

**Conference for Food Protection
2020 Issue Form**

Issue: 2020 III-018

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 issue was submitted for consideration at a previous biennial meeting, see issue: 2018-III-022, 2014-III-025; new or additional information has been included or attached.

Title:

Creation of a Rotisserie Chicken Food Safety Committee

Issue you would like the Conference to consider:

There were three reported *Salmonella* outbreaks involving rotisserie chicken cooked at retail food establishments during 2013 - 2019^{2,3,4}. Investigations in two of the outbreaks identified that inadequate cooking and cross contamination contributed to the outbreaks^{1,5} and that written procedures did not adequately address these contributing factors. Since multiple whole chickens are often cooked at one time in retail food establishments, maintaining and measuring appropriate temperature during cooking can be challenging. Findings from the outbreak investigations, and best practices developed to address these findings, could apply to any retail food establishment preparing whole rotisserie chickens as well as products such as chicken salad that use meat harvested from rotisserie chickens. Therefore, FSIS recommends that the Conference for Food Protection (CFP) create a committee to develop guidance for retailers that addresses the unique challenges associated with cooking rotisserie chickens. This information could also be used to develop training materials, of which could be used by Food Safety Managers as a reference in their Active Managerial Control Program.

Public Health Significance:

The Food Code recommends that raw poultry be cooked to 165°F for 15 seconds per §3-401.11(A)(3). However, there have been outbreaks related to rotisserie chicken not reaching the recommended temperature and cross-contamination that needs to be addressed in existing guidance. These challenges, such as ensuring temperature measurement is taken on the coldest part of the largest bird and controlling traffic within the raw and ready-to-eat areas of the retail establishment, were identified as contributing factors in the two outbreaks in 2013 and 2016-2017^{1,5}. The firm's procedures and training programs did not adequately address the food safety vulnerabilities unique to this product, such as variability in bird size, loading and unloading dozens of birds at a time into the rotisserie, taking temperatures at the proper location and depth, and preventing cross

contamination between the raw and RTE foods being prepared in the same space. The 2013 outbreak investigation involved at 32 case-patients that ate at a single retail food establishment. The 2016-2017 outbreak investigation involved 24 case-patients who reported consuming items containing rotisserie chicken at multiple stores of a single retail chain. In 2019, FSIS, CDC, and public health partners investigated a multistate *Salmonella* outbreak associated with chicken. Investigators identified a sub-cluster of 15 case-patients who had purchased rotisserie chicken or products made with harvested rotisserie chicken from a single grocery store location. In addition, in this 2019 outbreak investigation, a sample of leftover rotisserie chicken collected from a case-patient's home yielded the outbreak strain.

FSIS submitted issues to the 2014 CFP Biennial Meeting (2014 III_025) as well as to the 2018 CFP Biennial Meeting (2018 III_022) to create a Committee for Safe Cooking of Rotisserie Chicken. The focus was to develop further instructions to ensure that all poultry is cooked thoroughly, and that cross-contamination is avoided. No action was taken in response to either issue because it was felt that the cooking recommendations in the Food Code were sufficient. After each of the 2014 and 2018 CFP Biennial Meetings, an outbreak associated with rotisserie chicken occurred. Investigations following two of the outbreaks identified common challenges associated with ensuring rotisserie chickens are cooked to the recommended temperature. These challenges are not addressed by current recommendations in the Food Code. Specifically, investigation findings from two of the outbreaks indicated a potential for inadequate cooking of rotisserie chicken both because of the cooking procedures and inappropriate temperature monitoring. This can be attributed to the temperature of the largest bird not being monitored, variability of the location of temperature monitoring (e.g., breast, thigh, or both), variation in the depth of temperature measurement (surface and internal temperature measurements), and thermometers not properly calibrated. In addition, investigations noted handling practices provided opportunities for cross-contamination^{1,5}. Contact between smocks and aprons used for ready-to-eat production and those used for raw production and employee traffic between raw and ready-to-eat areas were not controlled. While cross contamination could be associated with any product, cooking of rotisserie chicken at retail food establishments presents a unique situation due to the handling of whole birds while skewering, loading, and unloading the rotisserie and handling during harvesting of leg, breast, and thigh meat. These unique issues are likely applicable across retail food establishments that produce rotisserie chicken.

Forming a committee to develop a guidance document on the safe handling and cooking of rotisserie chicken would provide a valuable resource for retailers. The committee would further identify lessons learned from past outbreaks and provide guidance to the retail industry. While FSIS can share best practices for cooking poultry products in federal establishments, collaborating with retail industry and state and local regulators will ensure the guidance will provide practical recommendations for proper handling and preparation of raw rotisserie chicken, cooking procedures to achieve lethality, temperature measurement protocols, and post-processing handling. By following the recommendations in the guideline, retail food establishments would be better able to ensure that Food Code recommendations related to cooking and cross-contamination of chicken are followed. This in turn should decrease the likelihood of foodborne illness being attributed to such products.

References (noted above with superscript numerals)

1. FSIS After Action Report (2019):
<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/recalls-and-public-health-alerts/foodborne-illness-investigations/outbreaks-salmonella-rotisserie-chicken-products-2016-2017>.
2. FSIS Recall Release (058-2013):
<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/recalls-and-public-health-alerts/recall-case-archive/archive/2013/recall-058-2013-release>
3. FSIS Recall Release (058-2013 Expanded):
<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/recalls-and-public-health-alerts/recall-case-archive/archive/2013/recall-058-2013-expanded>
4. FSIS 2016 Public Health Alert:
<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/newsroom/news-releases-statements-transcripts/news-release-archives-by-year/archive/2016/pha-100916>
5. Kissler, B. 2017. Assessing Contributing Factors for *Salmonella* I 4,[5],12, I:- Outbreak Investigations Associated with Pork and Rotisserie Chicken. International Association for Food Protection, July 10-12, 2017, Tampa, FL. Available at:
https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/a59f7d39-0bd1-4ce1-8561-df3824b08dea/IAFP-slides-kissler_071217.pdf?MOD=AJPERES.

Recommended Solution: The Conference recommends...:

The Conference recommends that a Rotisserie Chicken Food Safety Committee be convened of members from all constituencies in the CFP. The Conference recommends FSIS support this committee with agency resources, including active engagement from advisory members and FSIS subject matter experts. The Committee will be charged with:

1. Identifying best practices and existing guidance documents that relate to the preparation of rotisserie chicken at retail,
2. Developing a comprehensive guidance document for retail food establishments with best practices specific to rotisserie chicken preparation to ensure general Food Code recommendations are followed. These recommendations would include proper handling during preparation, cooking procedures to achieve lethality, temperature measurement protocol, and post-processing handling,
3. Determining appropriate mechanisms for distributing the guideline and related outreach, such as:
 1. Posting to state and local health department websites or resource libraries;
 2. Incorporating into CFP training programs and posting to the CFP website, and
 3. Requesting through FDA that the Food Code Annex be amended by adding a reference to the new guidance document and posting this information on the CFP website, and
4. Reporting the committee's findings and recommendations to the 2022 Biennial Meeting of the CFP.

Submitter Information 1:

Name: Meryl Silverman
Organization: USDA FSIS
Address: 1400 Independence Avenue SW
City/State/Zip: WASHINGTON, DC 20250
Telephone: 3015040844
E-mail: meryl.silverman@usda.gov

Submitter Information 2:

Name: Andrea Cote
Organization: USDA FSIS
Address: 1600 Clifton Road
City/State/Zip: Atlanta, GA 30329
Telephone: 404-718-3773
E-mail: andrea.cote@usda.gov

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.