

Update to CFP on FSIS Activities

1. Inspection of catfish

Under the provisions of the 2008 farm bill, FSIS has until January 2010 to issue final regulations and begin inspecting domestic and imported catfish. The catfish project involves creating regulations for a complete catfish inspection program from pond to plate. In addition to the regulations, FSIS will issue directives, notices, FR Notices, and compliance guides. The project entails holding public meetings, hiring new inspection staff, training the personnel involved in the inspection program, and developing outreach the works.

2. *Listeria monocytogenes* Sampling Programs

FSIS has several sampling programs that test for *Listeria monocytogenes* (*Lm*) in finished ready-to-eat (RTE) product. The programs are: ALLRTE (Random Verification Sampling of RTE Meat and Poultry Products), RTE001 (Risk-based Verification Testing of ONLY Post-Lethality Exposed RTE Meat and Poultry Products), RLM (Routine Risk-Based *Lm* Sampling), and IVT (Intensified Verification Testing). Only finished product samples are collected for the ALLRTE an RTE001 program. Food contact surface (FCS) and environmental samples are collected for the RLM and IVT programs in addition to finished product samples. Only the RLM sampling program is being modified at this time.

Starting in September 2008 and continuing until June 2009, the establishments for the RLM sampling program will be selected from the establishments that produce 95% of the domestic volume of RTE meat and poultry products. The selection of establishments for RLM sampling was previously based on risk derived from the risk-based algorithm. FSIS conducts RLM sampling in at least one establishment in each of the 15 districts per month. The number of sample units (3 finished product samples, 10 FCS samples, 5 environmental samples) collected is 3 for large plants, 2 for small plants, an 1 for very small plants. The EIAO provides the plant with at least one week's notice for conducting the FSA and RLM. Because there are multiple sampling programs and the 95% volume-based sampling could result in additional samples, it may appear on occasion that an establishment is being sampled excessively.

Commencing in July 2009, the RLM sampling will be piggy backed onto the FSIS FSA Prioritization model—which schedules FSAs at all FSIS establishments over a 4-year period. The Prioritization model is a risk-based algorithm that takes into account the factors that are also used in the RAD *Lm* risk model.

3. Risk assessment for non-intact beef

FSIS is conducting a risk assessment for non-intact beef products. The Agricultural Research Service Eastern Regional Research Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is leading the research effort to support the risk assessment. The risk assessment will address both blade or mechanically tenderized beef and injected beef. When the studies are complete, the Risk Assessment Division of the Office of Public Health Science will analyze the information and conduct the risk assessment. Completion of the projection is projected for mid to late 2009.

4. Partially cooked breaded poultry

In March 2006, FSIS recalled frozen stuffed chicken entrees. The entrees were partially cooked to set the breading but appeared as a ready-to-eat product. In response to the recall, FSIS developed guidelines for the labeling these products (http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Labeling_Policy_Guidance_Uncooked_Breaded_Boneless_Poultry_Products.pdf) and issued FSIS Notice 75-06. The recommendations included labeling that clearly indicated that the product was raw and not ready-to-eat, included validated cooking instructions, discouraged microwave cooking, and recommended use of a thermometer to determine product temperature at cooking.

Since the issuance of the guidelines and notice, salmonellosis has been linked to the consumption of the same types of products. The establishment involved in the 2006 recall had changed the product labeling to meet all the recommendations. FSIS is further pursuing this matter to determine what additional measures, if any, can be taken and how well the industry as a whole has addressed the issue of partially cooked products appearing as ready-to-eat.