UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

FSIS NOTICE	59-12	9/14/12

NOTIFICATION OF REVISED *LISTERIA* GUIDELINE AVAILABILITY

I. PURPOSE

This notice informs inspection program personnel (IPP) that a revised FSIS Compliance Guideline: Controlling *Listeria monocytogenes* (*Lm*) in Post-lethality Exposed Ready-to-Eat (RTE) Meat and Poultry Products is available. This notice also informs Enforcement, Investigations, and Analysis Officers (EIAOs) that they are to review the information in the compliance guideline as part of their preparation for conducting food safety assessments (FSAs) in establishments that produce post-lethality exposed RTE products, as described in FSIS Directive 5100.1, page 9.

II. BACKGROUND

The revised compliance guideline replaces previous versions of the guidance which was last updated in 2006. It provides specific recommendations that establishments producing post-lethality exposed RTE meat and poultry products may follow to meet the requirements of 9 CFR part 430, Requirements for Specific Classes of Products (The *Listeria* Rule). The document also provides information on sanitation, testing for *Lm*, and prevention of cross contamination of post-lethality exposed RTE meat and poultry products. FSIS made revisions to the guideline based on the most up-to-date science available as well as an analysis of *ask*FSIS questions and information from FSAs.

III. IPP RESPONSIBILITIES

A. At the next weekly meeting following the issuance of this notice, IPP at establishments that produce post-lethality exposed RTE products are to inform the establishment that the revised compliance guideline is available and may be used by the establishment to safely produce post-lethality exposed RTE products.

B. As part of the weekly meeting, IPP are to inform the establishment that the revised guidance provides the following information:

1. Simplified information establishments can use to meet the requirements of the *Listeria* Rule,
2. Updated information on antimicrobial agents and post-lethality treatments that establishments can use to produce safe products,
3. Expanded information on establishment sampling and testing for *Listeria* spp., and
4. New information on identifying and addressing *Listeria* spp. trends.

C. IPP are to document the weekly meeting in a Memorandum of Interview (MOI) as described in FSIS Directive 5010.1.

IV. EIAO RESPONSIBILITIES

A. EIAOs are to review and familiarize themselves with the information in the compliance guideline. They are also to use it as a technical resource when performing FSAs (as described in FSIS Directive 5100.1, Rev. 3) in establishments that produce post-lethality exposed RTE products. EIAOs are also to make establishments aware of the compliance guideline as part of the compliance assistance resources they provide to meet the Agency's obligation related to the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act (SBREFA), according to the directive.

B. During an FSA, if an EIAO finds that an establishment is using the previous version of the compliance guideline, he or she is not to recommend that IPP issue an NR solely for using an older version. The EIAO is to inform the establishment that an updated guidance document is available so that the establishment has a chance to re-evaluate its system in light of the new information.

V. QUESTIONS

Refer questions through askFSIS. When submitting a question, use the Submit a Question tab, and enter the following information in the fields provided:

Subject Field: Enter **Listeria Guideline**

Question Field: **Enter your question with as much detail as possible.**

Product Field: Select **General Inspection Policy** from the drop-down menu.

Category Field: Select **Sampling: Listeria monocytogenes** from the drop-down menu.

Policy Arena: Select **Domestic (U.S.) Only** or **International (Import/Export)** from the drop-down menu.

When all fields are complete, press the **Submit** button.

Acting Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy and Program Development