

FSIS NOTICE

Highlighted
changes

6/4/19

FOLLOW-UP SAMPLING IN RAW POULTRY ESTABLISHMENTS NOT MEETING SALMONELLA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

I. PURPOSE

This notice:

1. Reissues instructions for collecting follow-up samples at establishments that do not meet (exceed) *Salmonella* performance standards for chicken or turkey (poultry) carcasses, raw chicken parts, or comminuted poultry products and explains the new procedures for determining an establishment's category announced in November 2018;
2. Communicates that FSIS will no longer include follow-up samples in assessing whether establishments meet the *Salmonella* performance standards; and
3. Explains that FSIS will schedule follow-up sampling at Category 3 establishments no more than once every 120 days. Establishments that remain in Category 3 longer than 120 days may receive follow-up sampling assignments upon request by the Office of Field Operations (OFO).

II. BACKGROUND

A. FSIS' procedures for calculating each establishment's category status were modified in November 2018 ([83 Federal Register 56046](#)). Establishments are now categorized using a single 52-week moving window approach. More specifically, the Office of Planning, Analysis and Risk Management (OPARM) will determine each eligible establishment's Performance Category after evaluating routine sampling project results from the most recently completed 52-week window, by determining that at least a minimum number of samples were collected, and by calculating the *Salmonella* percent positive. Establishments are assigned to Category 1 when the *Salmonella* percent positive for the 52-week window is one-half or less of the product's maximum allowable percent positive (MAPP). Establishments are assigned to Category 2 when the *Salmonella* percent positive for the 52-week window is over one-half of the product's MAPP but does not exceed the product's MAPP. Establishments are assigned to Category 3 when the *Salmonella* percent positive for the 52-week window exceeds the product's MAPP. The November 2018 FR announcement specified that FSIS would no longer include follow-up sampling results as part of the moving window when determining establishment category status, and that the Agency would consider additional changes to its follow-up sampling strategy.

B. FSIS generally allows establishments assigned to Category 3 for the first time approximately 30 days to take corrective actions before initiating follow-up sampling. In most cases, FSIS will collect a set of 16 follow-up samples, with individual samples collected on a daily or per-shift basis whenever possible. Eight samples will be assigned if the Public Health Information System (PHIS) profile indicates the establishment does not produce the product subject to follow-up sampling more than three days a month.

C. Beginning with the issuance of this notice, when an establishment is assigned to Category 3 status, FSIS will schedule a follow-up sampling set only if one has not been scheduled within the previous 120 days. Establishments that remain in Category 3 longer than 120 days may receive follow-up sampling assignments upon request by OFO.

III. COMMUNICATING WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT

NOTE: Inspection program personnel (IPP) are not to attempt to categorize an establishment by tracking FSIS' testing results. OPARM is responsible for updating and reporting establishment categories. The most current establishment pathogen performance standard category status is provided in the PHIS "Establishment Profile Report."

A. When an establishment moves from Category 1 or NA to Category 2:

1. IPP assigned to the establishment, the Frontline Supervisor (FLS), and the District Manager (DM), will receive an alert entitled, "Warning: Product Exceeded One-Half of Performance Standard", through the PHIS dashboard. During the next weekly meeting with establishment management, IPP are to explain that the results indicate variable control of *Salmonella* and that the establishment may fail a performance standard. IPP are to advise the establishment that it may wish to make changes to avoid failing the performance standard.
2. IPP are to document notes from the meeting in a memorandum of interview (MOI) in accordance with [FSIS Directive 5010.1](#) *Food Safety Related Topics for Discussion During Weekly Meetings with Establishment Management*; and include "Product Exceeded One-Half of Performance Standard" in the subject line of the MOI.
3. IPP are to ensure that the MOI follows the content and formatting guidance prescribed in Chapter IV of [FSIS Directive 8010.2](#) *Investigative Methodology*. Specifically, the MOI:
 - a. Is written in the first-person point-of-view of the FSIS employee preparing the MOI;
 - b. Documents the date and location of the meeting;
 - c. Documents the name and official position of the FSIS employee conducting the meeting and of any other program employees present;
 - d. Documents the name and official position of all establishment employees attending the meeting;
 - e. Summarizes all information discussed during the meeting;
 - f. Includes a closing statement certifying that the MOI includes all the information discussed during the meeting; and
 - g. Is promptly signed and dated by the preparer upon completion.
4. This serves as an early warning to the establishment, and no further actions are to be taken by FSIS at the time.

IV. INSTRUCTIONS FOR COLLECTING FOLLOW-UP SAMPLES

A. When an establishment moves from Category 1, Category 2 or NA to Category 3 for the first time in 120 days:

1. IPP assigned to the establishment, the FLS, and the DM will receive an alert entitled “Failure to Meet a *Salmonella* Performance Standard” through the PHIS dashboard; and
2. IPP will also receive a “New Follow-Up Sampling Task” alert through the PHIS dashboard approximately 30 days after the Category 3 alert.

NOTE: The FLS, with concurrence of the DM or DDM, may request additional follow-up sets of samples through askFSIS when an establishment remains in Category 3 more than 120 days and has not demonstrated improved control of *Salmonella* in raw poultry products.

B. The FLS and the Inspector-in-Charge (IIC) are to correlate and evaluate the establishment’s production history and corrective actions to determine when IPP should begin collecting follow-up samples. Although follow-up samples will be automatically assigned through PHIS, the samples should be collected after corrective actions are implemented, and before the sampling collection window expires. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, IPP are to begin collecting follow-up samples approximately 30 days after receiving the Category 3 alert.

C. IPP are to be aware that establishments will continue to be assigned routine samples (using project codes in the table below). IPP are to request supplies for *Salmonella* follow-up sampling after receiving the tasks. Typically, 3-4 sets of supplies can be requested at the same time. Additional supplies will automatically be sent to IPP as submitted samples are received for analysis.

Table. Routine and follow-up sampling project codes, and eligibility/sampling instructions for poultry carcasses, chicken parts and NRTE comminuted poultry products.

Product	Routine sampling project	Follow-up sampling project	Eligibility and sampling instructions
Young chicken carcass	HC_CH_CARC01	F_CH_CARC01	FSIS Directive 10,250.1 , chapter III
Young turkey carcass	HC_TU_CARC01	F_TU_CARC01	FSIS Directive 10,250.1 , chapter IV
Raw chicken parts	HC_CPT_LBW01	F_CPT_LBW01	IPP Help: Raw Chicken Parts Sampling Program Legs, Breasts & Wings
NRTE comminuted chicken product	HC_CH_COM01	F_CH_COM01	IPP Help: NRTE Ground & Other Comminuted Poultry Sampling Program
NRTE comminuted turkey product	HC_TU_COM01	F_TU_COM01	

NOTE: Follow-up samples will only be scheduled for those raw poultry products subject to *Salmonella* performance standards. IPP are not to collect follow-up samples of products subject to an exploratory raw poultry sampling program and not subject to a performance standard. These include other raw chicken parts, mechanically-separated poultry products, or products from low volume or religious-exempt establishments.

D. IPP are to use the same procedures for collecting routine and follow-up samples. IPP are to 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, IPP are to alternate between all eligible parts. If an establishment produces both eligible intact and eligible non-intact chicken parts, IPP are to alternate sampling of intact and non-intact parts.

E. IPP are to refer to [IPP Help](#) to determine the eligibility of specific poultry products for follow-up sampling and consult askFSIS if they have further questions.

F. Once follow-up sampling is initiated, IPP are to collect the complete set of follow-up samples as quickly as possible. One follow-up sample is to be scheduled for each subsequent production shift, except when a routine sample is scheduled. Routine samples are given priority over follow-up samples and IPP are to ensure they do not allow routine sample tasks to expire. Samples submitted to the laboratory from two different shifts but marked with the same sample collection date will not be discarded, provided sample receipt temperature and packaging criteria are met as described in [FSIS Directive 10,250.1](#), *Salmonella and Campylobacter Verification Program for Raw Meat and Poultry Products*.

V. QUESTIONS

Refer questions regarding this notice to the Office of Policy and Program Development 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 **Notice xx-19**.
Question Field: Enter question with as much detail as possible.
Product Field: Select **General Inspection Policy** from the drop-down menu.
Category Field: Select **Sampling - Salmonella** from the drop-down menu.
Policy Arena: Select **Domestic (U.S.) Only** 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.

Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy and Program Development