

Export Meat Update Seminar: STEC requirements for exporting to the USA and HACCP overview Questions and Answers

NOTE: This document is not official advice from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

STEC

How does FSIS select product for testing at port-of-entry?

DAFF does not know exactly how FSIS selects products for testing. However, FSIS acknowledge that their system assigns shipments to a normal, increased or intensified level of reinspection. Production dates and product with different shipping marks will be treated as separate lots for the purpose of testing at the Port-of-Entry.

What method of sampling are FSIS inspectors using at port-of-entry?

Industry and FSIS inspectors are now using a cloth method of sampling (FSIS Directive 10,010.1 Revision 6, attachment 2) for sampling chilled beef trim within the USA. Frozen imported product is still tested by cutting thin slices from external carcass surfaces (where possible) from product in a carton (FSIS Directive 10,010.1 Revision 6, p.23 and Attachment 5 describe the procedure in great detail).

When collecting samples from chilled product for STEC testing, is it acceptable to freeze the product prior to shipment to the laboratory?

Yes, it is acceptable that meat for STEC testing is frozen once, and thawed once prior to the commencement of testing. Product may arrive at the laboratory either frozen or thawed at less than 7°C.

Can boning rooms mix trim from different processing establishments in one lot?

All cartons, packages, or containers represented by the tested sample and identified by the establishment as microbiologically independent from other lots based on a scientific, statistically based sampling program. This program should consider the possible connections between lots including lots produced from the same source material.

the microbiological independence of a sampled lot is an indication of the separateness of one sampled and tested lot from another. In determining the independence of a lot the establishment should consider the formation of the lot, the robustness of the sampling regime(s) applied to the lot and other factors that assist in identifying one lot as distinct from another.

Is it acceptable to test only for E. coli O157 even though the US regulate the top 7 STEC as adulterants?

The HACCP reassessment should identify the predominant STEC serotypes identified in the classes of stock being processed; and it must determine which STECs will be used to verify process control and in the robust testing of lots.