

PRODUCT RECALL GUIDELINES FOR FIRMS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Background and Objectives
2. The Recall Plan
3. Notifying FSIS of Recalls
4. Recall Assessment
5. Recall Termination
6. Recall Follow up

1. Background and Objectives

A recall is an effective method of removing from commerce any product that may be adulterated or misbranded. Firms such as a manufacturer, distributor, or importer take these actions as part of their responsibility to protect the public health and welfare.

A recall can be disruptive to a firm's operation and business; however, there are several steps that a firm can take to minimize this disruption. An operator of an inspected establishment should take measures that will ensure rapid and effective response if products that appear to be adulterated have entered commerce. The operator should prepare and maintain a detailed, written recall plan. This plan should describe, step by step, the procedures the firm will follow in case it becomes necessary to recall a product.

Official establishments are required to have HACCP plans that control hazards reasonably likely to occur and that identify in-plant corrective actions when there is a failure to control a critical control point (9 CFR 417.2-417.3). FSIS believes that establishments can identify corrective actions, including a recall if necessary when violative product has entered commerce. There is no regulatory requirement that an establishment includes this recall plan in its HACCP plan or as a prerequisite program; however, FSIS believes that prudent establishments will.

The guidance presented here is intended for all meat and poultry firms that may need to conduct a recall without regard to plant size or the number of people employed. Some of the recommendations may speak in terms of forming teams of employees to conduct certain activities related to recalls, or may seem to imply that sophisticated analyses of potential health hazard situations be conducted. However, the key activities discussed below can be performed by one or two individuals in circumstances where there are limited resources. For example, in a small plant operation, the owner or manager of the establishment may be the recall coordinator as well as the contact for the Agency, the firm's consignees, and the public. The Agency does not expect smaller establishments to hire

personnel simply to prepare for recalls. On the contrary, the Agency strongly encourages the management of all firms to prepare themselves, and their personnel regularly employed, for the potential of having to conduct a recall.

2. The Recall Plan

One person should be identified as the recall coordinator (firms may use other titles as appropriate) to prepare for and coordinate all activities related to recalls. The recall coordinator should be knowledgeable about every aspect of the firm's operations, including purchasing, processing, quality assurance, distribution, and consumer complaints. The recall coordinator should select people to form a recall team. The recall coordinator should be authorized to make decisions in carrying out a recall and should report to top management at regular, specified intervals.

A Recall Plan should address the following elements:

a. Identification of Recall Personnel - All internal and external personnel to be involved in the recall actions, along with their respective telephone and facsimile numbers, e-mail addresses, etc., as appropriate, should be identified. For each identified individual, an alternate to act in his or her absence should be specified. The roles and responsibilities of every person identified should be clearly specified.

b. Recall Procedures – The recall plan should specify, in detail, actions that the firm will take in deciding whether to recall a product and in effecting the recall should it decide to do so.

c. Evaluation of Health Hazards – A firm may collect and evaluate any information it has regarding the nature and extent of the associated health risks. A firm may take into account the following factors if it chooses to submit this information to the FSIS Recall Committee during the preliminary recall evaluation:

- Whether any disease or injuries have already occurred from the use of the product.
- Assessment of the hazard to various segments of the population,(e.g., children, the elderly, immuno-compromised individuals, etc.), who are expected to be exposed to the product being considered for recall, with particular attention paid to the hazard to those individuals who may be at greatest risk.
- Assessment of the relative degree of seriousness of the health hazard to which the population at risk would be exposed.
- Assessment of the likelihood of occurrence of the hazard.
- Assessment of the consequences (immediate or long-range) of the hazard's occurrence.

d. Scope of Recall – The plan should outline how the establishment will assess the amount and kind of product that is implicated in a problem. When the problem involves contamination with microbial pathogens, FSIS generally considers all products produced under a single HACCP plan between performance of complete cleaning and sanitizing procedures (clean-up to clean-up) to be potentially involved. However, sanitation does not necessarily define the scope of all product removal actions.

Some examples of product removal actions where the scope is defined other than by clean-up to clean-up include: the contamination of a vat of product with a foreign object, the use of an incorrect label, or the use of the same source of raw materials in other lots on other days of production. FSIS will consider such factors as the establishment's coding of product; the pathogen of concern; the processing and packaging; the equipment; the establishment's HACCP plan monitoring and verification activities (including microbiological testing); the establishments Sanitation SOP records; and whether some or all of the products controlled by the same or substantially similar HACCP plans have been affected.

If the use of the "clean-up to clean-up" approach does not define the scope of the problem, the firm will have to identify the product involved by defining, for example, when the problem began, and when it ended. The plan should specify how the firm will determine the scope of the implicated product for various scenarios and contingencies.

e. Records - A system of product coding sufficient to permit positive product identification and to facilitate effective recalls should be in use by all firms. Records should be maintained for a period of time that exceeds the shelf life and expected use of the product and at least the length of time specified in FSIS regulations concerning record retention (9 CFR 320; 381.175).

Distribution records should be maintained as are necessary to facilitate identification and location of products that are recalled. These records can be used to quickly provide FSIS with requested information regarding product distribution. Records such as bills of sale, invoices, and shipping papers are required to be kept with respect to each transaction in which any livestock, poultry or poultry food, or meat or meat food product is purchased, sold, shipped, received or otherwise handled by the establishment in connection with any business subject to the FMIA. These records should include names and address of consignees, shipment method, date of shipment, etc. It is also useful to note consignees that are hospitals, chains, restaurants, distributors, independent retailers or sellers to the National School Lunch Program or the Department of Defense.

Production records should be maintained that would facilitate the traceback of product ingredients in order to help determine causes of adulteration and define the scope of recalls. In the event that a recall becomes necessary because of an Agency sample testing positive or an outbreak of foodborne illness, verified records could be used to demonstrate limiting factors that may narrow the scope

of a recall by a particular plant. Moreover, the records would be essential in facilitating the traceback of the contamination to its source.

In practical terms related to *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 as detailed in FSIS Directive 10,010.1 establishments are expected to maintain records of their suppliers of ground beef raw materials and to make the records available to Agency personnel upon request in order for them, in the event that a sample of ground beef is reported positive, to notify suppliers that their product may have been the source of the contamination. The information inspection program personnel collect includes the name of the supplying establishment, the supplier's lot number, and production date of the product. This information has proven to be an effective tool for initiating tracebacks in an effort to find the source of contamination.

If a recall of ground beef is necessary because of contamination with *E. coli* O157:H7, a prudent establishment may be able to limit the amount of affected product if it has a detailed recordkeeping system in place. Carefully maintained production records can serve a vital public health purpose by providing an establishment and the Agency with an essential means of pinpointing potential sources of contamination and allow for greater accuracy in deciding which products may be affected. The kinds of records comprising such a system include production or grinding logs showing the times of each grind, the formulation or blend of raw ingredients including amounts, supplier lot identification, the finished product lot and subplot identification, and any test results associated with either the raw materials or finished product. The records should indicate and track which lots or sublots of a grinding establishment's ground beef particular raw materials were used and the amounts of each that were used.

For example, establishment 38 is a beef slaughter/fabricating/grinding establishment. It produces approximately 50,000 pounds of ground beef products per day. The raw materials used in the ground beef include its own in-house generated boneless beef, as well as boneless beef products purchased from other establishments. The establishment tests each lot of raw material it purchases from outside sources as well as those that it generates in-house and does not use any boneless beef that tests positive on the *E. coli* O157:H7 screening test. It also tests its finished ground beef by pulling a sample representing every 2000-pound blender batch and combining those four batches into one composite sample representing an 8000-pound subplot of the day's lot. For example, a given day's ground beef production log might (in part) look like this:

Ground Beef Log

Date : November 3, 2003

Product ID	Sublot #	Blend #	Time of Sample	Product Ground	Amt (lbs)	Sample Result	Date	Initials
Good Grind	1	1	7:50 AM	Est 38 - 103003 Lean trim	1000	Negative	05-Nov	QC
				Est 42 - 102903 80% trim	500			
				Est 38A - 103103 50% trim	300			
				Est 38 - 103003 Head/Cheek meat	100			
				Est Aust. 38B - 90603 Cow Shoulder	100			

Note: [Blend #2, #3, and #4 making up subplot #1 would be recorded in the same way. The sample result represents the entire subplot.]

Product ID	Sublot #	Blend #	Sample Time	Product Ground	Amt (lbs)	Sample Result	Date	Initials
Best Grind	2	1	9:20 AM	Est 38 - 103003 Lean trim	1000	Negative	05-Nov	QC
				Est Aust. 38B - 90603 Cow Shoulder	800			
				Est 42 - 102903 80% trim	200			

Note: [The next three blends making up the subplot would be recorded in the same way. The sample result represents the entire subplot.]

Product ID	Sublot #	Blend #	Sample Time	Product Ground	Amt (lbs)	Sample Result	Date	Initials
Meat Loaf Patty Mix	5	1	2:30 PM	Est 38 - 103103 50% trim	700	Negative	05-Nov	QC
				Est 42 - 102703 Boneless Veal	400			
				Est 38 - 103003 Lean Trim	200			
				Est 38 - 103103 Head/Cheek meat	200			
				Est Aust. 38B - 90603 Cow Shoulder	500			

Note: [The next three blends making up the subplot would be recorded in the same way. The sample result represents the entire subplot.]

In the event of a recall, this establishment will be able to identify the more likely sources of contamination from its production records. To illustrate, suppose subplot 5 from the chart above was the only lot that tested positive for *E. coli* O157:H7. The establishment could review their records and identify two sources of raw materials, Est. 42 boneless veal and Est. 38 head/cheeks (103003), that were not used in the other sublots. These two source materials would be more likely than the others to be the vector of contamination in the finished product.

Given this information, the establishment could:

1. Review its dressing procedures and the boning and handling of its head/cheek meat in order to find and eliminate any potential causes of contamination;
2. Confirm the test results for the lot that had the screen test positive;
3. Divert the rest of that lot of head/cheek meat away from ground beef production and into a process with an adequate kill step;
4. Notify its supplier of boneless veal, Est. 42, of its findings regarding that establishment's product; and
5. Inform the Agency of its findings, conclusions, and actions taken.

The establishment may also be able to demonstrate through this type of testing program and thorough recordkeeping that the previous sublots of product were not represented by the positive test from subplot 5. The previous sublots would not need to be removed from commerce if the establishment could adequately demonstrate through additional confirmation testing that they were not adulterated. For production records such as those discussed here to be most useful to an establishment and FSIS, they should be incorporated into an establishment's HACCP plan or be made part of a prerequisite program.

f. Depth of Recall – The plan should specify how the depth of recall will be determined for various scenarios and contingencies. The depth is dependent upon the extent of distribution and the level to which the recalled product was distributed. Levels of recall depth may be:

- Wholesale level, the distribution level between the manufacturer and retail or user level;
- HRI level, which includes hotels, restaurants and other institutional type customers and any intermediate wholesale level to reach those users;
- Retail level, which includes retail sellers and any intermediate wholesale level to reach the retail sellers; or
- Consumer level, which includes household consumers and any prior level distribution.

g. Recall Communications - A recalling firm is responsible for promptly notifying each of its affected consignees about the recall. The plan should specify what means of communication will be used and should include sample communication for various scenarios and contingencies. The format, content,

and extent of a recall communication should be commensurate with the hazard associated with the product being recalled, the strategy developed, and the recall plan. In general terms, the purpose of a recall communication (see attached sample letter) is to convey:

- That the product in question is subject to a recall;
- That further distribution or use of any remaining product should cease immediately;
- Where applicable and required as part of the recall strategy, that the direct consignee should in turn notify its consignees that received the product about the recall;
- Instructions regarding what to do with the product; and
- Contact Information for questions (e.g. a name and toll free number).

i. Recall Communication Implementation - As determined by the recall strategy, developed in conformance with the recall plan, a recall communication can be accomplished by telephone, facsimile transmission, e-mail, or special delivery letters conspicuously marked, preferably in bold red type, on the letter and envelope "URGENT - FOOD RECALL." If firms communicate their recall strategy by telephone calls or other personal contacts, FSIS expects the firms to document and follow-up this communication in some written form (e.g., letter, e-mail message, fax).

ii. Recall Communication Content - A recall communication should be written in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Be brief and to the point;
- Identify clearly the product and any other pertinent descriptive information to enable accurate and immediate definition of the product including, as appropriate;
 - Product/brand name
 - Product code
 - Package/case size
 - Package/case date code
 - Lot number/expiration date
 - UPC code
- Provide an explanation of the risk involved in consuming the product;
- Explain concisely the reason for the recall and the hazard involved;

- Provide specific instructions on what should be done with respect to the recalled products;
- Request an official, written response from the firm;
- Provide a ready means for the recipient of the communication to report to the recalling firm whether it has any of the product, (e.g., by allowing the recipient to place a collect call to the recalling firm);
- The recall communication should not contain irrelevant qualifications, promotional materials, or any other statement that may detract from the message; and
- Provide firm contact information (for questions).

Where necessary, follow-up communications should be sent to those who fail to respond to the initial product removal communication within a specified timeframe (e.g., within 24 hours).

The recall plan should specify what means of communication will be used, including sample communications, for various scenarios and contingencies.

iii. Responsibility of Recipient - Consignees that receive a recall communication should immediately carry out all instructions set forth therein and, where necessary, extend the recall to their consignees.

h. Public Notification - The purpose of public notification is to alert the public that a product is being recalled. A firm should consider the need for and means of public notification upon initiating a recall. The recall plan should specify what means of public notification will be used, if appropriate, for various scenarios and contingencies such as:

- General public notification by press release through the general news media, either national or local as appropriate; or
- Public notification through specialized media, (e.g., professional, trade or ethnic press, store placards or notification to specific customers (if known)).

A Recall Plan should include contact information for all potential media outlets such as television stations, radio stations, and newspapers and with local, State, and regional coverage areas as well as the national wire services. If the actual contacts are not specified, reference sources of current media contacts for all possible recall scenarios should be specified in the Recall Plan.

NOTE: Regardless of the public notification action taken by the recalling firm, FSIS will generally issue a press release for Class I and Class II recalls. For Class III recalls, generally the Agency will only issue a Recall Notification Report (RNR). The Agency will also post them on the FSIS web site (www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/recalls/rec_actv.htm) for all recalls. In

addition, the RNR will be sent, by means of E-mail or facsimile transmission, to public health officials throughout the country.

i. Firm's Effectiveness Checks - The purpose of effectiveness checks is to verify that all consignees at the recall depth specified by the strategy have received notification about the recall and have taken appropriate action. The methods for contacting consignees should be specified, for various scenarios and contingencies, and may be accomplished by personal visits, telephone calls, letters, facsimile transmission, or a combination thereof. This is a means of assessing the progress and efficacy of a recall. The method for determining the number of effectiveness checks to be conducted and the manner for conducting them should be determined for various scenarios and contingencies in the recall plan. FSIS will verify the firm's effectiveness checks.

To assess the effectiveness of a recall, a firm needs the following information:

- How much product is implicated in the recall?
- How is this product identified to a customer/retailer (i.e., lot markings)?
- How much product is within a firm's control?
- How much product has left the firm's control?
- How many locations did the firm ship the product to, and where are those locations?
- How did the firm communicate the product removal action to those who received the product; did the firm document this contact; and did the firm ask for and receive a written response acknowledging receipt of the information?
- What actions were taken with the product and by whom?
- If product was destroyed, was destruction witnessed and documented; were Agency personnel present?
- Is there a written record of when the issue was identified, when customers were notified, and when the firm received notification that product was either placed on hold or was no longer in a customer's control?
- Can the firm account for most of the product? Does the math add up? (The firm produced this amount, shipped this amount, had this amount returned, destroyed or determined to be consumed or irretrievable.)

j. Returned Product Control and Disposition - The means of controlling and disposing of or correcting the defect in the stock returned during a recall should be specified in the recall plan. Remember to check with the Agency before destroying product; FSIS may wish to witness the destruction. (Destroy means

to render inedible for humans and animals, and all labeling is made unusable for trade.)

k. Recall Simulations - In order to evaluate how well its plan will work in the event of an actual recall situation, the establishment should conduct periodic simulations. A simulated recall should involve the selection, without prior notice to personnel involved in the simulated recall, of at least one lot of product that has been distributed in commerce. A hypothetical reason for recalling the product should be specified, and the recall plan should be followed to establish a strategy for recalling the product. Such scenarios may be simple (e.g. one contaminated lot of product) or very complex (e.g. contaminated ingredient used in multiple products and involving rework). A firm may wish to begin with simple scenarios and work up to more complex simulations for their operation. The simulation should proceed at least to the point at which communication is to be made beyond the firm's organizational limits; however, full details of who will be contacted at that point, and how contact will be established, should be specified. Firms, especially those with products distributed by multi-layer distribution systems, may wish to consider conducting at least one simulation in which the product to be recalled has been shipped beyond the firm's initial customer to one or more of the consignee's customers. Taking the simulation beyond the recalling firm's organization could reveal potential problems in the retrieval process that possibly could be addressed before a "live" recall occurs.

A recall simulation file should be maintained to record the details and results of all simulated recalls. The recall simulation file should include the name, address, and telephone number of clients for the test lot, production records, the inventory, and distribution of the test lot. A recall simulation is used to determine whether the recall procedure is capable of identifying and quickly controlling a given lot of potentially affected product and reconciling the quantities produced, quantities in inventory, and quantities distributed. In addition, a recall simulation will identify potential problems and allow personnel to become familiar with recall procedures. If problems are identified during a recall simulation, the recall plan and procedures should be revised to correct the problems.

3. Notifying FSIS of Recalls

FSIS expects that, once it is determined that a recall will be undertaken, the recalling firm will immediately notify FSIS. When doing so, the firm should notify the Recall Management Staff (RMS) or the District Office in the FSIS district where the firm is located. The basic information that should be conveyed to FSIS includes, but is not limited to, the following (see FSIS Directive 8080.1):

- Complete and accurate product identity, including product labels.
- The reason for the recall and details about when and how any defect or deficiency was discovered.

- An evaluation of the risk associated with consumption of the product and how the evaluation was made (although FSIS will make its own determination of risk).
- How much of the product in question was produced and during what period of time.
- An estimate of how much of the product is in distribution and how long it has been in distribution.
- Area of the geographical distribution of the recalled product by State and, if exported, by country.
- Information about which distributors and customers received the product.
- Copies of any firm correspondence with distributors, brokers, or customers relating to the recall strategy or actions, and a copy of any proposed press release.
- The name, title, and telephone number of the recall coordinator for the firm.

This information may initially be provided orally. However, it should be confirmed to the RMS by using the worksheet. For clarity, it is recommended that the worksheet be filled out and submitted via e-mail. Doing so will prevent errors resulting from hard-to-read handwriting or illegibility because of poor fax transmission. Early on in the recall process, FSIS will generally send a program employee designated by the District Office to the establishment to verify distribution records and confirm facts.

4. Recall Assessment

The firm is expected to regularly, and in a timely manner, report the results of checks of the effectiveness of its efforts to retrieve the product to FSIS in order to keep the Agency apprised of the status of recalls in progress. The reporting frequency will be agreed upon by the recalling firm and FSIS. FSIS believes that the higher the degree of public health hazard, the more frequently the firm should report. FSIS will conduct its own effectiveness checks as specified in FSIS Directive 8080.1, Rev. 4. In addition, FSIS expects that the firm will notify the agency when it appears that the recall has been completed.

Unless otherwise specified, the recall status report should contain the following information:

- The number of consignees notified of the recall, the dates notifications were made, and the method of notification that the firm used for each consignee.
- The number of consignees responding to the recall communication.

- The quantity of product each consignee had on hand at the time the communication was received.
- The number and identity of consignees that did not respond.
- The quantity of product returned or held by each consignee.
- An estimated time for completion of the recall.

5. Recall Termination

A recall will be terminated when FSIS has completed the recall effectiveness checks and determined that the recalling firm has made all reasonable efforts to recall the product, and that it has either disposed of the recovered product, or the product is under FSIS control (retention or detention) or has documented control by the firm. To effect a timely termination of the recall, the firm should provide all relevant information to the Agency once the firm has determined that it has retrieved all possible product. The firm should send to the relevant District Office, a “closeout memo” containing a list of customers, the amount of product retrieved, and the actions taken. Once the Agency determines that the firm has made all reasonable efforts to recall the product, the RMS will notify the firm in writing.

6. Recall Follow-up

Once a recall action has been completed, the establishment should notify its customers that the recall action has been completed, thank them for their assistance, and provide assurances that the problem has been corrected. The Recall Team should evaluate how the recall action was conducted to determine whether things should have been handled differently, and what, if any, changes should be made to the plan.

MODEL RECALL NOTIFICATION LETTER

DATE

CUSTOMER FIRM NAME & ADDRESS

ATTN: **CONTACT PERSON NAME & TITLE**

Re: RECALL OF **TYPE OF PRODUCT**

Dear Sir or Madam:

This letter is to confirm our telephone conversation that **Company Name** is recalling the following product because **Specify Recall Reason.**

Describe the product, including name, brand, code, package size and type, establishment number, etc.

We request that you review your inventory records and segregate and hold the above product. If you have shipped any of this product, we request that you contact your customers and ask them to retrieve the product and return it to you. Once you have retrieved all of the product, please contact us. We will arrange to have the product shipped to our facility. Please do not destroy the product. We will credit your account for product returned.

We are undertaking this action in cooperation with the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. FSIS officials may contact you to confirm that you have received this notice and are cooperating in this action.

Your prompt action will greatly assist **Company Name** in this action. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact **Company Recall Coordinator** at **Phone Number.**

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Company Official Name and Title

MODEL PRESS RELEASE – FOREIGN OBJECT

[State] Company Recalls [Product] That May Contain Glass

[City], [Date]—[Company], a [City, State], establishment, is voluntarily recalling approximately [number of pounds] of [product] because the product may contain [hazardous material, e.g., glass]. Consumption could cause [lacerations].

Specific information on how to identify the product (e.g., the type of container [plastic/metal/glass], size or appearance of the product, product brand name, establishment number and location on package, flavors, codes and expiration dates, etc.).

Product was distributed [Listing of the states and areas where the product was distributed and how it reached consumers (e.g., through retail stores, mail order, direct delivery)].

Status of the number of and types of related illnesses that have been confirmed to date (e.g., “No illnesses have been reported to date”).

Brief explanation about what is known about the problems, such as how it was revealed, and what is known about its source. An example of such a description: “The recall was the result of the plant finding several pieces of glass on routine examination of the product. The company immediately contacted FSIS and has ceased distribution of the product as FSIS and the company continue their investigation as to what caused the problem.”

Because of the potential hazard, [name of company] urges consumers who have purchased these products not to eat them but to return them to the place of purchase.

Information on what consumers should do with the product and where they can get additional information (e.g., “Consumers who have purchased Brand X are urged not to eat the product but to return it to the place of purchase for a full refund).

Consumers with questions about the recall may contact [name and position or company division], at [phone number], or the consumer hotline at [toll free number]. Media with questions may contact [name and position] at [phone number].

####

MODEL PRESS RELEASE – ALLERGEN

[State] Company Recalls [Product] Because Of Undeclared Allergen

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE

COMPANY CONTACT AND PHONE NUMBER

**FOOD CO. ISSUES ALLERGY ALERT ON UNDECLARED
ALLERGEN IN PRODUCT**

[Company Name] of [City, State] is recalling [Quantity and Type of Product], because it may contain undeclared [specific type of allergen, e.g., egg, milk, etc]. People who have an allergy or severe sensitivity to [specific type of allergen] run the risk of serious or life-threatening allergic reaction if they consume these products.

Specific information on how the product can be identified (e.g., the type of container [plastic/metal/glass], size or appearance of the product, product brand name, establishment number and location on package, flavors, codes, expiration dates, etc.).

Product was distributed [Listing of the states and areas where the product was distributed and how it reached consumers (e.g., through retail stores, mail order, direct delivery)].

Status of the number of and types of related illnesses that have been confirmed to date (e.g., “The company has received two reports from consumers allergic to [specific allergen] of mild adverse reactions.”).

Brief explanation about what is known about the problem, such as how it was revealed, and what is known about its source. An example of such a description: “The recall was initiated after it was discovered that product containing (the allergen) was distributed in packaging that did not reveal the presence of (the allergen).”

Information on what consumers should do with the product and where they can get additional information (e.g., “Consumers who have purchased Brand X are urged to return it to the place of purchase for a full refund. Consumers with questions may contact the company at 1-800-XXX-XXXX”).

###

MODEL PRESS RELEASE – *L. monocytogenes*

[State] Company Recalls [Product] For Possible *Listeria* Contamination

[City], [date]– [Company Name], a [city, state] company, is voluntarily recalling approximately [quantity] of ready-to-eat [product] that may be contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*.

Specific information on how to identify the product (e.g., the type of container [plastic/metal/glass], size or appearance of the product, product brand name, flavors, codes and expiration dates, etc.).

Product was distributed [Listing of the states and areas where the product was distributed and how it reached consumers (e.g., through retail stores, mail order, direct delivery)].

Description of illness: “Consumption of food contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes* can cause listeriosis, an uncommon but potentially fatal disease. Healthy people rarely contract listeriosis. Listeriosis can cause high fever, severe headache, neck stiffness and nausea. Listeriosis can also cause miscarriages and stillbirths, as well as serious and sometimes fatal infections in those with weak immune systems – infants, the frail or elderly and persons with chronic disease, HIV infection or in chemotherapy.” Status of the number of and types of related illnesses that have been confirmed to date (e.g., “No illnesses have been reported to date. Anyone concerned about an illness should contact a physician.”).

Brief explanation about what is known about the problems, such as how it was revealed, and what is known about its source. An example of such a description: “The problem was discovered through routine FSIS microbiological testing.”

Information on what consumers should do with the product and where they can get additional information (e.g., “Consumers who have purchased Brand X are urged to return it to the place of purchase for a full refund. Media with questions about the recall may contact [Name and position] at [phone number]. Consumers with questions about the recall may contact [Name and position] at [phone number].

Consumers with food safety questions can phone the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555. The hotline is available in English and Spanish and can be reached from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Eastern Time) Monday through Friday. Recorded food safety messages are available 24 hours a day.

####