

***Salmonella* Initiative Program Criteria**

8/31/07

The following criteria define the *Salmonella* Initiative Program that FSIS intends to initiate in October 2007. This Program, conceptually discussed in 71 FR 9772 (February 27, 2006), is designed to produce definite improvements in on-going control for *Salmonella* in broiler and turkey slaughter operations in volunteer establishments. Such establishments will have to submit a request to participate in this Program and, if selected, will operate via a waiver to existing regulations, as provided in 9 CFR 381.3(b), and in accordance with the criteria described below. FSIS will review requests to participate in the Program beginning September 15, 2007. In addition, FSIS will soon formally announce the Program in a Federal Register (FR) Notice. FSIS intends to continue this Program until either a final regulation issues that incorporates the concepts of the Program into a public health based poultry slaughter inspection system, or the Agency decides to pursue a different approach to encouraging *Salmonella* control. Through the FR notice, FSIS will announce a schedule in which poultry "HIMP" plants, as well as all other poultry establishments operating under a waiver to existing regulations (e.g., on-line reprocessing), will be expected to come into compliance with this Program.

At this time, FSIS is aware that some poultry establishments would like to increase the volume of birds slaughtered, while other establishments have expressed a desire solely to chill the eviscerated carcasses differently than provided by existing time/temperature restrictions. Consequently, FSIS invites such establishments to apply to participate in the Program. Such establishments will be expected to agree to operate under a waiver to 9 CFR 381.94 (Contamination with microorganisms; process control verification criteria and testing; pathogen reduction standards) and to any other regulatory requirement that the establishment can demonstrate can be appropriately waived under 9 CFR 381.3(b). To be eligible to participate in the Program, establishments will need to agree to test for *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* and to be able to demonstrate that the incidence of *Salmonella*, on a daily basis per shift, is consistently maintained at or below half the current standard/guideline for *Salmonella* identified by FSIS.

Although FSIS will test these establishments for *Salmonella* in accordance with its scheduling criteria (see: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/scheduling_criteria_salmonella_sets.pdf), FSIS also will conduct unannounced testing in each selected establishment. FSIS will be comparing its results to that of the establishment.

Criteria for Participating:

- Up to five poultry slaughter establishments will be selected for the Program in situations that involve changes in the parameters of FSIS' inspection; FSIS expects there would be no limit on the number of slaughter establishments selected for the Program if there is no impact on FSIS inspection.
- The establishment must be listed by FSIS as having achieved a Category 1 level of process control via FSIS testing, with at least one of the sample sets being completed since February 2006 (see: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Frame/FrameRedirect.asp?main=http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/04-026N.htm>, 71 FR 9772, February 27, 2006, for a description of Category 1).
- Preference for selection of establishments will be given to establishments with a 5% or lower positive rate for all sample sets collected by FSIS since February 2006, as well as in

establishment-collected sample sets completed within the past quarter. The lower the rate, the greater the preference given.

- Preference for selection of establishments will be given to establishments that identify *Salmonella* as a hazard reasonably likely to occur.
- The percent positive rate for all sample sets collected by either the establishment or FSIS during implementation of the Program will need to be maintained at or below half the acceptable number of positive samples in the current standard/guideline.
 - If the percent positive rate exceeds half the acceptable number of positive samples in the current standard/guideline at any time during the Program, based on establishment or FSIS testing results, the establishment will need to take immediate steps to directly address any waived provisions of the regulations, as well as intensify the frequency of daily testing until three consecutive establishment-collected sample sets are at or below a 5% positive rate. FSIS will take steps to terminate the implementation of the Program in establishments that cannot regain process control for *Salmonella* at or below half the acceptable number of positive samples in the current standard/guideline within one quarter.
- On a daily basis, during each shift, the establishment will be expected to test for *Salmonella*; the sample set size is to be the same as that used by FSIS for verification testing, but multiple samples can be pulled daily.
- While maintaining a Category 1 level of process control, FSIS may request the establishment to provide FSIS with the *Salmonella* isolates from a randomly selected establishment-collected set. However, if the establishment attains a Category 2 or 3 level of process control at any time during the Program, all *Salmonella* isolates from all establishment-collected sets will need to be provided to FSIS on a weekly basis. FSIS will conduct serotyping and pulse-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) pattern identification on the samples, and then upload the pattern into PulseNet; FSIS will provide information about the establishment samples back to the establishment monthly.
- On a weekly basis, the establishment will need to collect at least one sample at both rehang and post chill in a manner that the collection of each sample reflects the time it takes a carcass to pass from rehang to post chill; the establishment is to analyze the samples for *Campylobacter*, generic *Escherichia coli*, and *Salmonella*; the establishment is to enumerate samples that are positive for these microorganisms, and it is to provide a copy of the results to FSIS at least quarterly.
- The establishment is to provide FSIS with copies of relevant information about the food safety system (e.g., interventions in use, volume of production, evisceration equipment type, linespeed, and sample set % positive rate).
- Establishments agree that they will provide FSIS with at least 30 days notice if they decide to terminate their participation in the program.

Submittal of requests to participate in the Program should be addressed to Dr. Isabel Arrington via email (isabel.arrington@fsis.usda.gov).