

Meat Messenger

North Dakota State Meat Inspection Program

North Dakota Department of Agriculture

July 2004

Hope Quality Meats: Meeting Demands, Hoping to Expand



Byron Fossum, manager of Hope Quality Meats, waits on a customer.

Hope Quality Meats is busy meeting the demands of the livestock producers throughout the eastern part of the state. They also have plans to expand their variety of products and move a higher volume of product, says Byron Fossum, manager of Hope Quality Meats, Hope, ND.

“Our best sellers right now are the Elk sticks,” Fossum explained. “However, we would like to get some new products out there in order to get a wider variety of flavored product.”

Fossum says that Hope Quality Meats would like to get their products into more stores. “We would also like to attend some more shows and events to build more name and product recognition,” Fossum said. “Attending events like the new Downtown Festival Market in Fargo would be a great way to get out and meet people and expand our business.”

The plant, located on Hope’s Main Street, is owned by a group of individual producers who have other interests besides the plant, but they do provide livestock that is slaughtered and processed there. The facility employs two full-time and six part-time employees.

Hope Quality Meats came under state inspection in September 2002 and slaughters mainly elk and beef, some pork and sheep, and processes deer in the fall. The establishment produces about fifteen different retail products and also distributes products through wholesalers to different outlets in their area, including convenience stores.

Fossum sees the opportunity for more producers to utilize inspection at the plant. “We would like to have more producers do more direct marketing of their own livestock in the area,” Fossum said. “There is a lot of livestock raised here, and I would like to see more locally raised product for sale at different outlets in the region,” Fossum said.

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Being under state inspection is something that Hope Quality Meats sees as a valuable tool in both diversifying their operation and improving the quality of their product.

“We pay closer attention to each step in our process since we have come under inspection,” Fossum said. “The result is a more uniform, consistent, quality product each time we process.”

E. Coli 0157 Incidence Posts Substantial Decline: Other Foodborne Illnesses Continue Downward Trend

Thursday, April 29, 2004

CDC Press Office

Cases of E. coli O157:H7 infections — one of the most severe foodborne diseases — showed a dramatic decline last year, decreasing 36 percent compared to the previous year, according to foodborne surveillance data released today.

The data released by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in collaboration with the Food and Drug Administration and the Department of Agriculture also showed that the incidence of three common foodborne diseases — Campylobacter, Salmonella and Yersinia infections — continued substantial declines seen in past eight years.

The overall incidence of E. coli O157:H7 infections has declined 42 percent since 1996, while Campylobacter infections have dropped 28 percent and Salmonella infections have decreased by 17 percent.

Cases of other less common bacterial and parasitic foodborne diseases have also decreased since surveillance began in 1996. Yersinia infections have decreased 49 percent, and Cryptosporidium infections have decreased 51 percent.

“These findings are good news for Americans and signify important progress toward meeting HHS’ Healthy People 2010 objectives for reducing the incidence of disease caused by these bacterial infections,” HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson said. “However, we must remain vigilant and continue our work to make America’s food supply as safe as possible. Much work remains to be done, particularly in protecting our children from foodborne illness.”

“The Department of Agriculture is committed to protecting public health through strong food safety systems,” said Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman. “The Department of Agriculture has implemented a series of policies designed to control E. coli O157:H7 and other pathogens. We will continue to implement science based system to enhance our systems further to help continue the positive trend in foodborne illnesses illustrated in the CDC report.”

The data also found that the incidence of Listeria, which had been decreasing the previous four years, did not decline in 2003. The national Listeria Action Plan was launched in 2003 to increase prevention efforts in the food chain, and a method is being developed in order to rapidly identify contaminated food items in outbreaks. The incidence of Salmonella Enteritidis, a common Salmonella serotype, has not changed significantly since 1996, demonstrating that additional efforts are needed to control this pathogen.

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Children continue to suffer from foodborne illness in greater numbers than other groups. CDC, FDA and USDA are currently conducting a case-control study of sporadic cases of Salmonella and Campylobacter to find the best opportunities for prevention in young children.

Several factors have contributed to the overall decline in foodborne illnesses. Enhanced surveillance and outbreak investigations have identified new control measures and focused attention on preventing foodborne diseases.

The Department of Agriculture's Food Safety & Inspection System implemented the Pathogen Reduction/Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) system in all 6,000 federally inspected meat, poultry and egg products plants over a three year period beginning in 1997. Since then, FSIS has strengthened HACCP enforcement through innovative inspector training and implemented rules to force plants to install new technologies and other methods proving they are effectively controlling dangerous pathogens like E. coli O157:H7, Listeria monocytogenes and Salmonella.

Other interventions include the FDA's regulation requiring the refrigeration and labeling of shell eggs to prevent Salmonella Enteritidis infections; HACCP regulation of fruit and vegetable juices as well as seafood; extensive food safety education, publication and outreach of good agricultural practices for fresh produce; and increased regulation of imported food.

Foodborne pathogens annually are responsible for an estimated 76 million illnesses in the United States. In 1996, CDC, USDA and FDA established the FoodNet surveillance system to quantify, monitor and track the incidence of laboratory-diagnosed cases of foodborne illnesses caused by Campylobacter, Cryptosporidium, Cyclospora, E. coli O157, Listeria, Salmonella, Shigella, Yersinia, and Vibrio. Since its inception, the FoodNet system has expanded to include nine sites and 41.5 million people, about 14 percent of the American population.

The full report, "Preliminary FoodNet Data on the Incidence of Infections with Pathogens Commonly Transmitted Through Food — Selected Sites, United States, 2003" appears in this week's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (April 30, 2004) and is available online at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/.

FSIS Seeks Input for New Website on Food Technologies

June 18, 2004

MeatAMI

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is requesting input on the kind of information it posts on its new Web site addressing the use of new technologies in the production of meat, poultry, and egg products. The agency intends to post information about new technologies that it is currently reviewing, or has already reviewed.

FSIS is seeking public comment about the benefits to the public and the possible negative effect posting the information could have on the company owning the technology. FSIS is hoping this effort will help small and very small establishments identify and implement new technologies.

Comments are due to the agency by July 19, 2004. For more information visit <http://www.meatami.com/>.

Value-Added Producer Grants

The primary objective of this grant program is to help eligible independent producers of agricultural commodities, agricultural producer groups, farmer and rancher cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures develop strategies to create marketing opportunities and to help develop business plans for viable marketing opportunities.

Eligible applicants (agricultural producer groups, farmer and rancher cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures) must limit their proposals to emerging markets. These grants will facilitate greater participation in emerging markets and new markets for value-added products. Grants will only be awarded if projects or ventures are determined to be economically viable and sustainable. No more than 10 percent of program funds can go to applicants that are majority-controlled producer-based business ventures. For more information, contact:

Dennis Rodin
USDA Rural Development
Federal Building Room 211
220 E Rosser Ave
Bismarck ND 58502-1737
Phone- 701-530-2056
dennis.rodin@nd.usda.gov

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600 East Boulevard, Dept. 602
Bismarck, ND 58505-0020
Phone: (701) 328-2231
or toll free at 800-242-7535

Fax: (701) 328-4567

Web Site

www.agdepartment.com

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North Dakota Department of Agriculture
600 East Boulevard Avenue, Dept. 602
Bismarck, ND 58505-0020