



How Safely Are You Preparing Your Frozen Food?

New research from the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) reveals that consumers may not know how to safely cook frozen foods, which can put families at risk of getting foodborne illness in their homes.

Consumers may not know that some frozen foods are not fully cooked or ready to eat, especially if they have browned breading, grill marks or other signs that normally show that a product has been cooked. In a recent FSIS observational study, 22 percent of participants said a not-ready-to-eat frozen chicken entrée was either cooked, partially cooked, or they weren't sure that the product was in fact raw.

Among respondents of a separate, national survey who had experience with foodborne illnesses, 61 percent reported they did not make changes to how they handled food at home after being sick, which is concerning when you consider that more than half of survey respondents reported that someone in their home was considered at-risk for foodborne illness. These individuals — children, older adults, pregnant women, and those with compromised immune systems — are unable to fight infection as effectively as others, so they can be susceptible to longer illness, hospitalization and even death from foodborne illness.

Links to the executive summary of the study can be found at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/food-safety-education/teach-others/download-materials/consumer-research-and-focus-group-testing>.

Have questions? Need more food safety information? Call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MP-HOTLINE (1-888-674-6854) or chat live at ask.usda.gov from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, in English or Spanish.

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USDA Seeks Nominations for Membership on Food Safety Advisory Committee

USDA is soliciting nominations for membership to the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF). There are nine vacancies on the advisory committee.

Nominations are being sought for individuals with scientific expertise in the fields of microbiology, epidemiology, food technology (food, clinical, and predictive), toxicology, risk assessment, infectious disease, biostatistics, and other related sciences. USDA is also seeking nominations for one individual affiliated with a consumer group to serve on NACMCF. This member will serve as a representative member to provide a consumer viewpoint and is not required to have a scientific background. Individuals who may be currently employed by state and federal governments, industry, academia or consumer groups are invited to submit nominations. Self-nominations are welcome.

Advisory committee members who are not federal government employees, except for the consumer representative member, will be appointed to serve as non-compensated special government employees (SGE). SGEs are subject to appropriate conflict of interest statutes and standards of ethical conduct. Each member serves a two-year term that may be renewed for two additional consecutive terms at the discretion of the Secretary of Agriculture.

NACMCF nominations must be addressed to the Secretary of Agriculture and accompanied by a cover letter addressing the nomination. Submissions must include a resume or curriculum vitae and a completed USDA [Advisory Committee Membership Background Information form AD-755](#).

Nomination packages must be received by November 9, 2020, and should be sent by email to john.jarosh@usda.gov or mailed to: Sonny Perdue, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250, Attn: FSIS\OPHS\National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (John Jarosh).

Established in 1988, NACMCF provides scientific advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human Services on the development of microbiological criteria by which the safety and wholesomeness of food can be assessed.

Those who have questions about their nomination package can contact John Jarosh at 202-690-6128. To read the *Federal Register* notice go to <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulations/federal-register/federal-register-notices>.

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

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FSIS Updates Import Library Webpage

On October 9, 2020, FSIS released an updated Import Library, improving the current webpage and updating each country page to indicate eligibility by product type and species. The webpage that lists the foreign establishments certified to export meat, poultry, or egg products to the United States was also redesigned to be more user friendly and to enhance transparency.

Additionally, FSIS updated country-specific information for applicable Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) animal disease requirements and the disease-specific links to APHIS' website and regulations. These changes will make it easier for stakeholders to identify the eligible species and products that equivalent countries are eligible to export to the United States.

The updated Import Library: Eligible Countries and Products webpage is available [here](#).

The updated Eligible Foreign Establishments list is available [here](#).

FSIS to Post Updated Dataset on Import Refusals

On October 15, 2020, FSIS will update the publicly posted dataset on import refusals for products that the agency regulates. Federal law requires every commercial shipment of imported meat, poultry, and egg products to be re-inspected prior to product entering U.S. commerce. FSIS re-inspects each shipment to verify labeling, proper certification, general condition, and any signs of tampering and to identify product adulterated by transportation damage. FSIS also performs additional activities on a random and/or for-cause basis, such as physical product examination and laboratory sampling for pathogens and chemical residues.

Any product that does not meet FSIS requirements is refused entry, and the importer has up to 45 days (30 days for egg products) to have the product destroyed for use as human food, re-exported/returned to the foreign country, converted to animal food, or brought into compliance with FSIS requirements, if applicable (e.g., relabeled, remarked, or issued a replacement certificate).

This dataset is updated around the 15th of each month and contains each shipment with product that was refused entry. To access these datasets or view more information about them, please visit the [FSIS Datasets page](#).

Export Requirements Update

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

Brazil

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

Tips for Faster Label Approval Process

Labels are currently taking **about 5-7** business days to evaluate.

TIP: The label signature line may state the name of a distributor if preceded by a qualifying statement, such as “distributed by.”

All labels must include a signature line identifying the name or trade name of the manufacturer or packer (establishment) that prepared the product for compliance with 9 CFR 317.2(g) and 381.122. The signature line is a mandatory labeling feature, and labels without this feature may be considered misbranded. The signature line can appear on the principal display panel (PDP), on the 20% panel adjacent to the PDP in the case of a cylindrical or nearly cylindrical container, on the front riser panel of frozen food cartons, or on the information panel. In addition to the name of the manufacturer or distributor, the signature line must show the city, state, and zip code of the place of business. If the company is not listed in a phone book, the street address should also be included in the signature line.

In place of the manufacturer or packer, the name and address of the distributor may appear in the signature line. When the name of the distributor is used, the signature line must be preceded by a qualifying statement such as “prepared for,” or “distributed by.”

For more information on mandatory labeling features, see <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulatory-compliance/labeling/labeling-procedures/label-submission-checklist>.

FSIS will continue to provide updates regarding label turnaround time, as well as suggestions to assist industry to streamline label submissions in its *Constituent Update*.

Materials from Public Meetings Now Available

The slide deck presentations from the below public meetings are now available at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/newsroom/meetings/past-meetings/past-meetings-2020>. Recordings of the public meetings will be added to this webpage as soon as they are available.

- USDA FSIS Virtual Public Meeting: *Salmonella* - State of the Science (September 22, 2020)
- Food Safety: Consumer Outreach and Education Today and for the Future (October 6, 2020)

Additional information about FSIS' past public meetings can be found on our [Meetings and Events](#) webpage.

Policy Updates

FSIS notices and directives on public health and regulatory issues are available at: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulations>. The following policy updates were recently issued:

Docket No. FSIS-2020-0029 - National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods Membership Nominations

FSIS Notice 52-20 - Updated - Training Requirement for International Travel

FSIS Notice 53-20 - Special Provisions for Pay Period 25