

Crisis Control Newsletter from RQA, Inc.—A Catlin Preferred Provider to Foodservice, Food Processing and Consumer Products Industries

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FSIS Hold and Test Implementation

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced that, beginning in early February (60 days from the announcement), the Agency will require producers to hold shipments of non-intact raw beef and all ready-to-eat products containing meat and poultry until they pass Agency testing for foodborne adulterants.

"This new policy will reduce foodborne illnesses and the number of recalls by preventing contaminated products from reaching consumers," USDA Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Elisabeth Hagen said. "Many producers hold products until test results come back. We're encouraging others in the industry to make this a routine part of operations."

The new policy requires official establishments and importers of record to maintain control of products tested for adulterants by FSIS and not allow the products to enter commerce until negative test results are received. FSIS anticipates most negative test results will be determined within two days. The policy applies to non-intact raw beef products or intact raw beef products intended for non-intact use and that are tested by FSIS for Shiga-toxin producing *Escherichia coli*. Also, the policy applies to any ready-to-eat products tested by FSIS for pathogens.

FSIS developed the "hold and test" policy, which will reduce consumer exposure to unsafe meat products, based on public comment and input received on a Federal Register notice published in April 2011. FSIS estimates if this new requirement had been in place between 2007 through 2010, 49 of the 251 meat, poultry and processed egg product recalls that occurred during that time could have been prevented.

The notice will be posted shortly on the FSIS website at:

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/Federal_Register_Notices/index.asp

and will be available at www.regulations.gov once it is published.

Sources: USDA, FSIS , News Release, Congressional and Public Affairs,, 12/07/12

Other Actions Taken by USDA

The FSIS hold and test implementation announcement is the latest significant public health measure FSIS has put in place during this Administration to safeguard the food supply, prevent foodborne illness, and improve consumers' knowledge about the food they eat. These initiatives support the three core principles developed by the President's Food Safety Working Group: prioritizing prevention; strengthening surveillance and enforcement; and improving response and recovery. Other actions taken by the USDA include:

- *Zero-tolerance policy for non-O157:H7 STECs.* On June 4, 2012, FSIS began routinely testing raw beef manufacturing trim for six strains of non-O157:H7 Shiga-toxin producing E. coli (STEC) serogroups. Trim found to be contaminated with these pathogens, which can cause severe illness and even death, will not be allowed into commerce and will be subject to recall.
- *Labeling* requirements that provide better information to consumers about their food by requiring nutrition information for single-ingredient raw meat and poultry products and ground or chopped products.
- *Public Health Information System,* a modernized, comprehensive database with information on public health trends and food safety violations at the nearly 6,100 plants FSIS regulates.
- *Performance* standards for poultry establishments for continued reductions in the occurrence of pathogens. After two years of enforcing the new standards, FSIS estimates that approximately 5,000 illnesses will be prevented each year under the new *Campylobacter* standards, and approximately 20,000 illnesses will be prevented under the revised *Salmonella* standards each year.

Food and Drug Administration Recalls (www.fda.gov)

Product: Chocolate Powder
Incident: Possible Health Risk–*Salmonella*

A Glendale, CA firm has announced a voluntary recall of limited quantities of their chocolate powder sold in 10.9, 21.8, and 40.7 ounce canisters sold nationally. The chocolate powder was produced during early October 2012. The company is removing the canisters from distribution because they were notified by an ingredient supplier that it has issued a recall of certain lots of its ingredient, calcium carbonate due to the possible presence of *Salmonella. Salmonella* can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. So far, there have been no reported illnesses associated with the affected product. Consumers who have purchased this product should not consume it and should return it to the place of purchase for a full refund. Consumers with further questions should contact the company for more details.

Product: Spinach
Incident: Possible Health Risk–*Salmonella*

A Charlotte, NC firm is conducting a voluntary recall of a limited quantity of spinach sold in 9 ounce packages with a Use-by Date of November 7. The recall is being issued out of an abundance of caution due to an isolated instance in which a random sample yielded a positive result for Salmonella under US Department of Agriculture's random sample testing program. *Salmonella* can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. The recalled spinach was distributed primarily in the Western region of the US and the company is contacting relevant retailers to confirm the recalled product has been removed from store shelves and inventories. No illnesses or consumer complaints have been reported in association with this recall. Consumers who may have purchased the recalled product should not eat it and dispose of it. Consumers with questions or that would like a refund should call the company.

United States Department of Agriculture Recalls (www.usda.gov)

Product: Chicken Breast Nugget Products
Incident: Possible Health Risk–Undeclared Allergen

A Bridgewater, VA firm is recalling approximately 1,440 pounds of chicken breast nugget products because of misbranding and an undeclared allergen, milk, not declared on the label. The products were produced on October 17, 2012 and were distributed to retail stores in CT, DE, MA, MD, NC, NJ, NY, OH, PA and VA. They were sold in bundled packages containing 3 12-oz. tray packs of chicken breast nuggets. The problem was discovered by the company and occurred as a result of an ingredient reformulation and labeling error. FSIS and the company have not received any reports of adverse reaction due to consumption of these products. Anyone concerned about a reaction should contact a healthcare provider. Consumers and media with questions about the recall should contact the company directly.

Product: Frozen Chicken Products
Incident: Possible Health Risk–Foreign Materials

A Decatur, AL establishment is recalling approximately 28,528 pounds of frozen, fully cooked, chicken products because they may contain foreign materials which has become known as pieces of a plastic pen. The products were produced on October 3, 2012. Three combo cases, one each from Sept. 6, Sept. 9 and Sept. 24, 2012 are also affected. The products were distributed to a facility in Kentucky for further processing into potential retail products. The products subject to recall include 900-lb combo cases containing thirty, 30-lb bags of fully cooked grill marked white meat chicken strips. FSIS was alerted to the problem by the company after the company received complaints from a customer who discovered the foreign material while preparing to further process the product. There have been no reports of injury associated with the consumption of this product. Consumers and media with questions should contact the

Consumer Product Safety Commission Recalls (www.cpsc.gov)

Product: Electric Ranges
Incident: Possible Risk-Burn and Fire

A South Korea manufacturer is recalling approximately 161,000 units of specific models of electric ranges sold at retailers nationwide from January 2006 through June 2010. The recalled ranges were sold in black, white and stainless steel with a smooth black ceramic glass top cooking surface. The burners on the electric ranges can fail to turn off after being switched off and the temperature setting can increase unexpectedly during use, posing burn and fire hazards to consumers. The company has received 80 reports of incidents involving burners failing to turn off or the temperature setting increasing unexpectedly during use. No fires or injuries have been reported. Consumers should immediately contact the manufacturer to schedule a free in-home repair. Consumers whose burner heat setting cannot be regulated by using the controls or who experience problems with a cook top burner remaining on should stop using it until it is repaired.

Product: Office Chairs
Incident: Possible Risk-Fall

An Archbold, OH importer is recalling approximately 70,000 units of specific models of office chairs (2,300 units in Canada). The recalled chairs are entertainment, executive, manager's and task type chairs. They were manufactured in China and sold in a variety of fabrics and colors. The chairs were sold at a variety of retailers nationwide and online from August 2009 to September 2012. The seat plate on the chair can break, posing a fall hazard to consumers. The company has received 17 reports of seat plates breaking, two of which involved consumers falling and receiving bumps and bruises. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled chairs and contact the company for a free replacement seat plate and attachment tool. Consumers and media with questions should contact the company directly.

Crisis Control is a newsletter jointly published by RQA, Inc. & Catlin Group.

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