

**Conference for Food Protection
2014 Issue Form**

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Issue: 2014 III-025**

Council Recommendation:	Accepted as Submitted _____	Accepted as Amended _____	No Action _____
Delegate Action:	Accepted _____	Rejected _____	

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Title:

Create Committee for Safe Cooking and Preparation of Rotisserie Chicken

Issue you would like the Conference to consider:

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is recommending the formation of a committee to develop a guideline for properly cooking rotisserie chicken to minimize the potential for *Salmonella* contamination because of undercooking or cross-contamination following the cooking step.

Although the FDA Food Code provides recommendations for cooking poultry products, rotisserie chicken is often cooked in large volumes in high-throughput areas, especially at retail (where hundreds of rotisserie chickens may be produced per day). There is a need for more guidance describing how these products can be safely cooked and handled, especially when large volumes of the product are made.

The guideline should identify steps that retailers can take to help ensure that rotisserie chicken is cooked thoroughly and handled using sanitary conditions that do not allow *Salmonella* adulteration of the product. The guideline should also provide specific actions about sanitation procedures for the equipment and utensils used to cook and handle rotisserie chicken.

Public Health Significance:

Salmonella infections are the most frequently reported cause of foodborne illness with an estimated 1 million illnesses attributed to the bacteria (Scallan et. al., 2011). FSIS has made it a priority goal to reduce public exposure to *Salmonella* from both Ready-to-Eat (RTE) and Non-RTE products (*Salmonella* Action Plan).

On October 7th, 2013, FSIS issued a Public Health Alert for chicken products produced at three facilities in California. Products were distributed to retail outlets in California, Oregon, and Washington State. On October 12th, FSIS announced that a retail store recalled 9,043 units (approximately 39,755 lbs.) of rotisserie chicken products that may be contaminated with a strain of *Salmonella* Heidelberg. This recall was initiated due to concerns about a group of *Salmonella* Heidelberg illnesses that may be associated with the consumption of rotisserie chicken products prepared in and purchased at the retail store. This group of illnesses was part of a larger cluster of *Salmonella* Heidelberg illnesses that were known to be drug resistant. According to a December 18, 2013 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report, a total of 416 persons infected with seven outbreak strains of

Salmonella Heidelberg were reported from 23 states and Puerto Rico, with 74% of ill persons reported from California. A total of 38% of ill patients were hospitalized, and no deaths were reported.

The 2013 Food Code recommends that poultry is cooked to an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C). However, further instructions are needed to ensure that all poultry is cooked thoroughly, and that rotisserie ovens are loaded properly to avoid cross contamination of cooked product from raw product. In addition, guidance is needed to avoid cross contamination of the product after it is removed from the oven, sanitation of equipment and utensils, and hot holding of the product before it is sold to consumers.

References:

Scallan E, Hoekstra RM, Angulo FJ, Tauxe RV, Widdowson MA, Roy SL, Jones JL, and Griffin PM. Foodborne illness acquired in the United States-major pathogens. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, Volume 17, Number 1, pages 7-15, January 2011.

Recommended Solution: The Conference recommends...:

that a CFP Committee be formed and charged with the following:

1) Development of a new guideline for retailers to properly cook rotisserie chicken and prevent the product from becoming contaminated after the cooking step. The guideline should incorporate the following:

- a) Steps to minimize potential for contamination and cross contamination during: receiving, storage, processing, cooking, and packaging of rotisserie chicken;
- b) Steps to properly sanitize rotisserie chicken equipment and utensils;
- c) Information about *Salmonella* contamination and cross contamination;
- d) Steps to hot hold the product until it is purchased by consumers; and
- e) Other relevant information identified by the committee.

2) Reporting back to the 2016 biennial meeting with its recommendations.

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