



Worthwhile Operational Guidelines & Suggestions

BROILER PROCESSING TIMELY INFORMATION - NOVEMBER 2002

USDA's new initiative to reduce *Listeria monocytogenes*

The USDA released an administrative directive last week (Release No. 0478.02) outlining new initiatives to strengthen current *Listeria* protocols and testing programs. Specifically, the directive focuses on additional steps to be taken by the USDA inspectors to ensure that establishments producing **ready-to-eat** meat and poultry products are taking the necessary steps to prevent *Listeria* contamination.

Under this directive, plants producing high and medium risk **ready-to-eat** products (deli-meats and hot dogs) that do not have an evaluated environmental testing regime to find and take necessary actions to eliminate *Listeria monocytogenes* (those plants that test for *Listeria*, but do not share the results with FSIS), will be placed under an intensified testing program by the FSIS. Intensified testing program will consist of:

1. Increased testing of the final product
2. Testing of food contact surfaces
3. Testing plant environment

Establishments that share complete *Listeria* data from their environmental testing with FSIS will be subjected to targeted testing program, which consists of final product testing.

The new *Listeria monocytogenes* directive is available on FSIS's web site at:
<http://www.fsis.usda.gov>

The comment period on the directive is Dec. 2, 2002. After FSIS review of comments and necessary modification, the directive will be implemented beginning Dec. 9, 2002.



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