Records for Product Protection

Product protection for thermally processed foods involves:

- Thermal process records
- Critical factor control records
- Closure evaluation records

The main sections dealing with recordkeeping, reviewing, and maintenance requirements are in sections 431.7 and 431.8

1. **Records demonstrate Compliance with regulations**
2. **Records provide assurance of proper and safe application of thermal processes**
3. **Careful review of records can give indication of problem**

Automatic recordkeeping may be integrated with thermal processing control systems.
Establishments should notify FSIS prior to use.
Automatic recordkeeping systems must be validated in accordance with 417.4(a)(1).

Processing and container closure evaluation records must be retained for 3 years.
FSIS permits storage at an alternate site during the last 2 years of the retention period

Establishment must provide

1. **Process schedule development records**
2. **Process schedules**
3. **Critical factors records**
4. **Time/temperature recording charts**
5. **Processing (retort or aseptic system) records**
6. **Container closure specifications/guidelines**
7. **Container closure/integrity records**
8. **Retort operation documentation**
9. **MIG calibration/accuracy records**
10. **Yearly retort maintenance records**
11. **Information on recycled or reused container cooling water**
12. **A process deviation log**
13. **Coding for each container**
14. **Initial distribution records**
15. **Product incubation results**
16. **A recall procedure**

FSIS requires:

- **product, day, and year**
- **establishment number on the label or container**

Computerized or automated recordkeeping systems can be used for thermal processing, critical factor monitoring and container integrity testing provided they meet the requirements in FSIS regulations.

Automated recordkeeping systems for retorts and aseptic systems are usually integrated with thermal processing control systems.

FSIS has encouraged the industry to work cooperatively in the development of automated recordkeeping systems.

Computerized record systems must be validated.