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Department of  
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## Food Safety and Inspection Service Protecting Public Health and Preventing Foodborne Illness



Food Safety and Inspection Service:

**National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection**

FSIS Response to NACMPI 2016 Meeting  
Consideration of FSIS Best Practices Guidance for Controlling  
*Lm* in Retail Delicatessens

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# Food Safety and Inspection Service:

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## Food Safety and Inspection Service:

### Background

- FSIS presented the FSIS Best Practices Guidance for Controlling *Listeria monocytogenes* (*Lm*) in Retail Delicatessens Charge to the National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection (NACMPI) on March 29-30, 2016.
- NACMPI recommended that:
  - FSIS coordinate outreach and enhance communication on retail best practices,
  - Ensure that its outreach is practical, easily understandable, and available to all audiences, and
  - Collaborate on updates to the Food Code.

## Food Safety and Inspection Service:

### Background

- In response to the NACMPI recommendations FSIS:
  - Developed an Interagency *Lm* Working group to coordinate and enhance communications.
  - Performed focus group studies
    - To determine if the information was practical, easily understandable and available to all audiences.
  - Assessed the focus group study results to determine if changes are needed to the Food Code.
- Based on the focus group findings, FSIS plans to:
  - Coordinate with its public health partners to revise its guidance/outreach materials,
  - Engage with industry associations and others to review/distribute the information.

**Note:** FSIS does not plan to recommend Food Code changes at this time because a high percentage of retailers follow FSIS recommendations.

## Food Safety and Inspection Service:

### Methodology

- FSIS performed the focus groups to assess the effectiveness of the [FSIS Best Practices Guidance for Controlling \*Listeria monocytogenes\* \(\*Lm\*\) in Retail Delicatessens](#) (Retail *Lm* Guidelines).
- The focus groups were recorded with participants' permission, and data collection was approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).
  - There were 12 participants across the large retail groups
  - There were 54 participants from state and local health and agriculture departments.
  - FSIS also conducted one focus group with five academics (cooperative extension specialists).
- Focus groups were conducted virtually allowing for simulation of an in-person focus group experience.

## Food Safety and Inspection Service:

### Focus Group Questions

- Question 1: Distribution/availability of communications
  - FSIS asked about how and through what format participants receive food safety information.
- Question 2: *Lm* Specific communications content
  - FSIS asked participants about the type, clarity, quality, usefulness, and consistency of the food safety information they had received.
- Question 3: FSIS *Lm* communications tools
  - FSIS asked whether participants had ever seen FSIS' *Lm*-specific documents (the [Retail \*Lm\* Guidelines](#), the [Lm Brochure](#), and the [FSIS \*Lm\* Self-Assessment Tool](#)), and from what source.

### Results

#### Distribution /Availability of Materials

- **State/locals:** Federal agencies (CDC, FSIS, FDA) were the main source of *Lm* information.
  - The most sourced formats of communication were websites and webinars, with training also frequently mentioned.
- **Retailers:** Receive information from federal agencies, state and/or local agencies and industry associations, specifically the Food Marketing Institute (FMI).
  - Both groups indicated that they prefer email distribution and web updates of information.
- **Academics:** Stated that they work with both the large and small retailers— implying that they could be a conduit to these groups.

### Results

#### ***Lm*-Specific Communications**

- **State/locals:** Stated that the style of messaging was different depending on the agency (FSIS, FDA and CDC).
  - Recommended tailoring some information to inspectors and other information to retailers.
- **Retailers:** Indicated that FSIS's materials were clear for corporate participants but not for frontline deli operators.
  - Recommended that FSIS work through trade associations to distribute outreach materials.
- **Academics:** Recommended first establishing a “foundation of minimum sanitation requirements of the Food Code” for retailers and then addressing *Lm*.

## Food Safety and Inspection Service:

### Results

#### FSIS *Lm* Communication Tools:

- **State/locals:** Indicated that they need materials that are simple to understand and that they can easily distribute to retailers.
  - Several recommended having more visually-based materials, such as posters that could be hung up in break rooms.
- **Retailers:** Recommended that FSIS build relationships and communication channels with state/local regulators.
  - Both the state/local and retail participants were not aware of the *Lm* Brochure.
- **Academics:** Indicated that the *Lm* Brochure and FSIS Self-Assessment Tool could be improved by simplifying the format and adding more visuals.

## Food Safety and Inspection Service:

### Next Steps

- FSIS plans to update the Retail *Lm* Guideline to improve consistency, clarity, and overall content.
  - Plan to update with pictures and images as suggested by the focus group participants.
  - Simplify recommendations to increase clarity.
- FSIS plans to coordinate with CDC and FDA to harmonize its outreach materials with content that has been developed by other groups and agencies.
  - FSIS plans to work with groups such as FMI, the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO), and cooperative extension specialists to review and distribute its materials.
- By making changes in outreach materials, FSIS can help ensure that its guidelines are useful to retailers and drive adoption of food safety practices.

Food Safety and Inspection Service:



Questions