Timeline of Events Related to *Listeria monocytogenes*

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1987: FSIS initiates regulatory microbiological testing for *Listeria monocytogenes* (Lm) in Ready to Eat (RTE) meat and poultry products and "zero tolerance" established.

February 3, 1998: FSIS Directive 10,240.1: "*Listeria monocytogenes*; Testing Procedures and Sanitation Information" issued.

February 10, 1999: Public Meeting held to gather information on Lm and listeriosis associated with RTE meat and poultry products in response to 1998 and 1999 outbreaks. FR Notice: "*Listeria* Contamination of RTE Products; compliance with the HACCP system regulations" and *Listeria* Guidelines for Industry issued (May 1999)

May 2000: Healthy People goal for Lm set to 0.25 case per 100,000 by 2005.

May-December 2000: Outbreak spread over 10 states, linked to turkey deli-meat. CDC identified 29 illnesses, resulting in 4 deaths and 3 miscarriages.

February 27, 2001: "Performance Standards for the Production of Processed Meat and Poultry Products: Proposed Rule" (includes testing food contact surfaces for *Listeria* spp.) and Draft Compliance Guidelines issued.

July-September 2002: Multi-state outbreak linked to turkey deli-meat products, resulting in 46 illnesses, 7 deaths, and 3 still-births and miscarriages.

December 9, 2002: FSIS Directive 10,240.3: "Microbial Sampling of Ready-to-Eat (RTE) Products for the FSIS Verification Testing Program" issued.

June 2003: Interim Final Rule "Control of *Listeria monocytogenes* in Ready-to-Eat Meat and Poultry Products" and Compliance Guidelines issued. Released Questions and Answers (Q&A's) for the Interim Final Rule.

October 28, 2003: Report "Reducing the Risk of Lm: Joint Response to the President" released.

December 2004: Notice 61-04, describing the RTE001 sampling program, published. Under this program, establishments are selected according to a risk ranking and products are collected according to a priority list.

April 2006: FoodNet Data show Lm levels are approaching national health objectives.

1987 | 1999 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006

1997: CDC, FDA and FSIS partnership establishes Healthy People 2010 goal for Lm. With the 1997 baseline year, the U.S. government targeted to reduce infections caused by Lm by half from 0.5 cases per 100,000 people to 0.25 case per 100,000 by 2010.

Fall 1998: Major Lm outbreak in which hotdogs and possibly deli-meats are implicated. CDC reports 101 illnesses, 15 deaths, and 6 still births or miscarriages associated with the outbreak.

January 2000: Direct Rule "Food Additives for Use in Meat and Poultry Products: Sodium Diacetate, Sodium Acetate, Sodium Lactate and Potassium Lactate" issued. FSIS releases revised action plan for control of Lm for prevention of foodborne listeriosis and Notice of Public meeting issued (May 2000).

January 2001: FSIS and FDA jointly published the Draft Assessment of the Relative Risk to Public Health from Foodborne Lm Among Selected Categories of RTE Foods.

February 25, 2002: FSIS Directive 10,240.2 Rev. 1: "Microbial Sampling of Ready-to-Eat (RTE) Products" issued.

November 2002: Public Meeting: Summit on Lm held for experts from government, academia, industry and consumer organizations to discuss current government thinking and activities regarding Lm.

February 2003: FSIS holds a public meeting on the draft Risk Assessment for Lm in Deli Meat, and released the completed draft risk assessment in May 2003.

September 2003: FSIS and FDA jointly publish the Final Assessment of the Relative Risk to Public Health from Foodborne Lm Among Selected Categories of RTE Foods. Workshops held on implementing controls for Lm (September-October 2003)

September 2004: Report assessing the Effectiveness of the "*Listeria monocytogenes* Interim Final Rule" issued. The report found that the rule led many establishments to make improvements to address Lm.

March 2006: FSIS Directives 10,240.4 and 10,240.5 issued. Under this program, establishments are selected based on a risk-ranking model and products, environmental and food-contact surface samples are collected.

May 2006: Compliance Guidelines to Control Lm in Post-Lethality Exposed RTE Meat and Poultry Products and Questions and Answers (Q's and A's) for the interim final rule updated.