

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

FSIS NOTICE	98-08	12/15/08
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**THERMALLY PROCESSED COMMERCIALY STERILE CANNED FOODS
EQUIPMENT SURVEY**

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this notice is to notify Inspection Program Personnel (IPP) of a survey that is being conducted in meat and poultry establishments that produce thermally processed, commercially sterile canned foods. The survey is being done to gather data on the different types and numbers of thermal processing systems (retorts) in use in meat and poultry establishments that produce thermally processed, commercially sterile meat and poultry products.

IPP in processing establishments that have a designated 03D procedure code identified in the plant profile will receive an e-mail on January 12 the date the survey will begin. The e-mail will contain instructions on how to access, complete, and submit the survey. If you are assigned to an 03D establishment and you do not receive an e-mail instructing you to complete the survey, contact the Policy Development Division.

II. BACKGROUND

During 2007, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) found that problems with the design and maintenance of Vertical Batch Still Crateless retorts contributed to the underprocessing of canned product. Given this finding, FSIS needs to determine what type of retort equipment is being used in FSIS-inspected establishments. FDA maintains a database of equipment used in canning establishments and schedule reviews of other establishments that use similar equipment. FSIS worked with FDA to find out which dual-jurisdiction establishments use Vertical Batch Still Crateless retort systems to assess that equipment.

FSIS does not have a database that contains information on the specific thermal processing equipment used in each thermal processing establishment. Consequently, FSIS is unable to determine which official establishments that are not dual-jurisdiction establishments may be using these types of retort systems.

DISTRIBUTION: Electronic

NOTICE EXPIRES: 1/1/2010

OPI: OPPD

FSIS must know the type and number of retorts in each establishment that produces thermally processed, commercially sterile (shelf-stable) meat and poultry products. FSIS needs this information to assess specific types of retorts whose design or maintenance may present a risk to public health.

III. INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY QUESTIONS

FSIS will administer the survey beginning Monday, January 12, 2008, and ending Monday, January 26, 2008. The survey will only be sent to establishments whose plant profiles contain the 03D procedure.

IPP in establishments that have an 03D procedure code designated in the plant profile will receive an e-mail on January 12. The e-mail will include a link to the Thermally Processed Commercially Sterile Canned Food Equipment Survey and a copy of this FSIS Notice will be attached.

IPP are to:

1. Follow the instructions in the e-mail to access the survey.
2. When the survey is complete, click the SUBMIT button to save the information they have entered into the survey form.

NOTE: IPP are to share the information documented on the survey with plant management during the weekly meeting. If plant management has concerns about the survey information documented by IPP, and they provide supporting documentation to justify a change, then this information can be used to change the survey response. IPP can return to the link provided to complete the survey, or to edit the information submitted, during the period of time the survey is open.

If you have questions regarding the content of the survey, contact the Policy Development Division through askFSIS at <http://askfsis.custhelp.com> or by telephone at 1-800-233-3935.

If you have technical problems accessing or completing the Survey, please send an e-mail to Yolanda Kennedy at yolanda.kennedy@fsis.usda.gov.

IV. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The Office of Policy and Program Development (OPPD) will analyze data collected on the type and number of retorts in establishments that produce thermally processed, commercially sterile canned meat and poultry products. The objective of the analysis is

to assess the types of retorts whose design or maintenance may present a risk to public health. OPPD will prepare a final report of the assessment. The report will inform future policy regarding checking and testing frequencies and requirements for additional recordkeeping by the affected establishments.



Assistant Administrator
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