



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and Inspection Service  
Office of Policy and Program Development  
Risk Management and Innovations Staff  
1400 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

---

October 19, 2023

By Electronic Mail  
[terrance.arthur@usda.gov](mailto:terrance.arthur@usda.gov)

Terrance Arthur, Ph.D.  
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 Drs. Arthur and Wheeler:

This letter is in response to your request dated June 14, 2022 and revised on Sept. 15, 2023, to utilize the MicroTally Mitt (MT-Mitt) as a Manual Sampling Device (MSD) to be used in federally inspected establishments as a sampling methodology for verification testing of *Salmonella* and/or Shiga Toxin-Producing *E. coli* (STEC) or other indicator organisms on beef trimmings (FSIS Log No. 2022-386-SMP).

Research data provided by Agricultural Research Service (ARS) demonstrated the MT-Mitt sampling of beef trimmings recovered indicator organisms and index target virulence genes that was not statistically different to the N60 excision, the IEH N60+ Shaver, or the MicroTally Swab (cloth) methods for beef trimmings.

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

- The MT-Mitt is 10" x 10" and is composed of a spunbond olefin polymer, 2.25 oz. wt.
- The MT-Mitt is vigorously rubbed over the entire top surface of a single combo bin of beef trim using enough pressure to dislodge microbiological organisms present. One side of the MT-Mitt is used to sample ½ of the top portion of a combo bin and then turned over and the second side is used to sample the other ½ of the top portion of the combo bin.
- Total time sampling should be not less than 90 seconds, with one half of the time (~45 seconds) per each half of the combo and each side of the MT-Mitt.
- Samples collected using the MT-Mitt are to be collected in a manner to minimize absorption of residual antimicrobial agents from the production process since no neutralizing buffer is added to the cloth during sample collection.

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 by interventions that may be applied to the trim pieces.

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 [Food Safety and Inspection Service 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
2022-386-SMP	USDA Agricultural Research Service	A method of sampling beef trimming 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 Dr. Bryan Trout by email at [bryan.trout@usda.gov](mailto:bryan.trout@usda.gov) or by phone at (314)-679-6942.

Sincerely,



Digitally signed by  
JESSICA BROWN  
Date: 2023.10.19  
13:59:21 -05'00'

Jessica Brown, PhD, DVM  
Acting Director  
Risk Management and Innovations Staff  
Office of Policy and Program Development