



USDA Website for the Latest Information on COVID-19

The COVID-19 outbreak is a rapidly changing situation. USDA is not aware of any reports at this time of human illnesses that suggest COVID-19 can be transmitted by food or food packaging. However, it is always important to follow [good hygiene practices](#) (i.e., wash hands and surfaces often, separate raw meat from other foods, cook to the right temperature, and refrigerate foods promptly) when handling or preparing foods. For further information, please go to <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus>.

FSIS Announces Results of Raw Pork Products Study

FSIS is announcing the availability of results from the second phase of the Raw Pork Products Exploratory Sampling Program (Baseline Study). The study was conducted from June 1, 2017 through May 31, 2018, to determine the prevalence of *Salmonella* and assess the occurrence of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) in a variety of raw pork products. In total, 4,014 samples from slaughter and processing establishments were analyzed for *Salmonella*; a subset of these samples (1,395) from slaughter establishments were analyzed for STEC.

Analyses determined that the national prevalence of *Salmonella* in raw pork products was highest in comminuted products (28.9%), followed by intact cuts (5.3%) and nonintact cuts (3.9%). Less than 1% of samples analyzed were positive for the top seven STEC.

The agency continues to monitor levels of *Salmonella* in raw pork and will use the data from the second phase of Raw Pork Products Exploratory Sampling Program to develop future policies designed to reduce the levels of *Salmonella* in raw pork products.

The results of the study are published in the Journal of Food Protection and are available at <https://doi.org/10.4315/0362-028X.JFP-19-360>.

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Export Requirements Update

The Library of Export Requirements has been updated for the following countries:

- China, People’s Republic of
- India
- Jamaica
- Kiribati, Republic of
- Morocco
- Qatar
- Tunisia

For a complete list of countries, visit <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/ffsis/topics/international-affairs/exporting-products>.

FSIS Announces Program Leadership Changes

Carl Mayes has been named the Associate Chief Information Officer (CIO), replacing Bajinder Paul, who is now the Deputy CIO at USDA. Carl previously served as Assistant Administrator for the Office of Investigation, Enforcement and Audit (OIEA) since 2015. In OIEA, he led the agency's surveillance and investigation activities for incidents of foodborne illness outbreaks and enforcement and litigation functions. Prior to working in OIEA, Carl was FSIS' Deputy Chief Information Officer. He joined FSIS in August 2009 and previously spent 21 years in the U.S. Air Force.

Carlynn Cockrum was named the Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA) for OIEA on February 17. On March 1, she also began serving as Acting Administrator of OIEA until a permanent selection is made. Previously, Carlynn was the Branch Chief in the Enforcement and Litigation Division, leading criminal, civil, and administrative enforcement responsibilities for FSIS. Prior to her work in ELD, Carlynn was an Attorney Advisor with USDA's Office of the General Counsel, and provided legal counsel to FSIS, APHIS, AMS and the Office of the Secretary.

Mark Crowe has been named the acting DAA for OIEA. He was serving as the Director of the Compliance and Investigations Division in OIEA. Mark began his career as a food inspector in Fresno, Calif., and subsequently held processing and import inspector positions in Seattle, Wash. Additionally, he has held positions as a compliance officer in Alameda, Calif.; a compliance specialist in Washington, D.C.; and a supervisory compliance investigator in Alameda, Calif. Mark has also served as the Humane Handling Ombudsman in the USDA Office of Food Safety.

Justin Ronca has been selected to serve as the agency's first Chief Data Scientist. Justin comes to FSIS from The MITRE Corporation, where he has been a principal data scientist supporting FSIS and the Office of Naval Intelligence for the last three years. Prior to joining MITRE, Justin was the director of global people analytics for Walmart. He graduated with a B.S. in Mathematics from American University in Washington, D.C. Justin earned an M.S. in Statistics and MPA from the La Follette School of Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

FSIS Posts Next Set of Establishment-Specific Datasets

FSIS is preparing to publish the next set of establishment-specific datasets as announced in the Federal Register on July 14, 2016 ([Docket No. FSIS-2014-0032](#)). Prior to publishing these datasets, FSIS is making sample datasets available. The next sample dataset and corresponding data documentation is for the Intensified Verification Testing (IVT) sampling program for ready-to-eat (RTE) products, which can be found on the Establishment-Specific Datasets: Laboratory Sampling Data web page at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/data-collection-and-reports/data/datasets-laboratory-sampling>.

Please visit <https://www.regulations.gov/> and follow the online instructions at that site for submitting comments to Docket FSIS-2014-0032 for this sample dataset and data documentation by April 17, 2020. FSIS intends to publish the final dataset on April 24, 2020. Additional details can be found in the [FSIS Establishment-Specific Data Release Strategic Plan](#).

FSIS Constituent Update is prepared by the Congressional and Public Affairs Staff, Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Education

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FSIS Recognizes U.K. as Single Food Safety Inspection System and Reinstatement Granted for Raw Beef Exports to U.S.

FSIS has completed its review of the United Kingdom's raw beef products inspection system to be considered a single food safety inspection system. This review included an assessment of the United Kingdom's self-reporting tool (SRT) documentation and in-country verification audit conducted from July 15 - August 2, 2019. FSIS has determined that the U.K. meets the equivalence criteria for FSIS to recognize it as a single food safety inspection system that encompasses England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and to grant a reinstatement of equivalence for Britain's raw beef products inspection system. The U.K. is eligible to export raw beef products to the U.S. derived from cattle slaughtered on and after March 6, 2020.

FSIS previously recognized the four countries (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) that comprise the U.K. as individual countries with meat food safety inspection systems equivalent to that of the U.S. Following the granting of this equivalence determination, FSIS is combining the previous individual country product eligibilities into one under the U.K. in the list of countries eligible to export meat products into the U.S. on the FSIS website at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/international-affairs/importing-products/eligible-countries-products-foreign-establishments/eligible-countries-and-products>.

The report for the audit conducted by FSIS in July 15 – August 2, 2019, is available on the [FSIS website](#).

FSIS Posts Annual Sampling Plan

Sampling of product for microbiological contaminants or chemical residues is a key FSIS activity to ensure public health and safety. FSIS has published its [FY 2020 Annual Sampling Plan](#), which identifies changes to FSIS' sampling programs planned for FY 2020 and describes the agency's overall strategy for directing its sampling resources. The [FSIS Strategic Plan for FY 2017-2021](#) includes an objective to strengthen FSIS sampling programs and the activities in the FY 2020 Annual Sampling Plan directly align with the FSIS' [FY 2020 Annual Plan](#). The changes to the sampling plan support FSIS' modernization efforts by maximizing public health benefits through prioritizing testing by degree of hazard.

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