

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

FSIS NOTICE

62-09

9/10/09

DO NOT IMPLEMENT THIS NOTICE UNTIL: OCTOBER 1, 2009

**COMPOSITING OF ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES COLLECTED DURING ROUTINE
RISK-BASED *Listeria monocytogenes* (RLm) SAMPLING**

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this notice is to provide instructions to Enforcement, Investigations and Analysis Officers (EIAOs) for collecting environmental (non-food contact) samples during RLm sampling and completing FSIS Form 10,210-3. This notice also informs EIAOs that the project identification code for environmental samples has been changed from RLMENVR to RLMENVC to denote that the samples will be composited at the laboratory.

II. BACKGROUND

FSIS is initiating a structured process for conducting Food Safety Assessments (FSA) at all federally inspected establishments, cycling through each establishment at least once every four-year period. Consequently, for establishments that produce post-lethality exposed ready-to-eat (RTE) products, FSIS will also conduct routine risk-based *Listeria monocytogenes* (RLm) sampling at the time of the FSA. This effort necessitates an increase in the number of establishments scheduled for sampling each month and a modification to the laboratory procedures.

According to FSIS Directive 10,240.5, RLm samples are collected in sampling units of 10 food contact surface, 5 environmental (non-food contact surface), and 3 product samples. Previously, the 5 RLm environmental samples were analyzed individually using separate RLMENVR forms. However, In order to accommodate the increased number of samples generated under the RLm program, FSIS laboratory personnel will composite the 5 environmental swab samples. The methodology for collecting the RLm environmental samples at the official establishment will not change – samples will still be collected individually. However, with the issuance of this notice, a single RLMENVC form will be used for all 5 swab samples and one result will be reported.

In situations where a for-cause FSA is conducted, such as during Intensified Verification Testing (IVT), FSIS laboratory personnel will not composite environmental swab samples.

DISTRIBUTION: Electronic

NOTICE EXPIRES: 10/1/2010

OPI: OPPD

III. SAMPLE COLLECTION

A. EIAOs are to:

1. Collect 5 separate environmental (non contact surface) swabs per sampling unit following the instructions in Directive 10,300.1. Use only one **RLMENVC** form per unit.
2. In block 28 of the FSIS Form 10,210-3, under question 3, state the number of swabs submitted for each site category. The five swabs may be from the same sites or different sites. If a sample site swabbed does not fit any of the site categories listed in question 3, then next to choice "J-Other/Details" the EIAO is to state the number of swabs along with a short written description (not to exceed 50 characters in the space provided next to that option) of the sites swabbed.

Example of a properly completed question 3 in block 28 of the 10,210-3 form:

Environmental Sites: write in the number of each swab site (1-5) below:		
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	A -Drain	<input type="checkbox"/> D -Wheel(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	B -Table	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
<input type="checkbox"/>	C -Floor Mat	<input type="checkbox"/> F -Slicer
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	J -Other/Details:	<input type="checkbox"/> On-off switch; supply air duct

3. Place each swab in a separate whirl-pak bag. The EIAO is to use a separate sample seal set (FSIS form 7355-A/B) for each individual swab sample collected. Place one separately numbered identification label on each swab sample, and place a corresponding identification label on the form. Place all five bar-coded labels from side-by-side in block 33 of the RLMENVC form.

NOTE: Environmental (non contact) brine samples will not be composited. Environmental brine samples will still be collected using the RLMENVR form. A separate RLMENVR form must be requested by the EIAO along with special supplies for brine collection. RLMCONT forms will still be used for the collection of brine samples that contact product.

4. Place all five swab samples that are in separate whirl-pak bags, and a single RLMENVC form from each sampling unit in a separate large Ziplock bag. Fold over the top of the bag and seal it with a bar-coded identification label (FSIS Form 7355-2B).
5. Submit all five swabs per sampling unit with a single RLMENVC form. The laboratory is to composite the five swab samples and post one result on the Laboratory Electronic Application for Results Notification (LEARN). The description of the sites that will appear in LEARN will be a coding of the information provided in question 3 from block 28. For the example provided in Section A.2 above, LEARN would display "2A1E2J On-off switch; supply air duct" as the site information.

Refer questions regarding this notice to the Risk and Innovations Management Division through askFSIS at <http://askfsis.custhelp.com> or at 1-800-233-3935 by pressing 1 and then 4.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy S. Deffen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy and Program Development