

Meat Processing News

Department of Animal Sciences and Industry
Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

USDA Authorizes 'Certified Organic' Meat, Poultry Labeling

Meat and poultry products produced under specified conditions may now be labeled as "certified organic." USDA will permit the use of the term 'certified organic' on meat or poultry product labels providing there is a factual statement that the product has been "certified organic by (insert the name of a certifying entity)." The certifying entity must have (1) standards for what constitutes an agricultural product that is "organically" produced; and (2) a system for ensuring that the products it certifies meet those standards. Organic certification for livestock generally means that no antibiotics or hormones have been used and that the animals have been provided access to the outdoors.

Companies wanting to use the "certified organic" label must have prior approval by FSIS's Labeling and Additives Policy Division. They can be reached at (202) 205-0279. Labeling includes any written, printed, or graphic material which is used on containers or wrapping of meat and poultry products, or material that accompanies meat and poultry products at their point of sale, e.g., "point of purchase" material. When submitting labeling bearing the term "certified organic by (a certifying entity)," documentation should include: (1) the name of the meat or poultry product, and/or ingredient(s) used in the meat or poultry product; (2) the certifying entity's name and address; (3) the name and signature of the responsible official at the certifying entity; (4) the date of certification; and (5) the acknowledgment that the entity (a) has applied criteria in certifying the product and (b) employs a system for evaluating ongoing compliance with its criteria.

New Food Safety Web Site

A gateway web site designed to help people find food safety information on the web is now available through the U.S. government. This site provides links to food safety-related web sites from federal, state, and local government agencies. The address of the site is: <http://www.Food.Safety.gov>.

Controlling *Listeria* in Your Plant

Recent recalls of hot dogs and packaged meats have been attributed to illnesses caused by *Listeria monocytogenes* (*Lm*). *Lm* is a pathogen that can thrive under cold, damp conditions in meat processing plants. Manufacturers of ready-to-eat products such as luncheon meats, hot dogs, jerky, or snack sticks should develop and maintain Clean Room Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). These SOPs should include: positive air movement in exposed product packaging rooms, restricted access to packaging line personnel only, sanitizing dips for hands and foot wear, and the use of sanitized clothing including full head covers and surgical gloves and masks. In addition, equipment cleaning and sanitizing procedures should comprehensively address both product and non-product surfaces such as the underside of equipment, electrical outlets and air filters. Cleaning and sanitizing emphasis should be placed on drains, standing water, refrigeration units and all other areas that stay wet.

Decontamination of *Listeria* species can be achieved by dismantling equipment to expose unsealed areas and removing insulation from pipes and conduits including plastic electrical ties and duct tape. All equipment and environmental surfaces should be thoroughly washed and cleaned and a peroxide solution should be applied to all surfaces. The room then should be fogged with a 1000 ppm quaternary ammonia solution to ensure that all crevices and micro cracks are coated with fine droplets. After 30 minutes, rinse the equipment contact surfaces only, in preparation for use. A dilute (1%) solution of citric acid can be used instead on equipment, walls, floors, and all other areas of the plant and should be applied after a final rinse. The citric acid will acidulate the plant environment making it difficult for *Lm* to survive. A 2 to 3% citric acid should be poured directly into all drains, since floor drains tend to harbor *Listeria*.

Upcoming Events

K-State HACCP
Workshop
May 21 to 23
Manhattan
Contact Liz Boyle
(785) 532-1247 or
Kelly Getty
(785) 532-0191

Profitability Tips for Cured Meat Products—Part III

Warrie J. Means, Ph.D., University of Wyoming

In the Fall 1998 issue of Meat Processing News, tips on using equipment, ingredients and recipes to increase the profitability of cured meat products were described. This issue focuses on marketing tips to enhance profitability of your products.

Marketing

Know your production costs for each item. It is difficult to estimate the profitability of products when you do not accurately know how much it costs you to process, package, and market it.

- Increase the number and variety of products you process and sell.
- Make specialty products that customers cannot find other places.
- Decrease the number of ingredients in certain product lines and market to customers wanting “natural” or “no preservatives added” products.
- Listen to your customers. Don’t be afraid to try “off the wall” ideas. You discover new recipes and gain loyal customers.
- Keep good records of your seasonal items, e.g. smoked turkeys. You can’t make a sale when you don’t have what the customer wants. Conversely, you can’t make money on a freezer full of unsold product.
- Prominently display plaques and awards you have won at state and national cured meat contests.
- Raise your prices. You may process and sell the same amount of products at a higher profit.
- Use “suggestive selling” techniques. Suggest that customers may want to cure their picnic shoulders or pork loins. Suggest purchase of other cured products.
- Give customers samples of your cured products, especially during times of peak interaction (e.g. game season).
- Add value to your products and “make them special.” For instance produce and market “double smoked bacon” and/or “apple smoked bacon.” Charge a premium for these products.
- Increase the number of cured items you process and market. For example, pastrami, capocollo, lunch meats, and loaf products.

- Prepare and sell meat platters. They can be high profit items and will broaden your customer base. Meat platters can also increase the value of product that would otherwise be thrown away (short chubs, broken polish sausages, etc.)
- Develop new recipes and specialty products, e.g. “Cheesy Jalapeno Sausage.”
- Sell water.

HACCP Training Workshop

A HACCP training workshop will be held May 21-23, 1999 at Kansas State University. You will learn about the HACCP regulation, the seven principles of HACCP, and how to develop a HACCP plan. If you are interested in attending and have not received the bright pink registration form, or if you would like additional information about the workshop contact Liz Boyle (785) 532-1247 or Kelly Getty (785) 532-0191.



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Meat Processing News is published for Kansas meat processors by the Department of Animal Sciences and Industry, Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service.

For more information or questions, please contact K-State Research and Extension, Animal Sciences and Industry at (785) 532-1247.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Liz Boyle'.

Elizabeth Ernst Boyle, Ph.D.

Extension Specialist, Meats

Cooperative Extension Service

Department of Animal Sciences & Industry

251 Weber Hall

Manhattan, Kansas 66506

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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