

**Conference for Food Protection
2016 Issue Form**

Issue: 2016 III-031

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

All information above the line is for conference use only.

Issue History:

This is a brand new Issue.

Title:

Amend Food Code – Include Definition for Curing

Issue you would like the Conference to consider:

A recommendation is being made to change the 2013 FDA Food Code Section 1-201.10 (B) to include a definition for "curing."

The FDA Food Code Section 3-502.11 discusses specialized processing methods that require a variance from the regulatory authority. A clear definition of what is considered "curing" is needed to provide both industry and regulatory personnel guidance on proceeding with variance submittal and HACCP Plan development.

Public Health Significance:

The FDA Food Code Annex 3 explains the rationale for FDA Food Code Section 3-502.11 by stating: "specific food processes that require a variance have historically resulted in more foodborne illness than standard processes." Also, these methods require specialized equipment or knowledge by food employees to be done safely, and can present a significant health risk if not done properly¹. When a variance is required, the FDA Food Code Section 8-201.13 states that a HACCP Plan must be prepared by the permit applicant or permit holder and approved by the regulatory authority. Creation of HACCP Plans by food service establishments can be costly², and therefore it is important to eliminate confusion regarding curing which requires a HACCP Plan.

Confusion results from products which may be considered "cured" to establishments due to the addition of curing salt or sodium nitrate but are kept otherwise within the time/temperature parameters outlined in the FDA Food Code Sections 3-501.16 and 3-501.17. The Code of Federal Regulations describes in 21CFR172.175 acceptable levels of sodium nitrite (200 parts per million) and sodium nitrate (500 parts per million) for use as a food additive. Because these products are allowable under 21CFR172.175, the addition of sodium nitrate or sodium nitrite with no other variation in the time/temperature parameters of the FDA Food Code would be regulated as Protection from Unapproved Additives, FDA Food Code Section 3-302.14, and would also be held to the requirements of FDA Food

Code Sections 3-202.12 Additives. Clarification needs to be provided in the FDA Food Code so that food establishments using sodium nitrite or sodium nitrate as a food additive only, without using it for true food preservation, do not use unnecessary resources on HACCP Plan development.

The FDA Food Code Annex 6 describes the process of curing in terms of food processing criteria. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a widely accepted definition of curing that is used for their regulations³. This definition is used throughout resources for food establishments^{4,5}. Additionally, the use of natural nitrate and nitrites from vegetable powders and juices should be considered in the definition of curing due to the increase popularity of natural foods⁶.

References:

1. "Annex 3." FDA 2013 Food Code. College Park, MD: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Food and Drug Administration, 2013. 465. Print.
2. Sharma, A., Roberts, K., & Seo, K. 2010. HACCP Cost Analysis in Retail Food Establishments. Food Protection Trends.
3. "What Is Curing?" *Ask Karen*. FSIS USDA, 26 Mar. 2009. Web. 28 Dec. 2015.
4. Forest JC, Aberle ED, Hedrick HB, Judge MD, Merkel RA. Principle of meat science. San Francisco: Freeman; 1975.
5. B.A. Nummer and Andress, E.L. 2002. Curing and Smoking Meats for Home Food Preservation Literature Review and Critical Preservation Points. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia, Cooperative Extension Service.
6. Sebranek, Joseph G., Bacus, James N. 2007. Cured meat products without direct addition of nitrate or nitrite: what are the issues? Meat Science.

Recommended Solution: The Conference recommends...:

that a letter be sent to the FDA recommending the 2013 Food Code be amended to include a new definition under Section 1-201.10 for "curing." Recommended language to read (new language underlined):

1-201.10 Statement of Application and Listing of Terms

(B) Terms Defined As used in this Code, each of the terms listed in ¶ 1-201.10(B) shall have the meaning stated below.

"Curing" means the addition of salt, nitrates or nitrites (either manufactured or naturally occurring), for preservation, color development, and flavor.

Submitter Information:

Name: Veronica Bryant
Organization: NC DHHS/EH Food Protection Branch
Address: 1632 Mail Service Center
City/State/Zip: Raleigh, NC 27699-1632
Telephone: 704-718-7866
E-mail: veronica.bryant@dhhs.nc.gov

Supporting Attachments:

- "Cured meat products without direct addition of nitrate or nitrite: what are"

It is the policy of the Conference for Food Protection to not accept Issues that would endorse a brand name or a commercial proprietary process.