



March 30, 2015

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

1400
Independence
Avenue, SW.
Washington, D.C.
20250

Carmen Darland
Maple Leaf Farms/Milford Valley Chicken
101 E. Church Street
Leesburg, IN 46538

Dear Ms. Darland,

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has completed its review of the petition submitted by Maple Leaf Farms/Milford Valley Chicken requesting the Agency amend its current policy about Chicken Cordon Bleu formulation so that it more accurately reflects industry practices and consumers expectations for products labeled as "Chicken Cordon Bleu." You requested that the Food Standards and Labeling Policy Book (the Policy Book) entry for "Chicken Cordon Bleu" either be eliminated or changed to read:

CHICKEN CORDON BLEU:

- 1.) Chicken.
- 2.) An ingredient containing pork;
- 3.) Cheese or pasteurized processed cheese;
- 4.) Can be breaded or unbreaded.

In addition, you requested clarification about the formulation of Chicken Cordon Bleu and solutions counting towards the minimum meat requirement. In March 2013, Rosalyn Murphy-Jenkins, Director of the Labeling Program Delivery Staff (LPDS) wrote to Carmen Darland of Maple Leaf Farms and explained that any added solutions in the chicken breast meat can count toward the 60 percent chicken breast meat component in the Policy Book entry, but the chicken skin cannot be counted because it is not considered poultry meat.

After consideration of the data submitted in the petition and the addendum to the petition, the Agency has decided to grant the petition in part. The petition requests that the Chicken Cordon Bleu Policy Book entry provide that the product has an ingredient containing pork. After reviewing the additional research provided in the petition on products currently in the market place, FSIS believes a "Chicken Cordon Bleu" standard that provides that such product including "pork" would be too broad. This product typically contains a cured pork product. Therefore, FSIS is revising the entry to provide that the product include cured pork but removes the minimum meat content of 5% for the cured pork. The entry will provide for the use of other types of meat or poultry (e.g., uncured ham or turkey ham) provided the product is descriptively labeled to specify the other type of meat or poultry in the product, in addition to the chicken. Your petition also requests that the entry state that a Chicken Cordon Bleu product "may be breaded or unbreaded." We agree with this revision, but have also decided to clarify that when such product is breaded the amount of breading is limited to 30% of the product formula. This clarification is necessary because Title 9 of the Code of

Federal Regulations (CFR) 381.166 limits batter and breading for product labeled as "breaded product" to 30%. In cases where the batter and breading exceed 30%, an alternative product name is needed on the label to accurately identify the product, e.g., "Chicken Cordon Bleu Fritter" which may contain breading in excess of 30%.

FSIS has decided to update the entry in the Food Standards and Labeling Policy Book to state:

CHICKEN CORDON BLEU:

Product should contain:

- 1.) Chicken breast meat (sliced) with or without chicken skin. Marinade or solution may be included in the meat content of the product. If another part of the chicken is used, product would need to be descriptively labeled, for more information see #5 in this entry.
- 2.) Cured pork, e.g.: ham, Canadian Style Bacon
- 3.) Cheese or pasteurized processed cheese
- 4.) Product can be breaded or unbreaded. If breading is used, breading is limited to 30%.
- 5.) If any of the conditions for chicken cordon bleu are not met, the product should be descriptively labeled. Not meeting the conditions can include using uncured bacon, uncured turkey ham, cured turkey ham, imitation cheese, or some other part of the chicken than the breast.

Furthermore, to make this change in policy, FSIS is developing a *Federal Register* Notice (FRN) that will be published in the near future that will announce to the public the changes to the entry in the Food Standards and Labeling Policy Book. This FRN will also identify other entries that need to be updated or eliminated in the Food Standards and Labeling Policy Book. In the interim, FSIS has determined labeling products that meet the revised policy book entry described above as "Chicken Cordon Bleu" would not be false or misleading. Therefore, producers may submit labels for approval in accordance with 9 CFR 412.1 that are consistent with the new policy book entry described above. FSIS will post an article in its Constituent's Update and modify the Policy Book entry on line within ten days from the date of this letter. If you have any questions regarding the status of the policy amendment, please contact Ms. Melinda Mallon at (202) 504-0878.

Sincerely,



Daniel L. Engeljohn, Ph.D.
Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy and Program Development