



Local Meat Processors Worried About New Proposed Regulations

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SPRING MILLS, Pa. -- Local butchers across the Alleghenies are speaking out about concerns with a proposed meat testing overhaul.

U.S. Department of Agriculture officials said Food Safety and Inspection Service experts have proposed changes to the hazard analysis critical control point process to improve food safety across the nation.

One Centre County food safety expert has raised concerns about the proposal, saying new requirements to test for indicator pathogens of E coli, salmonella and listeria in raw meats likely won't work.

"The whole process is flawed from a scientific standpoint to begin with," said Penn State Food and Animal Science expert Dr. Bill Henning. "There's been no indication from anybody at the USDA to tell us why this regulation is being put in place."

Cooper Street Meats owner Russ Judy told WJAC-TV Wednesday his newly expanded business would likely close if the proposed validation plans are approved.

"If this goes into effect, we probably won't be able to stay in business for the simple reason we couldn't afford to do the testing," said Judy. "The testing for the large companies that only making one or two products and does a couple thousand head a day, it won't be as bad for them as the guys who are trying to accommodate a small farmer. The consumer who wants to know their friend, their farmer and know where their meat comes from."

Although federal officials proposed the requirements to improve national food safety, Henning said the initiative could be counterproductive.

"A lot of these people are considering just dropping out of the system all together, which means they would have no inspection at all," said Henning. "If you have 15 products, that's \$150,000 in testing initially, then probably another \$20,000 to \$30,000 a year in ongoing testing for continuing validation."

Public comment for the HACCP inspection proposal has been extended through June 19.

To review the proposal, [CLICK HERE.](#)



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