

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

FSIS NOTICE

56-12

9/14/12

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF NEW CONTAINERS WHEN COLLECTING RAW GROUND BEEF SAMPLES FOR *E. COLI* O157:H7 AND *SALMONELLA* TESTING

I. PURPOSE

This notice clarifies instructions to inspection program personnel (IPP) for collecting raw ground beef samples for the MT43 and MT43S sampling programs described in [FSIS Notice 35-12 New Containers for Use When Collecting Raw Beef Samples for *Escherichia coli* \(STEC\) Testing](#). MT43 is the program for routine testing of ground beef in establishments for *E. coli* O157:H7, and MT43S is the program for routine testing of ground beef in low volume establishments (< 1,000 lbs/production day) for *Salmonella*. This notice instructs IPP to:

1. Whenever possible, collect ground beef product for the MT43 and MT43S sampling programs in its **final package**;
2. Collect a **2-pound** sample of ground beef in one or more final packages, if available; and
3. If ground beef is not available in its final package or if the final packages are too heavy, collect ground beef product by filling 3 Whirl-pak™ bags to the fill-line.

II. PROPER COLLECTION OF RAW GROUND BEEF PRODUCT SAMPLES

A. IPP are to collect ground beef samples for the MT43 and MT43S sampling programs that are in their **final package**, whenever possible. IPP are to collect a 2-pound sample of ground beef in its final package. The FSIS ground beef sample size has increased from the 1-pound sample, as previously stated in [FSIS Directive 10.010.1 Verification of Activities for *Escherichia coli* \(*E. coli*\) O157:H7 in Raw Beef Products, Ch. III., A., 2.](#), in order to facilitate lab analyses. See the picture to the right for an example of product in its final package.



DISTRIBUTION: Electronic

NOTICE EXPIRES: 10/1/13

OPI: OPPD

B. IPP are to put the product in its final packaging in the larger, non-sterile bag provided with the sampling supplies. IPP are to collect the appropriate number of packaged products, so that the sample equals two pounds. For example, in the picture to the right, two 1-pound packages are included in the larger, non-sterile bag.



NOTE: For product in its final packaging, IPP do not use the 3 Whirl-pak™ bags displaying a fill-line.

C. If product is not available in the final package or the final package is too heavy, IPP are to collect grab samples using aseptic technique. In this situation, IPP are to use the 3 Whirl-pak™ bags and fill the 3 Whirl-pak™ bags to the fill-line as shown in the picture to the right. Filling each of the 3 Whirl-pak™ bags to the fill line results in approximately a 2-pound sample of ground beef product. IPP do not need to weigh the sample.



D. IPP are to collect a 2-pound sample of ground beef either in the final package, if available, or by using the 3 Whirl-pak™ bags displaying a fill-line regardless of whether they receive an MT43 sampling task or both an MT43 and MT43S sampling task. IPP who receive both an MT43 and MT43S sampling task are to complete and ship two sample request forms (one for MT43 and one for MT43S sampling task) with one product sample.

III. DATA ANALYSIS

On a quarterly basis, the Data Analysis and Integration Group (DAIG) within the Office of Data Integration and Food Protection (ODIFP) will review and analyze FSIS *E. coli* O157:H7 collection and laboratory analysis rates. These analyses will be shared with the Office of Policy and Program Development (OPPD) and the Office of Public Health Science (OPHS) to inform potential changes to Agency verification procedures or other policy to prevent *E. coli* O157:H7 contamination of raw beef products. In addition, members of the Risk, Innovations, and Management Division (RIMD) will analyze askFSIS questions received to determine if the number of questions regarding whether to collect ground beef product in the final package and the amount of product to collect have decreased since the issuance of the notice.

Direct all questions regarding this notice to the Risk, Innovations, and Management Division through askFSIS at <http://askfsis.custhelp.com> or by telephone at 1-800-233-3935. When submitting a question, use the Submit a Question tab, and enter the following information in the fields provided:

Subject Field: Enter **Notice 56-12 Use of New Containers**
Question Field: Enter question with as much detail as possible.
Product Field: Select **General Inspection Policy** from the drop-down menu.
Category Field: Select **Sampling and E. coli O157:H7** from the drop-down menu.
Policy Arena: Select **Domestic (U.S.) Only** from the drop-down menu.

When all fields are complete, press the **Submit** button.

Acting Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy and Program Development