

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

FSIS NOTICE

97-08

12/11/08

MELAMINE TESTING OF RETAIL MEAT AND POULTRY PRODUCTS

I. PURPOSE

In light of recent disclosures of melamine being found in certain imported food products, FSIS has determined that it is prudent to do a small amount of sampling to see if there is any reason to be concerned about the presence of this chemical in meat and poultry products. Therefore, this notice is being issued to inform Investigators from the Compliance and Investigations Division (CID), Office of Program Evaluation, Enforcement and Review (OPEER), that they are to collect certain types of products at retail stores for testing for the presence of melamine. This notice provides Investigators with information on how they will receive the sample request, how many samples they are to collect, how they are to determine which products are appropriate to collect, how to package the samples, and to which laboratory samples should be sent.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Melamine and its three analogues, cyanuric acid, ammelide, and ammeline, referred to as melamine compounds (MC), are found in foods because of 1) industrial-environmental contamination, 2) alleged fraudulent addition of industrial MC to foods, and 3) its production as a metabolite of cyromazine which is an insect growth regulator. Mixtures of industrial source MC, most notably melamine and cyanuric acid, are more toxic than melamine alone. MC may be ubiquitous in nature at low levels because of its wide use.

B. The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) has estimated that the average cumulative dietary concentration of melamine from approved food uses would be less than 0.015 parts per million (ppm), but FDA does not, as of yet, intend this to be an estimate of the acceptable maximum level of melamine. FDA established in its recent safety/risk assessment that in all foods, except infant formula, levels of MC below 2.5 ppm do not raise public health concerns. For infant formula, the levels of melamine or one of its analogues alone that does not raise a public health concern is below 1.0 ppm.

DISTRIBUTION: Electronic

NOTICE EXPIRES: 12/1/09

OPI: OPPD

III. GENERAL SAMPLING PLAN

A. FSIS's sampling will focus on those meat and poultry products that contain milk-derived ingredients such as non-fat dried milk, casein, whey, evaporated milk, and milk powder.

B. Thus, the Agency has chosen the following five types of retail products for testing:

1. Baby food (containing a significant amount of meat or poultry products);
2. Cooked sausages (including hot dogs or frankfurters with and without cheese products);
3. Breaded chicken (bite sized morsels or nuggets with and without cheese products);
4. Meatballs;
5. Meat and poultry wrapped in dough and pizza (including calzones).

C. The Agency intends to collect and test a total of 45 samples per week over a 12-week period.

IV. INVESTIGATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

A. At the beginning of the study, CID will receive an initial supply of sampling forms. A partially pre-printed FSIS Form 10,210-3 with project code RMEL01 will be used for each sample. The forms will contain pre-printed blocks with instructions and blank blocks that the investigator is to complete. FSIS laboratories will provide enough shipping materials to initiate the study, which will be returned to CID for re-use after receipt of samples.

B. Investigators are to collect samples for melamine testing while conducting surveillance activities at retail stores as set out in FSIS Directive 8010.3, Procedures for Evidence Collection, Safeguarding and Disposal.

C. The Regional Office will provide Investigators with instructions that provide the categories (as listed in III. B. above) from which they are to collect a sample of product containing milk-derived ingredients and how many samples they are to collect at the retail store. The sample is to be at least one pound in its retail package

D. Attachment 1, Guidelines for Sampling Products for Melamine Testing, provides Investigators a list of the common milk-derived ingredients to look for on the label of meat and poultry products and examples of products for each of the five categories.

E. Investigators are to complete one FSIS Form 10,210-3 for each sample by filling

out blocks 19, 20, 22, 28, 29, 30, 31, and 32 and ship the samples and forms to the FSIS laboratory via overnight shipping. Investigators are to send products in the following manner:

1. shelf-stable product -- without ice;
2. cold items -- on ice;
3. frozen product -- frozen.

F. Investigators are to send the samples to the Food Emergency Response Network FERN Laboratory at:

USDA FSIS OPHS FERN Laboratory
Russell Research Center
950 College Station Rd.
Athens, GA 30605

V. TEST RESULTS

The laboratory results are to be sent to the Residue Branch in the OPHS Risk Assessment and Residue Division and to the Director of CID. If any of the laboratory results are above the guidance level identified by FDA, the Director of CID is to contact the Assistant Administrator for OPEER in accordance with FSIS Directive 5500.2, Significant Incident Response. The AA for OPEER, in consultation with the AA for OPHS, will convene the Emergency Management Committee, as appropriate.

Refer questions through supervisory channels.



Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy and Program Development

GUIDELINES FOR SAMPLING PRODUCTS FOR MELAMINE TESTING

Examples of common milk-derived ingredients to look for on the label of meat and poultry products include:

Dried Milk (e.g., nonfat dry milk, dried whole milk, malted milk)

Whey (e.g., dried whey, reduced lactose whey, whey protein concentrate, whey protein hydrolysate)

Casein

Milk Solids

Caseinates (e.g., sodium caseinate, calcium caseinate, potassium caseinate)
Hydrolyzed Milk Protein

Cheese Products (e.g., processed cheese foods, cheese substitutes, cheese sauces, and imitation cheese that often contain one or more of the targeted milk products or milk-derived ingredients listed above)

Flavors (e.g., butter flavors, artificial butter flavors, and milk flavors that often contain one or more of the targeted milk products or milk-derived ingredients listed above)

The following are meat and poultry product categories under FSIS jurisdiction that may contain the milk-derived ingredients above and are subject to sampling:

Baby Food (containing a significant amount of meat or poultry products)

Examples of product names include, "Chicken Sticks Packed in Water," "Turkey Sticks Packed in Water," "Chicken and Carrot Sticks Packed in Water," "Country Vegetables with Beef," "Ham, Pineapple and Rice," and "Lamb and Gravy."

Cooked Sausages (including hot dogs or frankfurters with and without cheese products)

Examples of cooked sausages include, "Frankfurter," "Bologna," "Frank," "Hotdog," "Weiner," and also batter wrapped sausages such as, "Corn Dogs-Batter Wrapped Franks on a Stick." Examples of sausages with cheese include, "Cheesedogs," "Cheese Franks," "Cheesefurters," and "Beef and Cheddar Sausage."

Breaded Chicken (bite sized morsels or nuggets with and without cheese products)

Examples include “Breaded Chicken Breast Patties,” “Chicken Fries-Chicken Breast with Rib Meat Patties,” “Chicken and Cheese Nugget Shaped Patties,” “Honey Battered Tenders-Breaded Tender Shaped Chicken Breast Patties with Rib Meat.”

Meatballs

Examples include “Turkey Meatballs,” “Beef Meatballs,” “Swedish Meatballs,” and “Italian Style Meatballs.”

Meat and Poultry Wrapped in Dough and Pizza (including calzones)

Examples include products enrobed in a dough that are often identified with descriptive names such as, “Cheeseburger Stuffed Sandwiches-Hamburger and Cheese with Sauce in a Crust,” “Pizza Snacks-Crust Filled with Cheese, Sausage and Sauce” and “Cheesy Taco Flavored Pizza Rolls-Crust Filled with Seasoned Beef, Sauce and Cheese.” Pizzas and calzones would include products such as, “Pepperoni Pizza” and “Sausage and Cheese Calzone.”