

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

FSIS NOTICE

18-08

3/17/08

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS RELATED TO RAW MEAT AND POULTRY PRODUCT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR *SALMONELLA* SAMPLING AND REPORTING

I. PURPOSE

This notice responds to questions about the responsibilities of inspection program personnel and District Offices regarding:

- A. Reporting *Salmonella* performance standard (PR/HACCP) sampling results, and
- B. Scheduling *Salmonella* performance standard (PR/HACCP) sampling after a failed set.

II. REPORTING *SALMONELLA* SAMPLING RESULTS

Q1. Can an establishment automatically receive *Salmonella* sample results?

A1. An establishment can automatically receive its *Salmonella* (PR/HACCP) sample results if it provides its e-mail address to the IIC to enter into the establishment's Performance Based Inspection System (PBIS) profile.

Note: PBIS allows one e-mail addressed/mail address per establishment

Q2. Can an establishment access LEARN to check on *Salmonella* sample results, including the status of the current *Salmonella* sample set?

A2. Establishments cannot access LEARN. Only FSIS personnel with a valid exchange login can access LEARN because it is an intranet site. Establishments can ask the FSIS inspection personnel in their plant to check LEARN for results if the establishment does not receive them by e-mail. FSIS Directive 10,200.1 instructs FSIS inspection personnel to provide results from LEARN to establishment management. LEARN provides a **90** day data window to review an establishment's results.

DISTRIBUTION: Electronic

NOTICE EXPIRES: 4/1/09

OPI: OPPD

For a current *Salmonella* (PR/HACCP) set, LEARN does not provide a count of samples analyzed toward completion of the set. It is up to the Inspector-in-charge (IIC) to keep track of number of samples collected and the results during the set.

Q3. When is the End of Set letter generated and by whom?

A3. The End of Set letters are generated by the OPPD Policy Analysis Division (PAD) and sent to the District Offices by electronic mail. The District Offices then distribute the letters, signed by the district managers, to the establishments. Establishments should expect to receive an End of Set letter approximately 3 weeks after a *Salmonella* (PR/HACCP) sample set has been completed. On occasion, there may be delays if serotype information on positive samples is still pending.

Q4. How does an establishment receive the End of Set letter?

A4. If an establishment has provided the IIC with a current e-mail address, the End of Set letter can be sent electronically by the District Office. If an establishment does not have an e-mail address, the District Manager will send the End of Set letter by US mail. Upon request by the establishment, the DM will fax a copy to the establishment. However, the original letter must also be sent.

Q5. Who, in addition to the establishment, receives copies of the End of Set letters?

A5. The IIC and Frontline Supervisor (FLS) also receive copies of the End of Set letters.

Q6. Should the letters be mailed via US Postal Service (USPS) or in FedEx envelopes?

A6. Since the letters are for informational purposes and do not express regulatory actions, please mail them via First Class USPS mail.

Q7. The *Salmonella* End of Set letterhead is generic to OFO. Can the District send the letters on District Office letterhead?

A7. As long as the text of the letter is not changed, the letter may be placed on District Office letterhead.

Q8. What management controls are in place for this program?

A8. The OPPD PAD staff maintains a list of establishments that completed sets. It also maintains a list of the letters generated and sent to the District Office for each establishment. The letters sent are checked off against the list of completed sets.

Q9. How does headquarter know who has been assigned in each District Office to receive the End of Set letters?

A9. Each District manager is to send the name and e-mail address of the district contact person to the [Salmonella End Set letters mailbox](#) by e-mail.

Q10. How is an End of Set letter issued if an establishment is temporarily not operating, or if inspection is temporarily withdrawn?

A10. The letter should be sent to the address where the establishment was receiving inspection, addressed to the President or Chief Executive Officer of the company as listed in Block 22 of FSIS Form 5200-2 Application for Inspection, with copies to the IIC and FLS.

Q11. How is an End of Set letter issued if an establishment is permanently closed?

A11. The letter should be sent to the establishment's last known address, and the District Office should maintain a copy of the letter in its files in the event the establishment's situation changes.

Q12. What is the difference between the Completed Set Report and the End of Set letter?

A12. The Completed Set Report, automatically generated by PREP once the last sample in the set is analyzed, is sent to LEARN and to the Outlook "Lab Sample Management Reports" public folders for the Districts. In-plant inspection program personnel have access to the completed set report through LEARN. District Offices, at their discretion, may grant permission to the inspection program personnel to access these folders. Completed Set Reports are issued even if the serotype analysis is pending.

The End of Set letter is generated by OPPD PAD after **all serotype** information is available. The End of Set letter confirms an establishment's category status and provides information regarding the significance of the number of serotypes identified in the set. In addition, the End of Set letter indicates actions FSIS may take because of the establishment's results.

III. SCHEDULING OF SAMPLING AFTER A *SALMONELLA* (PR/HACCP) SET FAILURE

Q1. What happens when it is known that an establishment will fail a *Salmonella* verification set before the set has been completed?

A1. *Salmonella* (PR/HACCP) verification sets will be completed even when enough failed samples have been collected to guarantee a failed set. The Agency believes completing all sets will provide valuable information on the presence of serotypes in establishments that would otherwise be lost if sets were terminated when the last sample needed to fail a set was completed.

Q2. What happens when an establishment fails a *Salmonella* verification sample set?

A2. Inspection program personnel will continue to receive sampling forms for every designated set scheduled for an establishment. Inspection program personnel should

begin follow up sets as soon as they receive the necessary sampling forms and supplies. The DO should not allow inspection program personnel to delay starting a *Salmonella* (PR/HACCP) sampling set, regardless of which category the establishment is in, while the establishment makes changes to improve its process control.

NOTE: Sample request forms (FSIS Form 10,210-7) must only be used within their designated set. Once a set is completed, all extra forms are to be mailed back to the laboratory. A new sample set is to start with a new set of forms.

Direct all technical questions to the Policy Development Division and all sampling questions to the Risk Management Division at (800) 233-3935 or submit your question through *askFSIS* at <http://askfsis.custhelp.com>.



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