



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

1400 Independence
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Washington, D.C.
20250

March 30, 2026

Delivered by electronic mail:
tommy.wheeler@usda.gov

Tommy Wheeler, Ph.D.
Meat Safety and Quality Research Unit
U.S. Meat Animal Research Center
USDA, Agricultural Research Service
P.O. Box 166, State Spur 18 D
Clay Center, NE 68933

Dear Dr. Wheeler,

This letter is in response to a request (FSIS Log No. OPPD 2025-0201) from Fremonta and USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) to the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) requesting modification to the No Objection Letter for the use of the MicroTally Mitt for poultry sampling. OPPD 2025-0201 supersedes the previous letter identified as FSIS Log No. 2024-565-SMP issued on November 21, 2024 for the use of the MicroTally Mitt for poultry sampling.

Specifically, the submitters are requesting the revision of the previous NOL as described below:

- Addition of sampling chicken parts in combo bins. For sampling of chicken parts in combo bins, remove a dry mitt from the sample bag and vigorously rub across one half of the combo bin for 45 seconds. Turn the mitt over and vigorously rub the mitt over the second half of the combo bin for 45 seconds. The mitt is to be inserted down between the parts to achieve a thorough sample. The mitt is then folded, placed in the sterile bag and 25 ml of nBPW or equivalent buffer is added and the bag sealed.

Previous research data provided by ARS demonstrated that sampling poultry carcasses and parts using the MT-Mitt provides organism recovery that is equivalent to or better than that of carcass sponge sampling and carcass and parts rinses. The supplemental data showed similar efficacy for sampling raw poultry parts in combo bins.

FSIS has completed its review and has no objection to the use of the MT-Mitt for the sampling of chicken and turkey carcasses and parts as part of an establishment's robust HACCP verification sampling system provided establishments adhere to the following protocol for using the MT-Mitt:

- The MT-Mitt is 10" x 10" and is composed of a spunbond olefin polymer, 2.25 oz. weight.
- The MT-Mitt is hydrated in a bag with 25 mL of nBPW or equivalent buffer. This procedure can be done at one time for all the MT-Mitts required for the day and

then stored refrigerated until needed. When handling the MT-Mitt, use plastic sleeves and gloves sanitized with an alcohol-based sanitizer free of any quaternary ammonium compounds.

- For sampling chicken carcasses, remove the MT-Mitt from the sample bag and vigorously scrub over the entire carcass surface for 15 seconds, turn MT-Mitt over to sample another 15 seconds, fold the MT-Mitt in half and half again and place in sample bag. For post-chill carcasses, rub the internal cavity and external surface.
- For sampling chicken parts, use an individual MT-Mitt to sample 4 pounds of parts held in a poly bag or equivalent container. Vigorously scrub the batch of parts for 15 seconds using one side of the MT-Mitt, then flip the MT-Mitt over and use the other side for an additional 15 seconds. Fold the MT-Mitt in half and half again and place in sample bag.
- For sampling turkey carcasses, remove the MT-Mitt from the sample bag and vigorously scrub over the half of the carcass surface (from midline on the breast to midline on the back, so each sample includes a leg and wing on the same side of the carcass) for 15 seconds, turn MT-Mitt over to sample another 15 seconds, fold the MT-Mitt in half and half again and place in sample bag. For post-chill carcasses, rub the internal cavity and external surface.
- Upon arrival at the laboratory, add an appropriate volume of bacterial growth media to the sample bag ensuring the MT-Mitt is submerged, then stomach for at least 30 seconds. Ensure MT-Mitt is pushed to the bottom of the bag, submerged in growth media, before incubation. Establishments and laboratories can support using a bacterial growth media volume aligned with a validated methodology.

The establishment will need to reassess its hazard analysis based on the implementation of this new sampling methodology. The establishment should consider how its results may be affected by new methodology including variation in the surface area being sampled and interventions.

As described in the *Federal Register* Notice Vol. 70, No. 201, Pages 60784-60786, dated October 19, 2005, a summary description on your new technologies will be posted on the FSIS New Technology Information Table. If you do not object within five business days from the date that you receive this letter, the Agency will post the included description of the technology on the Web site. If you do object to the description, you should state in writing that you object to the description, explain the basis for your objection (for example, proprietary agreement, confidential commercial information, etc.), and provide an alternate description. FSIS will post the alternate description, unless the Agency concludes that the description does not fairly describe the technology. In such a case, FSIS will post the description that it prepared and will notify the company of its decision. FSIS will post the following summary description of your technology:

Case Number	Company Name	Summary of the Notification/Protocol
OPPD 2025-0201	USDA Agricultural Research Service, Fremonta	A method of sampling poultry parts and carcasses for pathogens and indicator organisms using a MicroTally Mitt

If changes are needed to this program, you must submit any changes to FSIS in writing for review and approval prior to implementation.

If you have any questions or would like to modify your SOP, please contact Scott Updike, Ph.D., by email at Michael.updike@usda.gov or by phone at (314) 679-6943.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Selena Kremer-Caldwell".

Selena Kremer-Caldwell, Ph.D.
Acting Director
Risk Management and Innovations Staff
Office of Policy and Program Development