CONTROLLING CHEMICAL HAZARDS

Meat and poultry products can not be adulterated or misbranded through the misuse of proprietary substances and nonfood compounds. The FSIS has discontinued the practice of approving various chemicals for food use and shifted this responsibility to each establishment. Now, plants must have the proper documentation for each chemical used (proof of registration with EPA or FDA; use labels and instructions; letters of guarantee as a food grade) as an evidence of acceptability and safety (FSIS Directive 11,000.1). This includes chemicals used in cleaners, laundry compounds, hand care products, water treatments, processing additives, lubricants, sanitizers and other anti-microbials, and pesticides. Known human carcinogens, mutagens, heavy metals, and compounds classified as extremely toxic, should not be allowed in the plants, unless they are exempted under the threshold regulation process (Title 21 CFR Section 170.39).

In most HACCP plans, residue analysis is a verification activity that allows monitoring of contaminants, both man-made and naturally occurring, that may be encountered during the production and processing of food products. Many chemicals can now be detected in extremely minute quantities (see insert for a perspective) and well below the established threshold danger levels (www.epa.gov) before problems may arise. Thus, a comprehensive chemical surveillance program may be the most effective way to prevent health risks and provide margin of safety from chemical hazards in poultry products.

Contact: S. F. Bilgili, Ph.D.
Phone: (334) 844-2612
E-mail: sbilgili@acesag.auburn.edu

Poultry Science Department, Auburn University, Auburn, AL 36849-5416
www.ag.auburn.edu/dept/ph/