

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, DC

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# FSIS NOTICE

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15-16

2/18/16

## PROFILE UPDATE IN ESTABLISHMENTS THAT PRODUCE NOT-READY-TO-EAT STUFFED CHICKEN PRODUCTS THAT APPEAR READY-TO-EAT

### I. PURPOSE

A. This notice provides instructions to inspection program personnel (IPP) at all establishments that produce raw and heat-treated but not fully cooked, not shelf stable stuffed chicken products that they are to update the Public Health Information System (PHIS) profile. This notice also instructs supervisory personnel to verify that the establishment's PHIS profile information is accurate.

B. IPP are to update the profile so that FSIS can determine which establishments produce not-ready-to-eat (NRTE) stuffed chicken products that appear ready-to-eat (RTE). After IPP update the PHIS profiles, FSIS will use this information to schedule a public health risk evaluation (PHRE) at these establishments. FSIS plans to capture information concerning these establishments' production practices, and FSIS will determine whether establishments have reassessed their Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans in response to recent outbreaks associated with these products. This information, in addition to the PHRE, will be used to determine whether a food safety assessment (FSA) needs to be conducted.

C. Properly identifying these products within PHIS will also aid the Agency in identifying establishments to include in an upcoming exploratory sampling program. FSIS expects to design a sampling program to verify industry's level of process control for these products. FSIS is considering sampling (as part of a FSA) multiple locations including: poultry source materials (to assess incoming contamination), finished product (to assess whether a reduction of incoming contamination occurred during product formulation and processing), and post par-frying food contact surface contamination (to assess whether recontamination occurred before packaging).

### II. BACKGROUND

A. Manufacturers of these products have taken steps to improve their labeling to ensure that the consumer is aware that the product is raw, and that these products should not be microwaved because of the increased likelihood that the product will be undercooked. In addition, industry has taken steps to validate the cooking instructions for these products to ensure that, when cooked in accordance with the cooking instructions, the product will be safe to consume.

B. From 1998 to 2015, public health officials have investigated nine outbreaks attributed to consumption of NRTE stuffed chicken products that appeared RTE. Regardless of the efforts identified in paragraph A, in 2015, two separate outbreaks occurred resulting in a public health alert issued on July 1, 2015, followed by two separate recalls (see: [RC-096-2015](#) and [RC-101-2015](#)). FSIS announced an expanded recall, RC-101-2015, on [Oct. 2, 2015](#). From these most recent outbreaks, FSIS identified that manufacturers

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continued to rely primarily upon the labeling of the product and not upon reducing contamination of the finished product.

### III. DESCRIPTION OF NRTE STUFFED CHICKEN PRODUCTS THAT APPEAR RTE

A. NRTE stuffed chicken products that appear RTE contain raw, comminuted chicken breast meat or whole chicken breast meat, but the finished product is heat-treated only to set the batter or breading and impart an RTE appearance. The product typically is stuffed with ingredients such as a raw vegetable, butter, cheese, or meat such as ham. Because the product is par-fried in hot oil, the product most appropriately is produced under the Heat Treated Not Fully Cooked Not Shelf Stable HACCP processing category.

B. Examples of such products (Figure 1) include but are not limited to breaded, pre-browned chicken cordon bleu, chicken Kiev, and chicken stuffed with broccoli and cheese.



**Figure 1.** An example of a NRTE stuffed poultry product that appears RTE.

C. NRTE stuffed chicken product that appears RTE does **NOT** include other types of stuffed products such as turducken, whole stuffed chickens, or chicken thighs stuffed with stuffing and almonds. Chicken nuggets and other par-fried products are not included in this product type, unless the product has been stuffed.

### IV. IPP RESPONSIBILITIES FOR UPDATING PRODUCTS IN ESTABLISHMENT PROFILES

A. IPP at all establishments producing raw or heat-treated but not fully cooked, not shelf stable chicken products are to look for the task “Update Profile - NRTE Stuffed Chicken Products that Appear RTE” on the task list and schedule it on the task calendar. IPP are to update products in the PHIS establishment profile for NRTE stuffed chicken products that appear RTE in the HACCP Processing Category “Heat Treated, Not Fully Cooked, Not Shelf Stable” as directed in Chapter II, Part IX in [FSIS PHIS Directive 5300.1](#), *Managing the Establishment Profile in the Public Health Information System (PHIS)*.

B. Updating the PHIS profile is a high priority task, and IPP are to complete it no later than 30 days following the assignment of the task to the task list.

C. The task is to be completed only once per active establishment. IPP are to follow the instructions in [FSIS Directive 13.000.1](#), *Scheduling In-plant Inspection Tasks in the Public Health Information System (PHIS)*, when scheduling their inspection tasks. IPP are to prioritize completion of this task before completing other tasks of the same priority. IPP are to designate any task that they did not complete as “not performed” as a result of performing the “Update Profile - NRTE Stuffed Chicken Product that Appears RTE” task. IPP are to select “Higher priority task took precedent” as the reason code.

D. IPP are to complete or are to determine how to complete the task as follows:

1. In multi-inspector/multi-shift establishments, the supervisor is to determine which IPP on which shift are to complete this task.

2. In multi-shift establishments with one IPP per shift, the Frontline Supervisor (FLS) is to determine which IPP will complete this task.
3. Relief IPP assigned to an establishment with one shift are to complete the task the first week they are assigned to the facility, if the task has not already been completed by the IPP assigned to complete this task.
4. All other IPP who are not assigned to complete the task are to schedule the task to their calendar, then mark the task as “Not performed” and select the justification “Task not assigned.”

E. IPP are to enter or update one product group entry in the profile at a time or save each update when entered in PHIS. If IPP enter or update multiple product groups at the same time without saving in between each update, PHIS will not apply the intended use field correctly, which will impact sampling assignment.

F. IPP are to select “Other” for the intended use because the product is intended for consumer cooking (the product is ready-to-cook).

G. IPP are to enter all products described in this notice under the HACCP Category Heat Treated, Not Fully Cooked, Not Shelf Stable based on the production process for these products (see Figure 2). If the **establishment** has classified the product as raw intact or raw non intact, IPP need to take no action to have the establishment change the product category.

**NOTE:** FSIS is aware that an RTE version of this product is produced, but the instructions in this FSIS Notice are not applicable to the RTE version of this product.

**Table 1. IPP are to use the category listed to correctly enter NRTE stuffed chicken products that appear RTE into PHIS**

HACCP Category	Finished Product Category	Product Group
Heat-Treated, Not Fully Cooked, Not Shelf Stable	NRTE otherwise processed poultry	NRTE stuffed chicken product that appear RTE

H. For products entered under the new product group “NRTE stuffed chicken product that appear RTE” that had previously been entered in other product groups, IPP are to reduce the volume entry for the other product groups listed below, because these products will now be entered under the new product group. If these products are the only NRTE stuffed chicken products produced at the establishment, IPP are to delete the entire previous product group and re-enter the products under the new product group. These products were previously categorized in the following product groups:

1. For Heat-Treated, Not Fully Cooked, Not Shelf Stable products: Finished Product Category “NRTE otherwise processed poultry,” product group “Stuffed”.
2. If products were previously entered under any of the raw categories listed below, IPP will need to delete or reduce the volume from these categories:
  - a. For Raw – Non Intact products (not containing comminuted chicken): Finished Product Category “Raw ground, comminuted, or otherwise non intact chicken,” product group “Raw Stuffed Poultry Products.”
  - b. For Raw – Non-intact products (containing comminuted chicken): Finished Product Category “Raw ground, comminuted, or otherwise non intact chicken,” product group “Other Comminuted.” These products were identified as stuffed in the text box under intended use.

- c. For Raw – Intact products: Finished Product Category “Raw intact chicken,” product group “Raw Stuffed Poultry Products.”

I. IPP are to enter the production volume for each product group entry, as described in [FSIS PHIS Directive 5300.1](#).

J. For each entry, IPP are to enter the number of days the product was produced in the previous calendar month, as a number. For example, if IPP are updating products on November 28th, they would enter the number of days product was produced for each entry during the month of October as a number (e.g. 20, not 20 days).

The screenshot shows the 'Products' section of an establishment profile in PHIS. The 'Raw' tab is selected. The 'Finished Product Category\*' is 'NRTE otherwise processed poultry'. The 'Product Group\*' is 'NRTE Stuffed Chicken Product That Appear RTE'. The 'Average Daily Volume pounds per day' is '3,001 - 6,000'. The 'Species\*' is 'Chicken'. The 'Intended Use' is 'Other'. There are input fields for 'No. of days of production' and a 'Save' button.

Figure 2. Screenshot of new product group within PHIS.

K. After IPP have followed the instructions in this notice to perform the task “Update Profile – NRTE Stuffed Chicken Products that Appear RTE,” they are to mark the task as complete. IPP are to keep the information in the establishment profile up-to-date and accurate, as directed in Chapter I, Part X of [FSIS PHIS Directive 5300.1](#).

## V. SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Supervisory personnel are to assign IPP in raw and heat-treated processing chicken establishments to complete the task as described in section IV. D. “Supervisory personnel” refers to any Office of Field Operations (OFO) personnel who supervise IPP in conducting off-line verification activities in raw and heat-treated processing chicken establishments.

B. Supervisory personnel are to ensure that IPP have accurately updated the PHIS profile in establishments that produce the NRTE stuffed chicken products that appear RTE as described in Sections III and IV of this notice. To verify that the task “Update Profile – NRTE Stuffed Chicken Products Appear RTE” has been completed, supervisory personnel are to run a PHIS report for the task “Update Profile – NRTE Stuffed Chicken Products the Appear RTE” 30 days after the assignment of the task to the task list and follow-up with IPP for the tasks that were not completed.

## VI. DISTRICT OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES

A. If the task “Update Profile – NRTE Stuffed Chicken Products that Appear RTE” has not been completed 30 days after the assignment of the task to the task list, a list will be sent to the District Manager and Deputy District Manager of each district.

B. Within 14 calendar days of receiving the list, the District Office (DO) is to verify that the profiles of the establishments on the list have been updated accurately to reflect establishments that produce product described in section III of this notice.

C. Only establishments identified in PHIS as being active will be assigned the “Update Profile - NRTE Stuffed Chicken Products that Appear RTE” task. If an inactive chicken processing establishment becomes active after issuance of this notice, each DO is to ensure that the profile is updated as instructed in of [FSIS PHIS Directive 5300.1](#) and this notice.

## VII. QUESTIONS

Refer questions regarding this notice to RIMS through [askFSIS](#) or by telephone at 1-800-233-3935. When submitting a question, use the Submit a Question tab, and enter the following information in the fields provided:

Subject Field:	Enter <b>Notice 15-16</b>
Question Field:	Enter question with as much detail as possible.
Product Field:	Select <b>General Inspection Policy</b> from the drop-down menu.
Category Field:	Select <b>Sampling</b> from the drop-down menu.
Policy Arena:	Select <b>Domestic (U.S.) Only</b> from the drop-down menu.

When all fields are complete, press **Continue** and at the next screen press **Finish Submitting Question**.

**NOTE:** Refer to [FSIS Directive 5620.1](#), *Using askFSIS*, for additional information on submitting questions.



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