

# **National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection**

## **Briefing Paper for the Committee**

### **FSIS Recall Effectiveness Checks**

#### **Purpose:**

FSIS is committed to public health protection by developing and implementing new risk-based approaches to effectiveness checks of meat and poultry recalls.

#### **Background:**

FSIS field compliance officers conduct effectiveness checks of meat and poultry recalls ensuring that proper and adequate customer notification is made by the recalling firm and that the firm makes all reasonable efforts to retrieve and appropriately dispose of the recalled products. Effectiveness checks allow the Agency to verify that the actions of the recalling firm are made swiftly and accurately in the best interest of public health. Upon compliance, the firm is officially notified by letter that the recall is completed and no further action is expected.

#### **Discussion:**

FSIS is currently updating and revising its recall directive (FSIS Directive 8080.1, Recall of Meat and Poultry Products) to reflect the Agency's reorganization and take into account the comments it received at the December 2002 recall process public meeting. The recall directive spells out the policy and procedures FSIS will take in cases of meat and poultry recalls. It describes how recalls are to be conducted by the establishment and the role of FSIS throughout the recall process. The directive discusses how public notification of recalls is to take place and provides information on the new risk-based system the Agency will use for determining the scope of effectiveness checks. This directive is expected to be implemented by June 2004.

The following changes will be made to improve the recall effectiveness check process:

1. The new recall effectiveness check verification process will be based on risk. Risk will be measured by combining the hazard and exposure that the recall potentially represents. The hazard associated with the recall will be represented by the class of recall. The potential exposure of the recall will be represented by the number of consignees associated with the recall. (Consignees will now be considered fixed locations where products are either purchased or consumed.) This risk-based system will allow the Agency to better target its resources to protect public health.

2. New statistically-based guidance will direct the number of effectiveness checks conducted. The number of checks will be based on the nature of the hazard and the number of consignees. Effectiveness checks will be most intensive for Class I recalls when they are related to school lunch, outbreaks or illnesses. The guidance will also address the recommended time frames for initiating and reporting the verification process which will be based on the class of the recall.
  
3. An objective strategy will be used to verify appropriate recall product disposition or destruction by consignees. This strategy includes a 100% verification of disposition or destruction records and on-site verification based on a percent of product that is adequate to provide confidence that records are accurate.

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