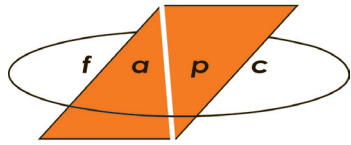


# Food & Agricultural Products Center



# FLASH!!

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY™

August 3, 2006

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## USDA to Sample Ground Beef in Grocery Stores

STILLWATER, Okla. - The U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service released new instructions for the retail sampling of ground beef for *Escherichia coli* 0157:H7 analysis.

FSIS Notice 43-06 clarifies when investigators from the Office of Program Evaluation, Enforcement and Review, Compliance and Investigations Division, should and should not collect ground beef samples at retail outlets.

“The notice was released July 20, 2006, and serves as a means of awareness for retailers,” said Jake Nelson, value-added meat processing specialist at the Food & Agricultural Products Center on the campus of Oklahoma State University. “Knowledge of this notice should allow meat market managers to verify that investigators are properly following procedures as described in the notice.”

FSIS Notice 43-06 states:

Investigators are to collect samples during a retail review when they determine the retail facility:

1. Does not maintain records of the federal or state establishment numbers of its suppliers;
2. Has no grinding records;
3. Grinds whole muscles;
4. Has grinding records that show the potential exists for cross-contamination to occur. This may be the case if:
  - a. The stores mixes irradiated and un-irradiated beef,

- b. The records are unclear as to whether only in-house trim is used, or
  - c. The records are unclear as to whether meat cuts (e.g., steaks, chops) for ground beef are used before their sell-by date; or
5. Is holding the product under unsanitary conditions.

An investigator is not to take a raw ground beef sample for an *E. coli* 0157:H7 analysis when:

1. The product is case ready (i.e., fully labeled consumer sized packages of ground beef from an official establishment);
2. The product is repackaged product (i.e., product that the retail facility does not grind and only portions such product into retail trays);
3. The retail facility only regrinds product previously ground at official establishments and does not conduct any practices that could introduce *E. coli* 0157:H7 into the product;
4. The firm does not produce ground beef products; and
5. The product is accompanied by documentation to the retail store that the product is “specially handled beef manufacturing trimmings,” and that the retail facility should control the product to prevent contamination with *E. coli* 0157:H7.

The notice also clearly specifies what products are considered “specially handled beef manufacturing trimmings.” It states:

NOTE: Specially handled beef manufacturing trimmings generally are sub-primals that have undergone

an antimicrobial treatment for *E. coli* 0157: H7 as part of a HACCP plan, are trimmed to meet a specific lean-to-fat ratio, are cut into slices, are sampled for *E. coli* 0157:H7 through the establishment's verification testing program and are sealed in bags for direct sale to a retail facility. As part of its HACCP plan, the official establishment addresses the intended users of the specially handled beef manufacturing trimmings (i.e., the retail facilities) and maintains a mechanism for informing the retail facility about the need to control the product to prevent contamination with *E. coli* 0157: H7.

For more information or to access FSIS Notice 43-06 online, individuals can visit [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations\\_&\\_policies/Notice\\_43-06/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/Notice_43-06/index.asp).

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