



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

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TO: Retail Establishments
FROM: Alfred V. Almanza, Deputy Under Secretary
SUBJECT: Retail *Listeria monocytogenes* (*Lm*) Pilot Project

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In January 2016, FSIS will launch a nationwide pilot project to assess whether retailers are using the recommendations in the FSIS "Best Practices Guidance for Controlling *Listeria monocytogenes* (*Lm*) in Retail Delicatessens" (FSIS Retail *Lm* Guideline).

As part of the pilot project, during their regular surveillance activities, FSIS Compliance Investigators will complete a questionnaire based on the FSIS Retail *Lm* Guideline to determine whether retailers are following specific recommendations from the guidance. The questionnaire will be used to compare the practices observed in retail delis to the FSIS Retail *Lm* Guideline in the following topics: product handling, cleaning and sanitizing, facility and equipment controls, and employee practices. The questions in the questionnaire mirror the self-assessment tool in the FSIS Retail *Lm* Guidance that deli operators can use to determine which aspects of a deli's practices are in alignment with good manufacturing practices to control *Lm*, and which are not.

FSIS will track the questionnaire responses over time to determine whether there is an increase in retailers adopting the recommendations in the guideline. Therefore, FSIS may survey the same retailer more than once. The information from the pilot project will be analyzed quarterly, and the results will be posted on the FSIS website in a Constituent Update. The FSIS Retail *Lm* Guideline is available at: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/29d51258-0651-469b-99b8-e986baee8a54/Controlling-LM-Delicatessens.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>. Retailers should be aware that the recommendations in the guideline, especially those based on the 2013 Food Code may be requirements in State, local, or tribal regulations.

FSIS will not perform sampling at retail as part of this pilot project. FSIS will continue to follow enforcement procedures described in [FSIS Directive 8010.1, Methodology for Conducting In-Commerce Surveillance Activities](#), at retail. If the FSIS Compliance Investigator observes product that is adulterated, the Investigator will detain the product and follow the methodology in [FSIS Directive 8410.1, Detention and Seizure](#), and [FSIS Directive 8010.2, Investigative Methodology](#).

FSIS Compliance Investigators will provide a tri-fold brochure, "Guidance for Controlling *Listeria monocytogenes* (*Lm*) in Retail Delicatessens," to the deli operator. Brochures are available in English and Spanish. Additional brochures may be obtained from the FSIS Compliance Investigator or downloaded from the FSIS website (<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/706237dc-da95-4ad1-849a-3570ed163ca4/LM-at-Retail-Brochure.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>). After the FSIS Compliance Investigators complete the questionnaires, they will point out ways in which deli

operators can do a better job of controlling *Lm* the deli. However, the Compliance Investigators will not ask the retailer to complete the questionnaire.

Deli operators may refer questions regarding the *Lm* pilot project to the Risk, Innovations, and Management Staff through [askFSIS](#) or by telephone at 1-800-233-3935. When submitting a question, use the 'Submit a Question' tab. In the subject field enter "Retail *Lm*."