

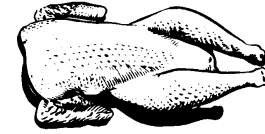


The University of Georgia

Cooperative Extension Service

College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences / Athens, Georgia 30602-4356

JULY 2008



PROCESSING TIP . . .

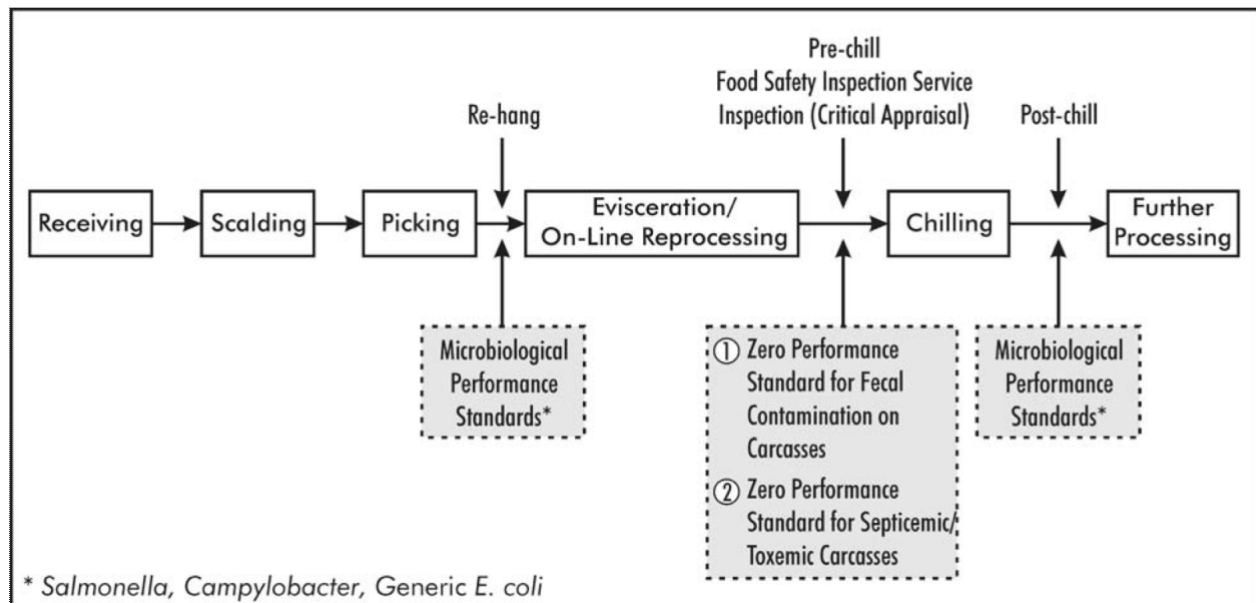
MICROBIOLOGICAL TESTING CHANGES PROPOSED BY USDA-FSIS

On January 25, 2008, the USDA-FSIS issued a formal report entitled, “Public Health Risk-Based Inspection System for Poultry Slaughter-Technical Report.” This document may be accessed at the following web address: edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/08-292.htm. In this report on page 8, a table is provided and is shown below:

**Figure 2. Public Health Risk-Based Inspection System
Focused Inspection Activity Prompt Example**

Poultry Slaughter Process Diagram

A generic process diagram was used to identify the common steps in young chicken slaughter establishments. The key steps in young chicken slaughter, shown in **Figure 3**, are live receiving, scalding, picking, evisceration (including on-line reprocessing), and chilling.



PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK

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Based on this document from USDA, it appears that it is possible that FSIS is going to require processing facilities to begin testing carcasses at the rehang area (front-end) of the plant as well as continuing testing after chilling.

According to the Federal Register Notice, Docket Number FSIS-2006-0034, dated 01/28/08, states that, "each week poultry slaughter establishments selected for the *Salmonella* Initiative Program (SIP) will collect at least one sample at both rehang and post chill," and "...analyze the samples for *Campylobacter*, generic *Escherichia coli*, and *Salmonella*." It continues by adding, "at least monthly, at least one rehang sample and one matched post-chill sample positive for any of these microorganisms must be enumerated," and "the results must be provided to FSIS at least quarterly."

As of July of 2008, it is unknown what levels of *Campylobacter*, generic *E. coli*, or *Salmonella* will be acceptable to USDA-FSIS at the front end (rehang area) of the plant. The microbiological performance standards in Figure 2 above are currently undefined.

Some important questions remain such as:

1. Will the reduction in these bacteria from rehang to post-chill be an acceptable measure of process control?
2. Is reduction through the process more important than final *Salmonella* prevalence?
3. What amount of reduction will be considered acceptable and how will this be determined?
4. What additional costs will the industry incur to have to begin this testing as *Campylobacter* is more expensive to detect?
5. What interventions do the industry have at their disposal to improve the levels of *Campylobacter*, generic *E. coli*, and *Salmonella* at the rehang area?
6. In the past, microbiological performance standards have meant placing the plant in Categories 1, 2, or 3 based on *Salmonella* prevalence. Will test results from rehang be used to place plants into Categories 1, 2, or 3?

These questions are extremely important as the poultry industry adapts to new regulations as they come on-line.



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"Your local County Extension Agent is a source of more information on this subject."