plant operation.

These topics need to be discussed more thoroughly:

- lotting
- basic 7 principles

11. Many small plant operators have not attended a training course since first implementing HACCP. Would it be valuable to require regular training at certain intervals of time (such as every 5 years) as it is for retail food providers in many states?

Key Points noted in the discussion

A mandated training course every 5 years would not be useful. If it is required, then those that are already getting the training on their own might be penalized. There aren't that many changes in basic HACCP. Changes that are occurring are FSIS notices, directives, compliance guides and regulatory requirements in response to outbreaks. Therefore, FSIS inspectors should play a greater role in making sure that plants are operating appropriately.

In addition there needs to be more consistency in how FSIS staff responds to changes and interprets guidance and directives.

Additional discussion points:

- We need a balance of consistency and reason from FSIS staff.
- Inspectors are not trained in how to train plant operators in HACCP
- Inspectors could make recommendations on how to run a better plant – hands on

Training Materials, Curricula, Resources, etc.

12. What resources or materials are used for training? Consider:

- *What curricula is used in training?*
- *Do you know who developed it?*
- *Do you use a textbook (e.g. GMA), notebook, the Hazard Guide, and/or power point presentations?*
- *Any other materials used for training?*

Discussion points:

Materials used include-

- International HACCP Alliance
- Video, notebook, hazard guide
- Interactive cd from Silliker

13. Do you use the resources the HACCP Alliance offers for training?

Key Points noted in the discussion:

The resources of the HACCP Alliance are not used by this group. They thought that the Alliance was not responsive. Trainers develop their own materials, and also have become HACCP Alliance approved trainers.

14. Do you use the resources provided by FSIS?

Key Points noted in the discussion:

Participants use materials and resource provided by FSIS. They find that Ask FSIS is an effective program that does respond to questions

15. What additional materials would help to make basic HACCP training programs more useful and effective? Consider:

- *Is there a need for standardized curricula?*
- *Do FSIS model plans need updating?*
- *Are more model plans needed?*
- *Are they useful to you?*
- *Any other materials (video, web based, printed, content areas) you would like to help with your training? Everything in list can come from a variety of sources,*

Key Points noted in discussions:

- There should be standardization of curricula in the basic HACCP training program
- FSIS model plans need updating and should be more specific
- If you are brand new the models are helpful and a good starting point, they should be updated, though.
- Would like documentation (fact sheets) to support CCP and validation decisions; how can we determine if scientific research matches needs in processing?

16. What is the best mechanism for delivery of basic HACCP training? (1 day course, 2 day course, more?; internet or web based course?; learn by mail?..)

Key Points noted in the discussion:

The basic 2 day HACCP course is good for an introduction. A combination dvd and web based training with programs in small modules or segments would be useful. Certification should be offered when training completed. Perhaps something like the USDA AgLearn system could be used for managing HACCP training programs.

17. How can we best ensure that courses are updated and that they are providing the most recent guidance and information?

Key Points in the discussion:

Bring in inspection agencies. Work with state inspection, FSIS and EIAOs to find out if course participants are learning what they need to learn.

Operators are reassessed annually to determine if they are meeting HACCP guidelines: this is the opportunity for the HACCP program itself to be reassessed.

Beyond the Basics – Training after the Basic Course

18. Is there any type of regular HACCP program/food safety/sanitation training being conducted in small plants?

Key Points in the discussion:

Participants reported that some training is done, including on-the-job education, but no “standardized”, regular training is being done. Training is not being documented.

19. Who is doing the training?

Key Points in the discussion:

Any training is being conducted by a trained trainer, HACCP coordinator, or person who took the HACCP class; they, in turn, train the line people. Some training is done by meat inspector, but not a formal training session

20. What are the barriers to a regular training program for small plant operators and their employees?

Key Points in the discussion:

Barriers to regular training include cost, time, lack of resources, employee turnover and employee quality.

21. Are small plant personnel attending or participating in training provided by FSIS, Universities, the Industry or Extension Programs?

Key Points in the discussion:

Some are participating in training. There would be a better response if it was more convenient, closer to plants. Some will only attend if mandated.

22. If so, which training programs and how often?

Key Points in the discussion:

Participants have attended courses in Advanced HACCP (e. coli, listeria, sanitation), labeling, and first time basic HACCP .

Additional discussion:

1. FSIS needs to get information out more consistently and in a timely manner to inspectors and plants when a crisis or situation arises. It is important to present the same information to operators and inspectors so that they are all on the same page. FSIS needs to get the information to the educational institutions so that they can get the information out to the plants. Also, collaboration with Trade Associations may help FSIS to respond more quickly and get information out more quickly.
2. Interpretation of regulations:
There needs to be communication between the federal and state governments and clarification of state functions. State and federal meat inspection programs should be re standardized. The federal government needs to clearly define state agency functions.