



**Food Safety and Inspection Service
United States Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250-3700**

News Release

Congressional and Public Affairs
(202) 720-9113; FAX: (202) 690-0460
Andrea McNally

Editor's Note: The due date for written comments on the draft risk assessment was incorrectly listed as Feb. 21, 2003, in a recent *Federal Register* Notice. Please note that written comments on the draft risk assessment will be accepted until March 14, 2003.

FSIS Releases Draft Risk Assessment on *Listeria*

WASHINGTON, Feb. 14, 2003--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service today released a [draft risk assessment for *Listeria*](#) that could lead to reductions in illnesses and deaths associated with the pathogen. The risk assessment allows for the evaluation of various control measures in the production of ready-to-eat meat and poultry products and is an important step as the agency moves toward final rulemaking.

"FSIS has worked diligently to gather the extensive scientific data necessary to develop a predictive risk assessment model," said Dr. Elsa A. Murano, under secretary for food safety. "This model will lead us to strategies to further reduce the number of illnesses caused each year by *Listeria monocytogenes*. By allowing us to evaluate factors that potentially contribute to the overall risk to public health, this risk assessment will give FSIS scientific confidence that new policies will be effective as we move toward rulemaking."

Through use of the model, FSIS discovered that a combination of testing, sanitation and interventions yielded greater benefits than any one strategy alone. The risk assessment also demonstrated that the use of intervention steps, such as post-packaging pasteurization or the introduction of growth inhibitors, showed dramatic public health benefits.

FSIS conducted the risk assessment to develop solid information on: the relationship between the prevalence and level of generic *Listeria* on food contact surfaces and the prevalence and level of *Listeria monocytogenes* in ready-to-eat meat and poultry products; the public health impact of different concentrations of *Listeria monocytogenes* in product; and the ability of testing programs, sanitation processes and intervention steps to mitigate the public health risk associated with *Listeria monocytogenes*.

"The information developed during the risk assessment process is critical to exploring a variety of risk management scenarios," said Dr. Murano. "FSIS plans to examine different combinations of testing and intervention that present possibilities for future policy making. Our goal is to improve the public health status of all Americans"

FSIS will consult the risk assessment as it proceeds in the coming months on an effective risk management approach, including a final rule, to reduce *Listeria monocytogenes* in processing plants

producing ready-to-eat meat and poultry products.

FSIS will hold a public meeting to discuss the draft risk assessment from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 26, at the Washington Plaza Hotel, 10 Thomas Circle NW, Washington, D.C. The public meeting is one of a series of symposia announced last year to discuss food safety and public health issues.

#

NOTE: Access news releases and other information at the FSIS web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>.

.

Related Documents

- Backgrounder: [Risk Analysis](#)
- [Draft FSIS Risk Assessment for *Listeria* in Ready-to-eat Meat and Poultry Products](#) [PDF, 57 pp.]
 - **
 - [Source Code LMRA.FRM](#), LMRA version 1.0 [PDF, 78 pp.]

**This new report of the Draft Risk Assessment replaces the earlier version posted on February 14, 2003. The latest draft includes all the additional detail and findings that were presented at the public meeting on February 26, 2003. This latest draft is also available in the FSIS Docket Room.

For Further Information, Contact:

FSIS Congressional and Public Affairs Staff

Phone: (202) 720-9113

Fax: (202) 690-0460

[News and Information Page](#) | [FSIS Home Page](#) | [USDA Home Page](#)