

Food Safety

Science –Based Standards Ensure Safe and Healthy Beef

Priorities for Safe Food

Cattle producers' top priority is to produce the safest and highest quality beef in the world. In fact, safety is a non-competitive issue for the beef industry.

All safety programs must be based on science, focus on industry application, and have a strong research foundation.

Everyone must play a role in ensuring food safety. Consumers should always follow the food handling, cooking, and storage steps that are essential to prevent foodborne illness.

USDA has an effective voluntary recall system. Under a voluntary system, USDA can initiate recalls within hours. A mandatory system could delay recalls by 2 to 15 days for public hearings.

USDA and FDA are federal agencies which are taxpayer funded. Any changes to food safety legislation must fit within that structure without demanding additional funding from regulated companies.



Beef Safety Facts

Fact: In order to operate, all federal processing plants must have USDA Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) inspectors present at all times. USDA can shut down a non-compliant facility simply by pulling its inspectors.



Fact: In the 100 years that USDA has had voluntary recall authority, there has been 100% compliance. No company has ever refused to recall product.



Fact: Every meat processing facility undergoes ongoing reviews of their HACCP plans, which focus on process controls rather than testing as a means to protect public health.

Actively Working to Improve Beef Safety

Here's the simple truth: you can't test your way to safety.

The focus must be on the validation of safety systems and process controls to reduce potential hazards. We encourage FSIS to incorporate the objectives of programs like HACCP and the Pathogen Reduction Act.

- ▶ Since 1993 cattle producers have invested more than \$27 million in beef safety research.
- ▶ The beef industry as a whole spends approximately \$350 million every year on beef safety.
- ▶ Hazardous Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans were pro-actively developed by the food industry as a method to identify and prevent potential safety hazards.
- ▶ In 1996, USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) enacted a rule requiring HACCP plans at all beef processing plants.
- ▶ In order to enhance food safety we must understand the pathogens and interventions that can reduce hazards.
- ▶ It is critical that USDA continue funding food safety research at a high level.

