UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE

Petition requesting initiation of rulemaking to revise the current requirements for safe food handling instructions (SHI) labeling of meat and poultry products and to introduce new requirements for SHI labeling of U.S. inspected siluriformes fish, including catfish products.

Docket No._____

CITIZEN PETITION

Submitted by:

The Safe Food Coalition

May 31, 2016

May 31, 2016

Food Safety and Inspection Service
Docket Clerk
Patriots Plaza 3
1400 Independence Avenue SW.
Mailstop 3782, Room 8-163A
Washington, DC 20250-3700

The undersigned members of the Safe Food Coalition write to request that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) initiate rulemaking to revise the requirements at 9 CFR 317.2 (l) and 9 CFR 381.125, which describe the current mandatory safe food handling instructions (SHI) label for raw and partially cooked meat and poultry products, and to add requirements for a SHI label for all raw or partially cooked siluriformes fish, including catfish products (hereinafter "catfish").

The revised rules should continue to require that labels provide information about the potential risk of pathogenic contamination of USDA products. They should further require that labels provide more specific information about safe handling practices for meat, poultry and catfish products, including:

- An end-point temperature for raw and partially cooked product categories (intact meats, non-intact meats, poultry, catfish), as well as any "rest time" requirement.
- Instructions to use a thermometer to verify the product has reached the recommended internal temperature.
- Information on safe handling practices to minimize risks associated with improper sanitation, handling, storage, and temperature control for meat, poultry and catfish products.
- The four core "Check your steps" safe food handling graphics featured on the www.foodsafety.gov website, instead of the graphics currently displayed.
- A web address for additional information on meat, poultry and catfish cooking recommendations.[1]

In addition to these content requirements, the revised rules should mandate that labels:

- Use easily legible type located away from curved or seamed areas of packages.
- Use bold or large font for end-point temperatures and "rest time" instructions.

An abundance of research on how consumers understand labeling information, on common food handling practices and associated risks, and on the survival rates of pathogens at specific end-point temperatures, demonstrate that these reforms would benefit consumers and help to significantly reduce foodborne illness.

---

[1] FSIS should also consider featuring USDA's chart of the recommended internal cooking temperatures at this website.

I. BACKGROUND

FSIS is a public health agency within USDA. It is responsible for ensuring that meat, poultry, processed egg products, and catfish are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled.

FSIS finalized the current SHI labeling requirements in 1994.[2] The SHI label serves two fundamental purposes. First, the label alerts purchasers to the fact that raw and partially cooked meat and poultry products may contain disease-causing bacteria. Toward this end, the SHI label must provide a "Rationale Statement" that uses a type no smaller than 1/16th of an inch and is placed "with such conspicuousness . . . as to render it likely to be read and understood by the ordinary individual."[3] In addition, the rationale statement must be placed immediately before the heading "Safe Handling Instructions."[4] Second, the SHI label provides purchasers with information about important safe food handling practices. Toward that end, FSIS requires that: 1) the safe-handling instructions appear in a type size larger than that of the rationale statement; 2) the instructions appear in one color type printed on a single color contrasting background; 3) the rationale and instructions are set off by a border, and 4) the instructions include an illustrated graphic of the following safe food handling practices:

- Keep refrigerated or frozen. Thaw in refrigerator or microwave. (A graphic illustration of a refrigerator shall be displayed next to the statement.)
- Keep raw meat and poultry separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces (including cutting boards), utensils, and hands after touching raw meat or poultry. (A graphic illustration of soapy hands under a faucet shall be displayed next to the statement.)
- Cook thoroughly. (A graphic illustration of a skillet shall be displayed next to the statement.)
- Keep hot foods hot. Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard. (A graphic illustration of a thermometer shall be displayed next to the statement.)[5]

In 2000, the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) published a study on food safety messages and delivery mechanisms as part of a multi-year evaluation of the Pathogen Reduction: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System, Final Rule, which RTI conducted for FSIS. As part of its evaluation, RTI made several recommendations specifically regarding the SHI label, including:

- Improve visibility and awareness of the label; add color and increase font size.

---

[2] *See* USDA Food Safety Inspection Service. "Mandatory Safe Handling Statements on Labeling of Raw Meat and Poultry Products." 59 Fed. Reg. 14528, 14540 (Mar. 28, 1994) *codified at* 9 C.F.R. §381.125, p 472-3("Subpart N. Special handling label requirements."). In 1999, FSIS revised cooking guidelines applicable to certain processors of ready-to-eat foods, however, it did not make changes the SHI label. *See* USDA Food Safety Inspection Service. "Compliance Guidelines for Meeting Lethality Performance Standards for Certain Meat and Poultry Products." 64 *Fed Reg.* 746 (Jan. 6, 1999).

[3] 9 C.F.R. § 381.125(b). The "Rationale Statement" is the following:

> "This product was prepared from inspected and passed meat and/or poultry. Some food products may contain bacteria that could cause illness if the product is mishandled or cooked improperly. For your protection, follow these safe handling instructions."

[4] *Id.*

[5] *See* 9 CFR 381.125; 9 CFR 317.2 (l).

- Add instructions about proper cooking temperatures.
- Make messages consistent with the four Fight BAC!™ messages.
- Consider incorporating Thermy™ into the label to remind consumers to use a food thermometer to check for doneness.[6]

In 2011, USDA revised the cooking temperature chart that it provides as a complement to the SHI label. The new chart consolidates the minimum internal temperatures into three categories:

- **145° F with a three minute stand time:**
  - Intact beef, pork, veal, lamb (steaks, roasts, chops, hams) inspected by USDA
  - Fish
- **160° F**
  - Non-intact* ground beef, pork, veal, lamb
  - Organ meat – such as kidney, liver, stomach, tongue, and tripe
  - Eggs
- **165° F**
  - Poultry (whole, parts or organs)
  - Ground poultry
  - Meats not inspected by USDA
  - Casseroles
  - Leftovers[7]

* Note: Non-intact products – injected, marinated and tenderized meat and poultry products – are not included, but non-intact ground meat and poultry are listed. Given the new labeling requirements for non-intact injected, marinated and tenderized products, FSIS should update its temperature chart and provide recommended internal temperatures for all non-intact products.

In 2013, FSIS sent a letter to food safety stakeholders soliciting input on whether the agency should revise the SHI label requirements. Many stakeholders, including petitioners, responded in favor of revisions, and in January 2014, FSIS presented a summary of the stakeholders' responses to the National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection (NACMPI).[8] A subcommittee was formed to discuss revising the SHI, and NACMPI issued a report containing the following recommendations:[9]

- SHI label should continue to be mandatory and be affixed to all meat and poultry products.

---

[6] Research Triangle Institute. Multi-year evaluation of the Pathogen Reduction: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System; Final Rule for the USDA-FSIS, p.8. August 21, 2000. Available at: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Oa/research/fsmessages.pdf (last accessed May 31, 2016).

[7] USDA. Safe Minimum Internal Temperature Chart. Available at: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/safe-food-handling/safe-minimum-internal-temperature-chart/ct_index (last accessed May 31, 2016).

[8] USDA/FSIS. (2014) NAMPI Mtg. Murphy-Jenkins, R. Food Safety Handling Labels PPT, slides 16-18. Available at: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/9adeea60-4d52-4eb6-a15a-8e15b6873192/NACMPI-Food-Safety-Handling-Labels-010714.pdf?MOD=AJPERES (last accessed May 31, 2016).

[9] NACMPI. Subcommittee on Food Safety Handling Labels, January 7 – 8, 2014 Washington, DC. Available at: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/70d59a26-32bb-4d25-9050-462b0b0cacb5/Food-Safe-Handling-Labels-NACMPI.pdf?MOD=AJPERES (last accessed May 31, 2016).

- SHI label should be revised to include more specific information, including the use of a thermometer to verify that a specific end-point temperature has been achieved.
- Any changes to the SHI label must be field tested for effectiveness prior to implementation.
- FSIS should work in partnership with risk communication experts from other agencies, universities and food safety stakeholders to identify how SHI would fit within a comprehensive food safety risk communication strategy.

As a follow-up to NACMPI's 2014 recommendations, FSIS posted in the Federal Register a notice indicating its intent to seek a contract to study consumer perceptions related to the safe handling instructions for raw or partially cooked meat and poultry products.[10] Two Safe Food Coalition members commented on this notice and expressed support for FSIS' engagement with an outside research group to determine consumer perceptions about safe handling and preparation of raw or partially cooked meat and poultry products.[11] At the March 2016 NACMPI meeting, FSIS reported the results of the contracted work, which showed that feedback from multiple focus groups supported revising the SHI label to include a "recommendation to use a food thermometer" and "endpoint temperatures for different cuts of meat/poultry," as well as other changes consistent with those recommended in this petition.[12] In light of these results, we urge FSIS to move immediately forward with a revision of the current SHI label.

FSIS is now initiating a second round of consumer research to further study revisions to the SHI label. The research will consider questions such as how instructions on thermometer use should appear on the label, and how the label might direct consumers to sources of additional information. While we support FSIS efforts to deepen its understanding of labeling issues, we think that the agency has gathered sufficient evidence and conducted the necessary evaluations to undertake the long overdue revisions recommended in this petition.

---

[10] 80 FR 12141, March 6, 2015. [Docket No. FSIS–2015–0003] Notice of Request for a New Information Collection: Gathering Sessions for Safe Food Handling Instructions.

[11] Center for Foodborne Illness Research & Prevention and Consumer Federation of America. Joint Comment. Available at: http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=FSIS-2015-0003-0002 (last accessed May 31, 2016).

[12] Bernstein, C. Update on Safe Handling Instructions: Requirements Gathering for Safe Handling Instructions. FSIS Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Education. Power point presentation to NACMPI on March 29, 2016.

II. RATIONALE FOR PETITION

Foodborne illness is a serious public health threat in the United States. Each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 48 million people are sickened, 128,000 are hospitalized and 3,000 are killed by foodborne illnesses. Of those sickened, children, seniors over the age of 65, and individuals with compromised immune systems, including pregnant women, are most likely to develop serious cases of disease. The economic burden of foodborne illness is difficult to assess with a high degree of certainty, but annual cost estimates range from $15.5 billion for the 15 leading foodborne pathogens to $77.7 billion for the 31 known pathogens.[13]

In the 22 years since FSIS finalized its SHI label, USDA and others have conducted considerable research on how consumers respond to the SHI label; on the validity of the four core safe food handling practices; and on the thermal inactivation of pathogens for different meat, poultry and fish products. This research provides significant, relevant information that was not available when FSIS finalized the SHI label requirements in 1994.

Multiple studies on the thermal inactivation of pathogens for different meat, poultry and fish products have served to document safe end-point, internal cooking temperatures with much greater accuracy. This research on lethality of pathogens in meat, poultry and fish was not available in 1994, but today it could provide valuable guidance to the food service industry and consumers by providing them with more precise cooking instructions. The following is a sampling of research that documents the bacterial death rates for major foodborne pathogens:

- Study on E. coli O157:H7 showing bacterial death rate with heat treatment of 70° C or the equivalent.[14] (Stringer, 2000)
- Study on Salmonella to determine heat resistance of 35 Salmonella strains.[15] (Juneja, 2001)
- Study on thermal inactivation of Salmonella and Listeria in a variety of commercially formulated meat and poultry products.[16] (Murphy, 2002)
- Comparison of thermal inactivation of Salmonella enterica and Listeria monocytogenes in "naturally occurring" and "artificially contaminating" pork products.[17] (Wang, 2015)

---

[13] *See* Hoffman, S et al. (2015) Economic Burden of Major Foodborne Illnesses Acquired in the United States, USDA/Economic Research Service, *Econ Info Bulletin,* No. 140, May 2015, and Scharff, R. (2011) Economic Burden from Health Losses Due to Foodborne Illness in the United States. *J of Food Protection*, 75(1):123–131.

[14] Stringer, SM and George and M.W. Peck (2000). Thermal inactivation of Escherichia coli 0157:H7. *J of Applied Microbiology Symposium Supplement*, 88: 79S-89S.

[15] Juneja VK et al. (2001) Thermal Inactivation of *Salmonella spp.* in Chicken Broth, Beef, Pork, Turkey, and Chicken: Determination of D- and Z-values. *J of Food Science*, 66(1):146-152.

[16] Murphy, RY et al. (2002) Thermal Inactivation *D*- and *z*-Values of *Salmonella* Serotypes and *Listeria innocua* in Chicken Patties, Chicken Tenders, Franks, Beef Patties, and Blended Beef and Turkey Patties. *J of Food Protect*, Jan; 65(1):53-60.

[17] Wang X. et al. (2015) "Growth and inactivation of Salmonella enterica and Listeria monocytogenes in broth and validation in ground pork meat during simulated home storage abusive temperature and home pan-frying." *Front Microbiol.* 2015; 6: 1161.

- Study on thermal inactivation of E. coli O157:H7 and non-O157 STECs in brine-injected steaks cooked on a gas grill.[18] (Luchansky, 2011)

In addition, research on consumer behavior has also advanced considerably over the past 22 years. Multiple consumer behavioral studies reveal a need for improved food safety educational outreach to ensure the adoption of the four core safe food handling practices. Below is a sampling of research that documents the lack of consumer compliance with safe food handling practices for meat and poultry products:

- A review of the efficacies of the cooking protocols (regulatory cooking recommendations) to inactivate Shiga toxin-producing E. coli (STEC) in non-intact beef prepared at retail, foodservice and in homes.[19] (Shen, 2014)
- Survey on safe food handling finding that *less than* 25 percent of those surveyed reported using a thermometer to check meat and poultry products for doneness.[20] (IFIC survey, 2009)
- Study exploring restaurant preparation and finding frequent cross contamination (inadequate cleaning and sanitation) and lack of knowledge concerning the recommended final cooking temperature for chicken.[21] (Brown, 2013)
- Study on thermometer use when cooking poultry finding that less than 10 percent of consumers (who own a thermometer) use it to check poultry for doneness.[22] (Kosa, 2015)

Finally, there have been studies and surveys to evaluate whether consumers pay attention to food package labels. In its recent final rule on labels for mechanically tenderized beef, FSIS provided information about the impacts of food products' labels on consumer behavior.[23] FSIS cited study estimates that 15 to 19 percent of consumers changed their behavior in response to cooking instructions, while 56 percent of consumers modified their behaviors after reading nutritional fact labels.[24] Based on this research, FSIS estimated that "24 percent of consumers that previously cooked mechanically tenderized beef to a lower temperature will change their behavior and cook the

---

[18] Luchansky, JB et al. (2011) Inactivation of Shiga Toxin–Producing O157:H7 and Non-O157:H7 Shiga Toxin–Producing *Escherichia coli* in Brine-Injected, Gas-Grilled Steaks. J of Food Protect, Jul; 74(7):1054-64.

[19] Shen C. (2014) Cooking Inactivation of Shiga Toxin Producing Escherichia coli (STEC) in Non-intact Beefs–a mini-Review. *J Food Processing & Beverages*, 2(1): 5.

[20] IFIC (International Food Information Council Foundation) *2009 Food & Health Survey Results Web Cast Series: A Focus on Food Safety.(Web Cast #3, Power point presentation #, Slide 17). Available at:* http://www.foodinsight.org/Content/6/Food%20Safety%20Web%20cast%20Deck%20FINAL.pdf (last accessed May 31, 2016).

[21] Brown, LG et al. (2013) Frequency of inadequate chicken cross-contamination prevention and cooking practices in restaurants. *J of Food Protect*, 76(12): 2141-2145.

[22] Kosa, KM et al. (2015) Consumer-Reported Handling of Raw Poultry Products at Home: Results from a National Survey. IAFP: *J of Food Protect*, Jan;78(1):180-6. *Available at*: http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/iafp/jfp/2015/00000078/00000001/art00025

[23] 2015 USDA Final Rule for Descriptive Designation for Needle- or Blade-Tenderized (Mechanically Tenderized) Beef Products [Docket No. FSIS–2008–0017].

[24] *Id.*; *see also* Yang, et al. (1999) Evaluation of Safe Food-Handling Instructions on Raw Meat and Poultry Products. *J of Food Protect,* 63:1321– 1325; Adu-Nyako, K, D. Kunda, K. Ralston (2003) Safe Handling Labels and Consumer Behavior in the Southern U.S. American Agriculture Economics Association Annual Meeting, Montreal Canada; American Dietetic Association (1995) America's Eating Habits: Changes and Consequences. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Food and Rural Economics Division. *Agri Information Bulletin* No. 750.

product to the endpoint temperature that appears in the cooking instructions." Projected compliance at this level is significant.

Thus, labels matter. The current SHI label does not reflect the food safety research that has been developed over the past 22 years. The SFC maintains that the SHI label is out-of-date and does not provide the information needed to prepare and handle meat, poultry, and catfish products safely. In particular, the SFC is concerned with these four points:

First, research demonstrates that thermometer use is the only reliable method for verifying "thorough cooking,"[25] yet many cooks, including restaurant cooks, are still not routinely following this safe food handling practice.[26] The current SHI label on meat and poultry products does not provide the user with the recommended internal temperature for the product, nor does it give instructions about the importance of using a thermometer to verify doneness. Not providing this type of information on USDA's mandatory meat and poultry SHI label is inconsistent with USDA's charge to "assure that it [the product] will not have false or misleading labeling and that the public will be informed of the manner of handling required to maintain the article in a wholesome condition.[27] By revising the SHI label to prominently display specific information about internal, end-point cooking temperatures and thermometer use, a revised label will give the foodservice industry and consumers more accurate food safety information, which, in turn, will improve food wholesomeness, thereby lowering the potential of foodborne disease.

Second, the current SHI label requirements do not apply to catfish products, which have recently been put under USDA's oversight. FSIS has long provided information on its website about cooking fish to 145° F.[28] Now that the agency has authority over catfish producers, it should ensure that food preparers have access to safe food handling information for catfish by updating its SHI label requirements to include catfish products. According to the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC), fish products have been implicated in several foodborne illness outbreaks. In fact, CDC identifies fish as the leading cause of outbreaks involving a single food ingredient (24 percent), with poultry (10 percent) and dairy (10 percent) listed well behind in the single-food outbreak category.[29] This statistic alone supports making an SHI label for catfish a top priority for USDA.

---

[25] Snyder, O. Peter (1998) A summary of research information on why internal meat color should not be used as an indication of meat doneness. Hospitality Institute of Technology and Management. Available at: http://www.hi-tm.com/Documents/Meat-color.html (last accessed May 31, 2016).

[26] Bogard,A, C Fuller, V Radke et al. (2013) Ground Beef Handling and Cooking Practices in Restaurants in Eight States. *J of Food Protect*, 76(12):2132-2140. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/ehsnet/docs/jfp-ground-beef-handling.pdf (last accessed May 31, 2016).

[27] 21 U.S.C. § 601 (n)(12).

[28] *See* USDA (2007) Keep Food Safe and USDA (2015) Safe Minimal Internal Temperature Chart. Available at: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/shared/PDF/Keep_Food_Safe_Food_Safety_Basics.pdf (last accessed May 31, 2016); USDA 2015 chart *available at*: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/safe-food-handling/safe-minimum-internal-temperature-chart/ct_index (last accessed May 31, 2016).

[29] CDC. (2015) New CDC Data on Foodborne Disease Outbreaks. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/features/foodborne-diseases-data/ (last accessed May 31, 2016).

Third, the current SHI label uses out-of-date food safety messages. As indicated above, the SHI label is supposed to draw attention to the safe food practices that can be taken to increase meat and poultry safety.[30] Over the past two decades, a variety of government, industry, academic and non-profit groups have expended significant resources on educational programs that communicate the steps food handlers can take to reduce the incidence and spread of foodborne diseases. As a result, the four core safe handling practices – clean, cook, separate and chill – have become prominent in U.S. food safety programs.[31] Consistent messaging will strengthen the efficacy of these educational programs, and for that reason, the SHI label should include the "Check Your Steps" logos featured on the joint USDA and FDA foodsafety.gov website.

Fourth, the current SHI label requirements do not adequately address an important area of concern: the label's placement. Current instructions stipulate that the label is to be displayed on the principal display panel (PDP). The PDP can be the front or back of a package and the label must adhere to specific font and border requirements.[32] According to the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act, a product is "misbranded" if "any word, statement, or other information required . . . is not prominently placed thereon with such conspicuousness . . .and in such terms as to render it likely to be read and understood by the ordinary individual under customary conditions of purchase and use."[33] However, as the pictures in Appendix I show, the SHI label is sometimes located on curved or seamed areas of packaging and, as a result, the print becomes difficult to read, especially if the packaging has been wrinkled during the "shrink-wrap" process. Consumers must be able to easily read the SHI label. Labeling regulations and guidance should include specific positioning details to ensure the label's readability.

III. ABOUT THE PETITIONERS

The Safe Food Coalition (SFC) was formed in 1993 under the leadership of Carol Tucker-Foreman. In 1999, Ms. Tucker-Foreman formed the Food Policy Institute at Consumer Federation of America, and the management of the SFC was transferred to CFA's Director for the Food Policy Institute. Today, the SFC is managed by the current Food Policy Institute Director, Thomas Gremillion.

The SFC is composed of various consumer groups, public health associations and trade unions that work to prevent injury and illness associated with food products. Current members include: Consumer Federation of America; Center for Foodborne Illness Research & Prevention; Center for

---

[30] *See above* "Background," p. 3.

[31] *See* FoodSafety.gov, Check Yours Steps at http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/index.html; USDA "Be Food Safe" campaign at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/teach-others/fsis-educational-campaigns/be-food-safe (last accessed May 31, 2016); FDA "Safe food handling: What you need to know" at: http://www.fda.gov/food/foodborneillnesscontaminants/buystoreservesafefood/ucm255180.htm (last accessed May 31, 2016)., and CDC "Food safety: Consumer information" at http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/groups/consumers.html (last accessed May 31, 2016).

[32] 9 CFR 381.125.

[33] 21 U.S.C. §601(n)(6) and 21 U.S. Code § 453(h)(6).

Science in the Public Interest; Consumers Union, Food & Water Watch; Government Accountability Project, National Consumers League; STOP Foodborne Illness and United Food Commercial Workers.

Some of the SFC's accomplishments include:

- Use of scientific standards in USDA's meat and poultry inspection, primarily through the 1996 Final Rule: Pathogen Reduction/Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (PR/HACCP);
- The adoption of zero tolerance for pathogenic contamination in ground beef purchased for the nation's school lunch program.
- Passage of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's 2010 Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).
- Review of FDA's proposals to implement FSMA.
- Improvements in food labeling including, most recently, the finalization of USDA's Final Rule to label mechanically tenderized beef products.

IV. LEGAL BASIS

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) and Poultry Products Inspection Act (PPIA) provide the Secretary of Agriculture with broad authority to protect public health and welfare by assuring consumers that meat and poultry products distributed to them are wholesome, not adulterated, and properly marked, labeled, and packaged.[34]

That authority may be exercised under subsection 1(n)(12) of the FMIA (21 U.S.C. § 601 (n)(12)) and subsection 4(h)(12) of the PPIA (21 U.S.C. § 453(h)(12)) by requiring that labels on products regulated under these Acts are not false or misleading and that they provide information on proper handling to maintain the wholesomeness of such products. Just as these sections provided the legal basis for initially requiring safe handling instructions on raw and partially cooked meat and poultry products in 1994, so too do they provide the legal basis for the action requested in this petition, i.e., to revise the SHI label for raw and partially cooked meat and poultry products and to include a SHI label on raw or partially cooked catfish products.[35]

V. CONCLUSION

Currently, many food preparers engage in risky food handling behaviors, which allow dangerous bacteria on or inside meat, poultry and catfish products to persist and grow and, in some cases, spread to other foods, increasing the likelihood of illness. An updated SHI label should reflect the latest research on common food handling mistakes, such as failure to cook raw products to an

[34] 21 U.S.C. § 602; 21 U.S.C. § 451 (2014).

[35] *See* Mandatory Safe Handling Statements on Labeling of Raw Meat and Poultry Products, 59 Fed. Reg. 14528, 14530-31, March 28, 1994.

appropriate temperature, and convey the information that consumers most need to safely prepare and handle raw or partially cooked meat, poultry or catfish products. Much has changed since FSIS developed the current SHI label requirements in 1994, and these changes warrant a revision of the meat and poultry SHI label, as well as the addition of a catfish SHI label.

We applaud FSIS for the work that the agency has done to identify the most effective SHI label design. However, the agency should not delay action any longer. Foodservice workers and consumers need explicit instructions about safe handling and cooking instructions for meat, poultry and catfish products, and they need that information now. A revised SHI label, along with a new label for catfish, will significantly and immediately improve public health, and we therefore urge the agency to take prompt action in response to this petition.

VI. CERTIFICATION

The undersigned groups certify that, to the best of their knowledge and belief, this petition includes all information and views on which the petition relies, and it includes representative data and information known to the petitioners that are unfavorable to the petition.

Respectfully submitted,

Center for Foodborne Illness Research & Prevention

Center for Science in the Public Interest

Consumer Federation of America

Consumers Union

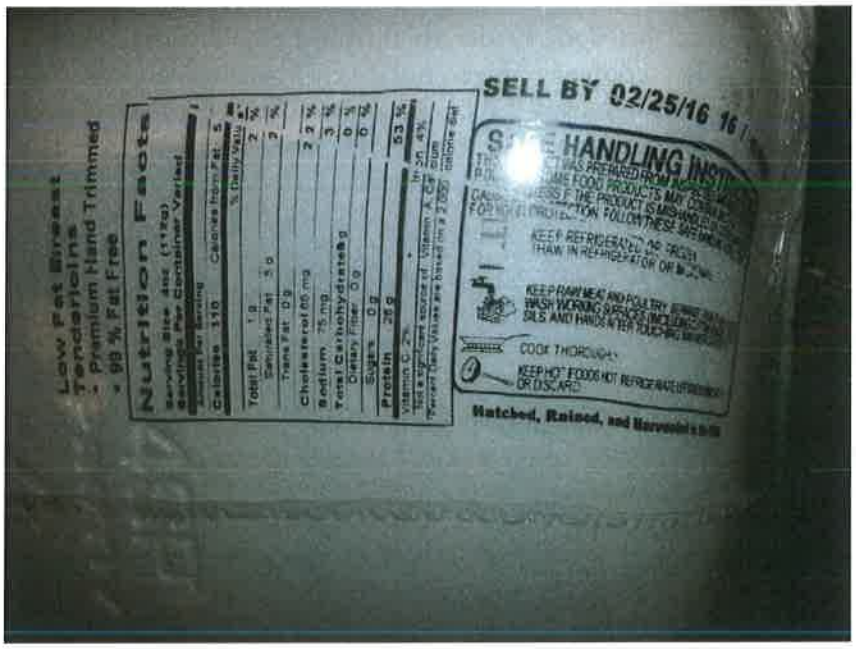
Food & Water Watch

National Consumers League

STOP Foodborne Illness

Appendix I

Selected photos of SHI meat and poultry labels



Picture of SHI label on the curved surface of a turkey breast – the instructions are crinkled.

Picture of SHI label on the back, curved edge of a chicken package.