FSIS Studies on *Lm* at Retail

*Listeria monocytogenes (Lm)* is a leading cause of foodborne deaths in the United States. Each year, *Lm* contamination of food results in an estimated 1,600 cases of listeriosis in this country, with over 90 percent of those who become ill being hospitalized, and 16-20 percent of cases resulting in death. Those at greatest risk are adults 65 years and older, pregnant women, newborns, and those who are immunocompromised. Cooking and other lethality treatments generally eliminate *Lm*; however, ready-to-eat (RTE) foods—which usually do not undergo consumer cooking before consumption--can be re-contaminated by environmental sources during processing and at retail to present a significant food safety risk.

*Lm* is widely distributed in the environment, has the ability to persist and grow at low temperatures, readily cross-contaminates, and is transmitted through food. These characteristics make *Lm* a challenge to control and a food safety concern for federal and state public health agencies, processors, retailers and consumers. Despite these challenges, effective FSIS policies and innovative industry programs have resulted in a significant decline in the occurrence of *Lm* on RTE meat and poultry products tested at processing over the past decade--from 0.76 percent 10 years ago to 0.34 percent today. Yet, the incidence of listeriosis has plateaued over the past few years, in part, due to re-contamination of RTE foods at retail. This has been all the more reason for our continued efforts to address *Lm*.

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FSIS, FDA Update Joint Agency MOU

FSIS and FDA recently updated a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on collaboration and information sharing. The MOU was updated to include definitions, food safety contact notifications and egg products ingredients.

The agencies are collaborating on scientific and regulatory activities pertaining to food ingredients intended for use in the production of meat, poultry and egg products. This MOU will assist in making science-based decisions regarding the safety and suitability of substances used in the production of these products.

...Retail Lm Studies

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Over the past few years, FSIS scientists have collaborated with food safety partners to publish several studies in the scientific literature on the presence, transmission, and risks associated with Lm in retail delicatessens. These targeted studies informed the current understanding of where Lm persists in the retail environment, how it is transmitted, and how retail conditions and practices have an impact on public health. These scientific studies have helped to guide FSIS’ strategy to prevent Lm contamination of RTE meat and poultry products prepared and served at retail. Data from these studies was used in FSIS’ independently peer reviewed interagency retail risk assessment that was publicly presented in May 2013. In April 2014, based on the results of this risk assessment, FSIS issued the Best Practices Guidance for Controlling Listeria monocytogenes (Lm) in Retail Delicatessens. This guidance provides specific recommendations on steps that retailers can take in the delicatessen area to control Lm contamination of RTE meat and poultry products.

FSIS co-authored studies used to support continued efforts to improve retail food safety include (FSIS co-authors in bold):


FSIS, Federal Partners to Hold Public Meeting on Progress Toward Attribution of Foodborne Illness

Public Meeting on the Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration’s (IFSAC) Work to Improve Foodborne Illness Source Attribution Estimates for *Salmonella*, *Escherichia coli* (E. coli) O157, *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Campylobacter*

FSIS, the FDA, and the CDC will hold a public meeting on Tue., Feb. 24, 2015, to update stakeholders on the Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration’s (IFSAC) work to improve foodborne illness source attribution. Specifically, IFSAC will provide updates on work to develop harmonized foodborne illness source attribution estimates, as well as other analyses IFSAC has undertaken since its formation in 2011. This work can inform food safety strategies. FSIS, FDA and CDC are also interested in input from stakeholders regarding plans for future IFSAC endeavors.

The meeting will be held in the USDA’s Jefferson Auditorium in the South Building located at 14th & Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C., from 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET. For those unable to attend in person, a live webcast of the meeting will be available. There is no fee to register for the public meeting, but pre-registration is mandatory for participants attending both in-person and viewing via webcast.

In-person attendees must check-in the day of the meeting and non-USDA employees must enter through the Wing 4 entrance on Independence Avenue and show a photo ID upon entering the building. Only pre-registered attendees will be permitted to enter the building. Attendees are encouraged to register on-line (see information below). You may also contact the person listed below to register.

Courtney Treece
Planning Professionals Ltd.
1210 W. McDermott St., Suite 111
Allen, TX 75013
Office: (704) 258-4983
Fax: (469) 854-6992
Email: ctreece@planningprofessionals.com

For general questions about the meeting, to request an opportunity to make oral public comments, or for special accommodations due to a disability, please contact:

Juanita Yates
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (HFS-009)
Food and Drug Administration
5100 Paint Branch Pkwy
College Park, MD 20740
Phone: (240) 402-1731
Email: Juanita.yates@fda.hhs.gov

Early registration is recommended because seating is limited and there will be no on-site registration at the event.

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...IFSAC Public Meeting

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Registration and Additional Information:
- Register online at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/meetings
  - FSIS Agency ID: Docket Number FSIS-2015-0001; Document Number: 2015-01566

Please note the following important dates:
- Feb. 9, 2015: Closing date for request to make oral comment as well as request special accommodations due to a disability
- Feb. 17, 2015: Closing date for registration
- Prior to the meeting: Meeting materials will be available on the IFSAC Web page at http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/if sac/index.html and on FSIS’ website at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/meetings
- April 30, 2015: Closing date to submit comments to Docket Clerk

Update: FSIS Testing for E. coli

FSIS posts bi-weekly updates for the agency’s raw ground beef E. coli sampling program. Included are testing results of raw ground beef component samples for E. coli O157:H7 and STECs from FSIS routine and follow-up sampling programs. Also featured is data for non-O157 STECs by each non-O157 STEC serogroup.

Between June 4, 2012 and Jan. 25, 2015, FSIS laboratory services analyzed a total of 8,374 beef trim samples (7,144 domestic and 1,230 imported); 2,463 routine follow-up samples (2,349 domestic and 114 imported); and 261 non-routine follow-up/traceback samples. One hundred samples were found to be positive; 46 were domestic trim samples; 4 were imported trim samples; 46 were domestic follow-up samples; and 4 were non-routine follow-up/traceback samples. To date, three samples have been positive for both O157:H7 and non-O157 STEC, and six samples have been positive for two different non-O157 O-groups.

To review testing results, visit the E. coli data tables at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/data-collection-and-reports/microbiology/ec/.

FSIS Policy Updates

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

Notice 11-15, Activation of the Public Health Information System Help Button

We Want to Hear From You

FSIS wants feedback from its readers. Let us know what you like about the Constituent Update.

Please send comments and suggestions regarding content to FSISUpdate@fsis.usda.gov.

If you don’t regularly receive the Constituent Update, sign up for it at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/newsroom/meetings/newsletters/constituent-updates.

Follow Us On Twitter

Find food safety information for at-risk people, along with tips and resources to keep consumers and other interested groups informed of the latest agency news and events. Follow FSIS on Twitter at www.twitter.com/USDA-FoodSafety.

Also Tweet en Español

The FSIS Spanish language Twitter feed keeps consumers and other interested communities informed of the latest agency news and events and provides useful food safety tips.