



Special Alert

FSIS to Implement Enrichment Method to Detect *Campylobacter* in All Raw Poultry Samples

When FSIS switched to neutralizing buffered peptone water (nBPW) to collect samples for *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* analysis in July 2016, *Campylobacter* recovery from raw chicken parts and turkey carcasses dropped significantly. FSIS anticipated that an enrichment method (described in MLG chapter 41.04 and available at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/0273bc3d-2363-45b3-befb-1190c25f3c8b/MLG-41.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>), which uses a larger volume and allows injured cells to recover, would improve the recovery of *Campylobacter* as compared to the direct plate method currently used to assess whether establishments meet the *Campylobacter* performance standards. A recent side-by-side study of all poultry carcass and chicken parts samples indicated significantly higher *Campylobacter* recovery using the enrichment method as compared to the direct plate method for chicken carcasses (18% compared to 1%), turkey carcasses (1% compared to 0%) and chicken parts (16% compared to 2%). A similar study of comminuted poultry product samples, which do not require the use nBPW, was conducted due to the lack of sensitivity of the direct plate method for these products; significantly higher recovery of *Campylobacter* was found with the enrichment method for comminuted chicken (11% compared to 2%) and comminuted turkey (3% compared to 0%).

Given these results, on Aug. 27, 2018, FSIS will begin testing all raw poultry samples using the enrichment method. Procedures and frequency of sample collection will remain the same. After collecting sufficient data, FSIS intends to revise performance standards for raw poultry products based on the enrichment method and intends to propose and request comments on these revised standards in the *Federal Register*.

FSIS will discontinue assessing whether establishments meet the current *Campylobacter* performance standards. FSIS will continue to share individual *Campylobacter* sampling results directly with establishments using existing mechanisms but will temporarily discontinue posting aggregate category results and prevalence estimates on the FSIS website until sufficient data are generated with the new method. In addition, FSIS will suspend *Campylobacter* analysis for follow-up samples initiated when establishments exceed a *Salmonella* performance standard.

Until we have new performance standards in place, FSIS intends to make available information relative to the percent positive for all establishments subject to FSIS *Campylobacter* sampling and testing using the most recent enrichment method generated *Campylobacter* sample results. This information will be aggregated and will not single out any specific establishment. This information will give industry and other stakeholders timely information about progress being made to reduce contamination in the products sampled.

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