RAW CHICKEN PARTS SAMPLING PROGRAM

I. PURPOSE

A. This provides instructions to inspection program personnel (IPP) to collect raw chicken parts (finished product) for *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* analysis. Only chicken legs, breasts, and wings are subject to sampling at this time. This notice reissues the content of FSIS Notice 16-15, *Raw Chicken Parts Sampling Project,* with the following modifications and clarifications.

1. FSIS is clarifying that results from chicken parts sampling collected on and after July 1, 2016 will be used to assess whether establishments meet new performance standards (see Section II. A.);

2. FSIS is clarifying that chicken parts receiving an off-site antimicrobial intervention such as HPP or irradiation are not to be sampled unless the parts are returned to the producing establishment after such intervention is applied (see Section V. H.);

3. FSIS is clarifying that finished parts are to be collected prior to freezing unless the establishment applies a validated antimicrobial intervention that achieves a reduction in *Salmonella* or *Campylobacter* at or after the freezing step (see Section V. G.); and

4. This incorporates clarifications from FSIS Notice 50-15, *Clarifications for the Raw Chicken Parts Sampling Project for Legs, Breasts, and Wings*. For example, clarifications include how the FSIS laboratories will provide parts sampling supplies to IPP (Section IV), sampling eligibility for marinated parts (Section V. A.), and how IPP are to select the sampling site (Section VI. D.).

B. Chicken parts subject to sampling include those that are intact and those that are non-intact (that have been needle injected with liquid, provided the raw nature of the product is evident, mechanically tenderized, vacuum tumbled, or similarly processed). Parts that have been marinated would also be subject to sampling provided the raw nature of the product is evident.

II. BACKGROUND

A. On February 11, 2016 FSIS finalized new performance standards for chicken parts and announced them in the Federal Register notice, "New Performance Standards for *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* in Not-Ready-to-Eat Comminuted Chicken and Turkey Products and Raw Chicken Parts and Changes to Related Agency Verification Procedures: Response to Comments and Announcement of Implementation Schedule." FSIS will begin assessing whether establishments are meeting the new performance standards for raw chicken parts collect on and after July 1 2016. Until the implementation date of this notice (July 1, 2016), IPP are to follow current instructions.

B. Sampling tasks are assigned based on information in the establishment's PHIS profile.

III. SCHEDULING AND DOCUMENTING SAMPLES

A. Chicken parts samples will only be requested at establishments with an average daily production of greater than 1,000 pounds of eligible chicken parts. If an establishment makes intact (not injected, tenderized, or vacuum tumbled) chicken parts with an average daily production volume of greater than

B. 1,000 pounds, but produces non-intact chicken parts with an average daily production volume of less than 1,000 pounds, then IPP are to schedule only intact parts for collection. Similarly, if an establishment makes non-intact chicken parts with an average daily production volume of greater than 1,000 pounds, but produces intact chicken parts with an average daily production volume of less than 1,000 pounds, then IPP are to schedule only non-intact parts for collection.

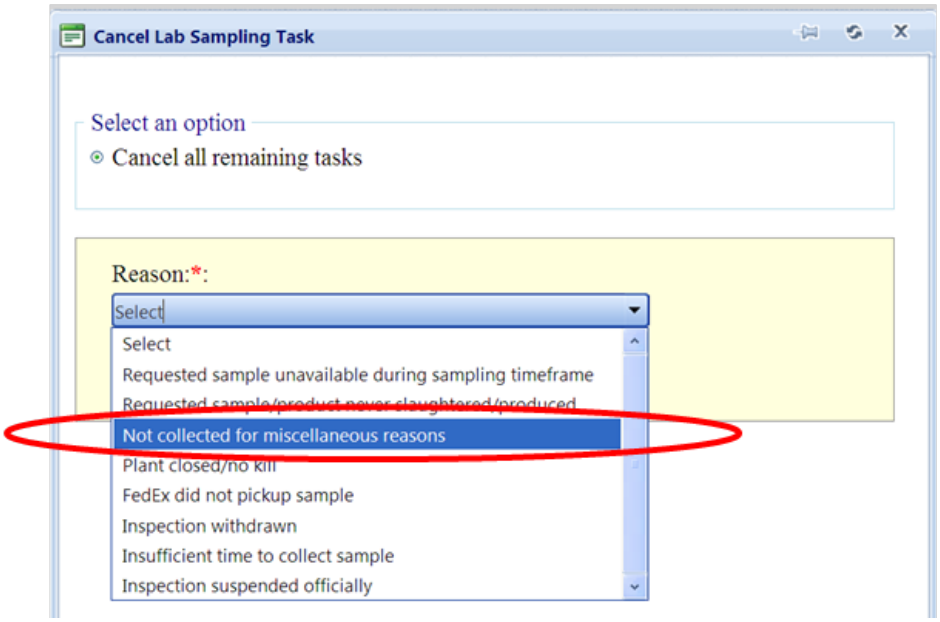
C. IPP will receive directed sampling tasks through PHIS as "HC_CPT_LBW01." IPP at establishments will receive sampling supplies from the FSIS laboratories in preparation for sample collection each month.

D. IPP are to notify official establishment management before collecting a sample and inform management that they will be collecting a chicken parts sample for *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* analysis.

E. When possible, IPP are to collect one parts sample no more frequently than once per week. In the case that there are more samples than weeks in the sampling window, IPP are to schedule sample collection evenly throughout the sampling window, and more than one sample in a given week can be collected. IPP are to document the sample collection as directed in PHIS Directive 13,000.2. IPP are to ensure that all requested information is entered completely and accurately into PHIS.

NOTE: IPP are to be aware that FSIS assigns the number of chicken parts samples for collection at each establishment based on factors such as establishment production volume and number of days of production. Some establishments may not receive sampling tasks every month. Establishments will not receive a sampling task in PHIS if all of the eligible finished product groups in the PHIS profile have the intended use "For RTE Cooking Only." FSIS reviews eligibility each month before assigning samples.

F. If sampling tasks remain in the task list at the end of the sampling window, IPP are to cancel them from the task list and provide the correct reason. When canceling tasks in the task list, IPP are to select "Not collected for miscellaneous reasons" if the reason for cancellation is other than the specific options listed. IPP are not to allow sampling tasks to remain at the end of the sampling window.



G. If an establishment does not produce eligible product, IPP are to cancel remaining parts sampling tasks from both the task list and (if scheduled) the task calendar, using the correct reason.

1. If the establishment produces a product that is eligible for chicken parts sampling but is not producing during the sampling window, then IPP are to select "requested sample unavailable

during the sampling timeframe."

2. If the establishment produces NO product that is eligible, then select "requested sample/product never slaughtered/produced." IPP should check the Establishment Profile in PHIS to ensure that the profile lists the correct products and product volumes.

IV. SAMPLING SUPPLIES

A. IPP are to request replacement chicken parts sampling supplies when the parts sampling task has been assigned in PHIS and the sampling supplies have not arrived by the first day of the following calendar month. For example, if chicken parts sampling tasks are assigned in PHIS on June 24, IPP should request replacement supplies only if they have not arrived by July 1. IPP are to request replacement supplies if they are damaged, lost, or otherwise unavailable for use. IPP are to request these sampling supplies through PHIS. To do this, IPP are to right-click a scheduled lab sampling task ("HC_CPT_LBW01") on the Task Calendar, then select "Request sampling supplies" from the drop down menu. IPP are to request sampling supplies at least 72 hours (not including weekends and holidays) before they intend to collect the sample.

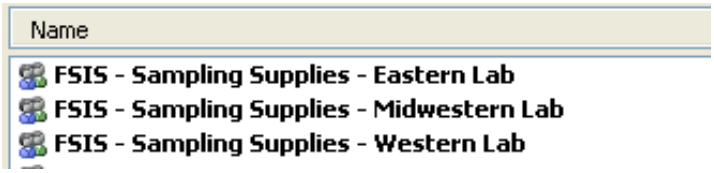
B. IPP will receive the M16 box (shipping container) with sorting labels (red "HC_CPT_LBW01" project labels) plus one set of the following supplies:

1. 15" X 20" sterile plastic bag;
2. Pair of sterile gloves;
3. Sterile wide-mouth container with 400 ml of sterile Buffered Peptone Water (BPW);
4. 120 ml sterile specimen jar with lid;
5. Quart resealable zipper lock bag;
6. 6" X 12" plastic sleeve for the printed PHIS form (FSIS Form 8000-19 Revision 1);
7. Form 7355-2A/2B (Sample seals);
8. Absorbent pad;
9. Cardboard separator;
10. Gel coolant pack; and
11. (3) FedEx (pre-printed) airbills (1 per FSIS Laboratory for submitting the sample).

C. IPP are to use only the supplies provided for the parts sampling. Additional cardboard separators and gel coolant packs may be included with the sample supplies depending upon the time of the year. Sample supplies that are not provided in the shipping container or that are not sent from any of the three FSIS laboratories for this project are not to be used.

D. IPP are to refrigerate the sampling BPW and shipping container upon receipt. The sampling BPW must be pre-chilled. Pre-chilling these items is critical to the sampling effort. IPP are to only use sampling BPW that is pre-chilled. IPP are not to use sampling BPW that shows signs of cloudiness or turbidity or that contains any particulate matter.

E. If any of these conditions exist, IPP are to send a request to any of the lab sampling supplies mailboxes via Outlook. IPP are to select one of the addresses below from the Global Address List and request a fresh bottle of sampling BPW. IPP are not to use sampling BPW intended for other sampling projects.



V. PRODUCT ELIGIBILITY

A. Eligible chicken parts for sample collection for the chicken parts sampling project are defined by FSIS as raw chicken legs, breasts, and wings that would typically be available for consumer purchase. These products can be skin-on or skinless and can be bone-in or boneless. Eligible parts can be mechanically tenderized, vacuum tumbled, or injected or otherwise marinated or coated in solutions or dry spice mixtures, provided that the raw nature of the product is evident to IPP. Cut-up chicken parts are eligible for sampling provided they are equal to or larger than 3/4 inch in size in at least one dimension and are of a type that would typically be available for consumer purchase. The Attachment lists eligible chicken parts and subparts, including a link to access photographic images representative of typical chicken parts and subparts available as a List of Chicken Parts Eligible for Sample Collection accessible through the "IPP Help" button (under Raw Chicken Parts Sampling Supplies and Guidance). IPP will be able to open the "IPP Help" button from the Icon on their FSIS Computer Desktop). IPP are to review definitions of the parts to ensure that the parts selected for sampling are accurately documented in PHIS. Definitions are found in 9 CFR 381.170(b), Standards for kinds and classes and for cuts of raw poultry include:

1. For legs, whole legs (no backbone attached), drumsticks, thighs, and cut up or portioned leg meat (3/4 inch or larger in at least one dimension) are eligible for sampling;

2. For breasts, whole and half breasts (with or without ribs), boneless and skinless chicken breasts, tenderloins and tenders, and cut up or portioned breast meat (3/4 inch or larger in at least one dimension) are eligible for sampling; and

3. For wings, whole wings (with or without the wing tip), mixed wing sections, drummettes, mid-sections (flats), wing tips, and boneless wings are eligible for sampling.

NOTE: Chicken half carcasses and chicken quarter carcasses are not eligible for collection under this sampling program. The following products are not eligible because they are chicken quarters: 1) leg quarters which consist of a thigh and drumstick, with a portion of the back attached, 2) breast quarters which consist of half a breast with the wing and a portion of the back attached, 3) breast quarters without wing that consist of a front quarter of a chicken carcass from which the wing has been removed, and 4) the entire carcass that has been cut into four equal parts.

B. Only finished products are eligible for sampling. (Finished products are the products that are shipped from the establishment.) Eligible chicken parts are identified in PHIS in the finished product group as "Poultry Parts (legs, breasts, wings ONLY)" and "Injected, Tenderized, or Vacuum Tumbled Parts (legs, breasts, wings ONLY)". IPP are not to request that an establishment cut up whole chickens for FSIS chicken parts sampling.

C. If a chicken part is of a type that would typically be available for consumers and is produced in an

establishment, it is eligible for sampling even if it is not being packaged for consumer purchase by the establishment being sampled.

Example 1: An establishment produces boneless, skinless chicken breasts as a finished product, which is a product type typically available for consumers. The establishment packages and ships all the boneless, skinless chicken breasts for HRI. The product is eligible for parts sampling.

Example 2: An establishment produces raw bone-in chicken thighs as a finished product, which is a product type typically available for consumers. Some of the product is packaged in consumer-ready packaging while the rest is shipped for further processing into an NRTE product. All of the product is eligible for sampling regardless of where it is being shipped.

D. Only raw parts that are not intended for further processing into RTE products at another federally inspected establishment are eligible for sampling. Consistent with current FSIS *Salmonella* sampling procedures for NRTE product, when an establishment either processes all or moves all such product to another official establishment for further processing into RTE product, IPP are not to collect a sample of such product for the chicken parts sampling project (see Chapter VII, Section II, FSIS Directive 10,250.1, *Salmonella and Campylobacter Verification Program for Raw Meat and Poultry Products*).

NOTE: Official establishments include only domestic federally-inspected establishments and do not include foreign, State-inspected, or food service establishments including HRI. Therefore, if an establishment produces eligible chicken parts and ships them to a foreign, State-inspected, or food service establishment for any type of further processing (including into RTE product), those parts are eligible for sampling under the chicken parts sampling project at the producing establishment.

E. Parts that are portioned only (packed into smaller packages without any additional processing) or repackaged only are not eligible for sampling.

F. Chicken parts produced at establishments that slaughter and further process or at establishments that further process (but do not slaughter) are eligible for sampling. For example, if source material received at a further processing establishment is deboned, marinated, or cut up into eligible chicken parts, IPP are to sample finished chicken parts at the further processing establishment. If an establishment receives chicken parts but does not process them and only repackages them, then the parts are not eligible for sampling at the establishment that only repackages them.

G. Finished parts are to be sampled prior to freezing unless the establishment applies a validated antimicrobial intervention that achieves a reduction in (and not only reduces outgrowth of) *Salmonella* or *Campylobacter* on parts at or after freezing. If establishments apply such an antimicrobial intervention at or after freezing, IPP are to collect parts after such interventions have been applied. In this case, IPP are to randomly select parts to be sampled, and the establishment would need to develop a tempering procedure for such parts and apply it prior to IPP collecting the sample. The sample collection date entered in PHIS is the date that IPP collect the product, after it has been tempered.

H. If off-site interventions, such as high pressure pasteurization (HPP) or irradiation, are applied to prevent or control *Salmonella* or *Campylobacter* in chicken parts, IPP are to sample such product after they return to the producing establishment after such an off-site intervention is applied.

NOTE: At this time, it is not possible to collect product which has received an off-site intervention at the establishment which applied the off-site intervention. FSIS is working to resolve this issue.

VI. SAMPLE COLLECTION

A. IPP are to follow these instructions, in addition to the applicable sample collection instructions

described in FSIS Directive 10,250.1. More details and guidance concerning sample collection are accessible through the "IPP Help" button (see Raw Chicken Parts Sampling Supplies and Guidance).

B. IPP are to collect a rinsate from 4 lbs ± 10% (3 pounds, 10 ounces to 4 pounds, 6 ounces) of the specified raw chicken parts. Finished chicken parts are to be sampled prior to freezing.

C. In preparing for sample collection, IPP are to:

1. Use only the sample supplies provided for the Raw Chicken Parts Sampling Project (HC_CPT_LBW01);

2. Place the gel coolant pack in the freezer on receipt of the sample collection kit at least one day before sample collection;

3. Pre-chill the sampling BPW and sample box prior to sample collection;

4. Identify the point in the process where they will select the raw chicken parts for sampling; and

5. Follow the instructions provided in FSIS Directive 7355.1, *Use of Sample Seals for Laboratory Samples and Other Applications* to ensure sample integrity.

D. To choose the parts to be sampled, IPP are to:

1. Randomly select which available eligible chicken parts (legs, breasts, and wings) to sample. If an establishment produces more than one type or subtype of eligible chicken part, then IPP are to alternate sampling of the parts each sampling task to ensure that all products are collected during the sampling project. If an establishment produces both eligible intact and eligible non-intact chicken parts, IPP are to alternate sampling of intact and non- intact parts;

NOTE: Randomization of parts selection is critical to achieve sample variety.

2. Collect only one chicken part subtype per sampling event. For example, if IPP are collecting chicken breast tenderloins, they are to collect only chicken breast tenderloins and not a mixture of other breast pieces or other parts such as legs;

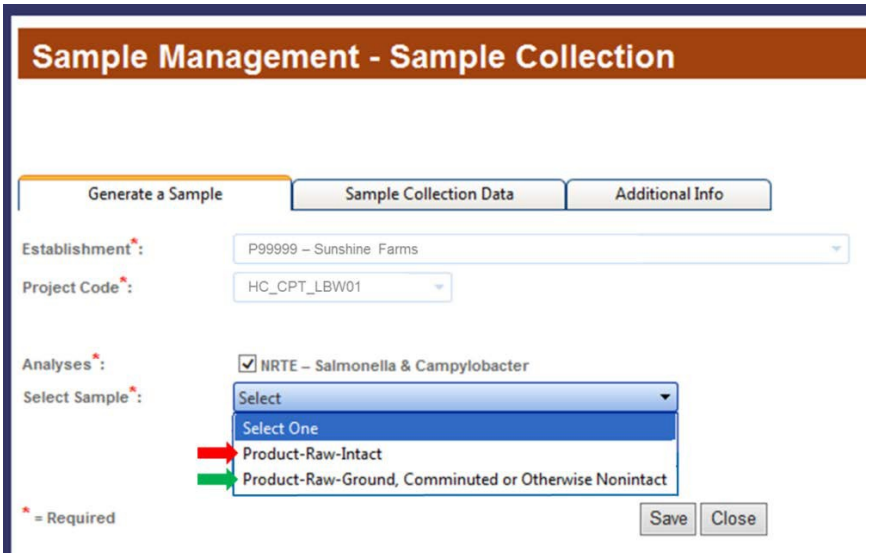
3. Collect and place into the sampling bag a sufficient number of eligible chicken parts to total 4 lbs ± 10% (3 pounds, 10 ounces to 4 pounds, 6 ounces) in weight. Avoid transferring excess processing liquid when placing the chicken parts in the sampling bag;

4. If an establishment produces chicken parts on more than one shift, IPP are to alternate sample collection from different shifts each sampling event so that all shifts are represented. For example, if there are four samples assigned in a month to an establishment with two shifts, IPP are to collect two samples in the first shift and two samples in the second shift (first week, shift one; second week, shift two; third week, shift one; fourth week, shift two);

5. Alternate the production line (e.g., conveyer belt) from which IPP collect a sample if more than one production line produces the product to be sampled;

6. Collect samples after the eligible product has passed all interventions, as close to finished as possible. If the final intervention is applied during the packaging step, IPP are to collect prior to packaging when possible. Otherwise product may be collected in its final consumer-ready packaging if it is packaged for consumers; and

7. For each sampling event, answer the questions in PHIS and complete the sample collection task questionnaire (see Questions for the Raw Chicken Parts Sampling Program accessible through the IPP Help button.) When making selections in the screen below in PHIS, IPP are to select “Product-Raw-Intact” when collecting raw intact chicken parts (red arrow). IPP are to select “Product-Raw-Ground, Comminuted or Otherwise Nonintact” when collecting raw non-intact chicken parts (green arrow).



E. Additional details and illustrations on how to collect a rinsate sample from the eligible chicken part are accessible through the IPP Help button (under Raw Chicken Parts Sampling Supplies and Guidance). IPP are to:

1. Collect the rinsate from the eligible chicken parts immediately after collection of the parts. IPP are not to hold the chicken parts under refrigeration overnight prior to collecting the rinsate;

2. Place the container with the rinsate sample in an ice bath immediately after sample collection or refrigerate the sample within five minutes of collection. IPP are to hold the rinsate in a refrigerator set at 40° F or lower and under FSIS control until the samples are shipped. IPP are not to freeze samples; and

3. Ensure sample security prior to shipping to the laboratory. IPP are to avoid storing sample boxes near heaters or in areas exposed to excessive heat. The laboratory will discard rinse samples that arrive at or above 15°C (59°F) or below 0°C (32°F).

F. IPP are to ensure that all requested information is entered into PHIS. When sample collection data entry is completed, IPP are to click the “Submit to Lab” button, print a finalized form, and sign the form. PHIS will display a message stating that the sample collection information has been successfully submitted. The printed sampling form is to be placed in the sample box with the corresponding sample.

G. IPP are to follow the instruction provided in FSIS Directive 7355.1, on the use of sample seals (FSIS Form 7355-2A/2B) to maintain sample security and identification. To secure the sample, IPP are to:

1. Affix one small bar-coded label to the top center of the completed sample form and place the sample form in the plastic form sleeve;

2. Affix one small bar-coded label to the sample collection jar containing the collected sample;

3. Place both the sample collection jar and the plastic sleeve containing the form into the zipper lock

bag provided, squeeze the air out of the bag, and zip the bag closed; and

4. Affix the corresponding medium-sized bar-coded FSIS Laboratory Sample Identification Label (FSIS Form7355 -2B) on the zipper lock bag containing the sample jar.

NOTE: If the sample collection jars are leaking upon arrival, the laboratory will discard the samples.

H. To pack the shipping container, IPP are to:

1. Remove the gel coolant pack from the freezer, place the absorbent pad in the shipping container, and place the gel coolant pack on top of it;

2. Place the cardboard separator on top of the gel coolant pack to prevent the sample from freezing;

3. Place the sample collection jar (within the zipper lock bag) upright inside the shipping container on top of the cardboard separator; and

4. Place the foam plug on top of the sample jar and press down slightly to secure contents;

I. IPP are to complete the information on the container seal (form 7355-2A) from the same sheet with the bar code labels and sample identification label that were used previously in section G, sign the seal, and affix the signed container seal across the seam of the closed sample box flap using the instructions provided in FSIS Directive 7355.1.

1. For shipping containers with self-sticking closures, apply the seal across the closed inner flap of the box parallel to the edge of the closed flap. Then close the outer flap over the seal; or

2. For shipping containers without self-sticking closures, apply the seal across the closed outer flaps. Fasten the outer flaps with clear packaging tape.

NOTE: Proper placement of the container seals (form 7355-2A) is very important. Proper placement for each type of shipping container is illustrated on page 7 of FSIS Directive 7355.1.

J. IPP are to review the information on the pre-printed FedEx airbills provided with the sampling supplies and select the airbill that matches the FSIS Laboratory printed on PHIS Form 8000-18. Enter return address information on that airbill;

K. IPP are to remove or obliterate any old carrier shipping bar codes from the container and affix the FedEx airbill addressed to the FSIS laboratory printed on PHIS Form 8000-18 on the shipping container;

L. IPP are to ensure that the sample remains under FSIS control until pickup by FedEx;

M. It is critical to the success of the parts sampling project that sample temperature be properly maintained during collection and shipment. IPP are to avoid storing shipping containers near heaters or in areas exposed to excessive heat. Proper utilization of the packing materials provided for sample collection will help ensure that an appropriate temperature is maintained during shipping;

N. IPP are to ship the sample via overnight FedEx courier the same day as they collect the sample, when possible. Samples collected prior to FedEx arrival are to be shipped the same calendar day the samples were collected. IPP are to hold the rinsate sample overnight if they collect a sample after FedEx has picked up. For example, rinsates collected from late production or second shifts are to be held overnight under refrigeration and sent by overnight courier the next calendar day. Samples collected on Friday are

to be scheduled, collected, and shipped the same day for arrival at the laboratory on Saturday. IPP are not to ship a sample on Saturday or the day before a Federal holiday.

NOTE: Samples that meet discard criteria for only one pathogen may still be tested for the other pathogen (e.g., a sample which is not suitable for *Campylobacter* testing but is suitable for *Salmonella* testing will still be tested for *Salmonella*). Samples and supplies are not to be shared or split with the establishment. However, if the establishment is interested in doing its own analysis, it may use its own supplies to collect a different sample at approximately the same time and point of production the parts sample is collected.

VII. RESULTS

Salmonella and *Campylobacter* results for individual samples collected for this program will be posted in LIMS-Direct and PHIS.

VIII. DATA ANALYSIS

The FSIS Office of Data Integration and Food Protection (ODIFP) will analyze the data collected in the raw chicken parts sampling program to determine if an establishment is meeting the new performance standards for raw chicken parts.

IX. QUESTIONS

Refer questions regarding this to the Risk, Innovations, and Management Staff through by telephone at 1-800-233-3935.

ATTACHMENT

CHICKEN PARTS ELIGIBLE FOR SAMPLE COLLECTION

When answering the questionnaire, select the appropriate letter in the Raw Chicken Parts Sampling Program questionnaire (Question 2a), which corresponds to the specific type of part collected. When collecting cut up or portioned breasts or thighs, write in what was sampled in Question 2b.

NOTE: Title 9 CFR 381.170(b), Standards for kinds and classes, and for cuts of raw poultry, sets out requirements for certain cuts of poultry. IPP are to review definitions of the parts to ensure that the parts selected for sampling are accurately documented in PHIS.

Select A for **breast** if you collect:

- Boneless and skinless chicken breasts
- Whole breasts (skin on or skin off), with or without ribs
- Half breasts or split breasts with back portion removed (skin on or skin off), with or without ribs
- Tenders and tenderloins
- Cut up or portioned breasts (chunks, strips, thin-sliced, or similarly cut with a size of 3/4 inch or larger in at least one dimension, and that would typically be available for consumer purchase)

Select B for **leg** if you collect:

- Bone-in whole legs (skin on or skin off)
- Boneless whole legs (skin on or skin off)
- Drumsticks (skin on or skin off)
- Thighs (skin on or skin off)
- Boneless and skinless thighs
- Cut up or portioned legs (chunks, strips, or similarly cut with a size of 3/4 inch or larger in at least one dimension, and that would typically be available for consumer purchase)

Select C for **wing** if you collect:

- Whole bone-in wings (with or without the wing tip)
- Mixed wing sections
- Drummettes
- Mid-joints or mid-sections (flats)
- Wing tips
- Boneless wings

NOTE: For photographic images representative of typical chicken parts and subparts see the List of Chicken Parts Eligible for Sample Collection accessible through the IPP Help button.