

# FSIS Small Plant Session Offered by USDA-FSIS

The FSIS Small Plant Session is a complimentary, in-person program offered in conjunction with the AMSA Reciprocal Meat Conference at West Texas A&M University. Designed specifically for small and very small meat and poultry processors, this complimentary session brings together USDA experts, regulatory specialists, and business development resources in one location. Participants will gain practical insights, ask questions directly of agency representatives, and explore tools to support both compliance and business growth.

Participants will engage in hands-on demonstrations, focused educational sessions, and open question-and-answer discussions covering food safety, regulatory compliance, business resources, and plant operations.

**Date:** Wednesday, June 24

**Location:** West Texas A&M University  
Caviness Meat Science & Innovation Center  
600 WTAMU Drive, Canyon, TX 79015

**Cost:** Complimentary

**Registration:** [Reserve your seat HERE](#). Space is limited to 75 participants.

**Who Should Attend:** Owners, operators, food safety personnel, quality assurance staff, entrepreneurs exploring inspection, and processors interested in expanding or improving operations.

## **Schedule:**

### **1:30 – 3:00 p.m. | Open House Demonstrations**

This interactive session will feature five demonstration stations coordinated by faculty and staff from West Texas A&M University and Texas Tech University. Participants will rotate through stations in small groups, spending approximately 15 minutes at each station with brief transition periods between demonstrations.

Topics were selected by Dr. Mindy Brashears, U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Under Secretary for Food Safety to address key areas of interest for small and very small processors.

1. Validating HACCP Systems and Interventions
2. Intervention Ingredient Management
3. Stunning Demonstration and Validation of Stunning Equipment
4. Validating Water Activity on Shelf-Stable Products and pH Measurement on Fermented and Acidified Products
5. Properly Mixing and Validating Lactic Acid Concentration and Review of Listeria Alternatives 1, 2, and 3

Presenters will be faculty and staff from the Texas Tech University and West Texas A&M University Meat Science programs.

### **3:00 – 5:00 p.m. | Regulatory Resources, Business Support, and Open Q&A**

Following the demonstration session, participants will hear brief presentations (7–10 minutes each) from USDA agencies and the U.S. Small Business Administration. Speakers will include FSIS representatives (TBD), Thomas Kinsey, U.S. Small Business Administration, and James Redfield, Texas State Director for USDA Rural Development.

Topics are organized to guide participants through the lifecycle of a processing operation—from obtaining inspection and launching a facility to accessing funding, navigating labeling requirements, and preparing for recalls and regulatory challenges.

**USDA FSIS Office of Field Operations** – For those just getting started, this session will cover district structure, personnel roles, navigating the grant of inspection process, inspection expectations, timelines, and key resources available to new establishments.

**USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and USDA Rural Development (RD)** – For processors looking to start, grow, or expand operations, this session will highlight available USDA resources, technical assistance opportunities, and current grant and funding programs.

**U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)** – This session will focus on SBA loan programs, capital access, business development resources, financing strategies, and opportunities available to support processor growth and expansion.

**USDA FSIS Office of Policy and Program Development** – For establishments that are operating or nearing operation, this session will address labeling requirements, product standards, askFSIS, the Small Plant Help Desk, and how to locate and interpret regulatory guidance.

**USDA FSIS Office of Investigation, Enforcement and Audit** – This session will discuss the agency's role during investigations and outbreaks, recall preparedness and response, state meat and poultry inspection programs, and common compliance questions.

The session concludes with an extended open discussion, providing attendees direct access to USDA and SBA representatives for questions related to their specific operations, challenges, and future plans.

**Space is limited to 75 participants. Advance registration is encouraged. [Register Here](#)**

Contact Christine Alvarado with questions: [Christine.Alvarado@usda.gov](mailto:Christine.Alvarado@usda.gov)