

Changes Coming Soon to USDA-FSIS Testing, Sampling for *E. coli*, *Salmonella* in Beef



Credit: U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA's FSIS) has announced upcoming changes and expansions to its beef sampling and testing programs for *Escherichia coli* and *Salmonella*.

FSIS to Replace N60 Method with Cloth Method to Sample Trim

Beginning February 1, 2023, FSIS intends to stop using the N60 excision method to sample domestic beef manufacturing trimmings and bench trim for adulterant Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) and *Salmonella*. FSIS will replace the N60 excision sampling method with a non-destructive surface sampling method that uses a cloth.

FSIS cited data which shows that the cloth sampling method is as effective as the N60 excision sampling method at recovering microorganisms in beef manufacturing trimmings. The cloth sampling method is also faster and safer for FSIS field personnel to use because it does not require employees to use hooks or knives to collect samples. Additionally, the cloth sampling method allows FSIS to sample without destroying product, which reduces food waste.

FSIS is requesting comments on the method change. Stakeholders must submit comments on the notice by January 23, 2023. FSIS will implement the cloth sampling on February 1, 2023, unless the agency receives substantive comments that warrant further review.

Comments can be made through the [Federal eRulemaking Portal](#), through the mail, or by hand-delivery. Mailed-in comments can be addressed to: Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Mailstop 3758, Washington, DC 20250-3700. Hand-delivered comments can be submitted to: 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Jamie L. Whitten Building, Room 350-E, DC 20250-3700. All items submitted by mail or electronic mail must include the agency name and docket number FSIS-2022-0019.

FSIS to Expand STEC Testing to Additional Raw Beef Products

FSIS has announced a date on which the agency will [expand](#) its routine verification testing for *E. coli* to additional raw beef. Beginning February 1, 2023. FSIS will expand its routine verification testing for six STEC strains that are adulterants (non-O157 STEC, O26, O45, O103, O111, O121, or O145), in addition to *E. coli* O157:H7, in samples of raw ground beef, bench trim, and other raw ground beef components collected at official establishments. FSIS will also begin testing for the non-O157 STEC in ground beef samples collected at retail stores and in applicable samples of imported raw beef products.

Currently, the only raw beef products routinely tested for all seven targeted STEC serotypes are beef manufacturing trimmings, while all other raw beef products are presently only tested for *E. coli* O157:H7. The present announcement follows the June 4, 2020 [Federal Register](#) notice, in which FSIS announced and requested comments on its plans to expand routine verification testing for STEC in raw beef products.

Source: Food Safety Magazine

<https://www.food-safety.com/articles/8149-changes-coming-soon-to-usda-fsis-testing-sampling-for-e-coli-salmonella-in-beef>