Technical Brief 11/08

Week beginning Monday 8 September 2011

1. USA shipping marks – use of stickers *(Nicola Dermer & Janine Collier)*

Notification: MAF has received feedback from USDA FSIS that some New Zealand product recently arriving in the US had shipping marks applied using orange stickers that could be removed without being destroyed.

An inspector was able to pull the majority of the stickers off cartons without destroying the stickers and advised MAF that the stickers did not appear to be scored deep enough to make them self destruct. Also on some cartons the edges of the stickers were curling as well.

While this has not caused a problem with clearance of product at the border at this stage, this information is being provided to industry so that premises can review the application of shipping marks and prevent a future problem occurring.

Background: There was a similar issue with these types of stickers in the past. FSIS has alerted MAF to a potential recurrence. Under section 2.9.3 of the USA OMAR, shipping marks may be applied by permanent adhesive labelling which must destruct if removal is attempted.

2. Reminder for Red Meat NMD and US E. coli O157 Requirements - *(Paul Dansted & Piers Harrison)*

Notification: This technical brief has been published as a reminder of key actions required under the NMD programme and US OMAR for Salmonella and E. coli O157 detections, which have recently been updated, and to also notify some reporting changes made under the US E. coli O157 sampling programme.

For *Salmonella* detections under the NMD Programme:

- A generic checksheet has been developed for operators to use in the event of *Salmonella* detections to address the requirements under the Salmonella Performance Standard, section 6.7. The checksheet includes a section for both bobby and porcine detections. It is located on the Foodsafety website at: http://www.foodsafety.govt.nz/elibrary/industry/animal-products-national-nmd/index.htm
- The NMD Administrator is no longer required to be notified for *Salmonella* detections and follow up reports should not be sent to the Administrator (as per section 6.7 of the Notice). There is an escalating response to Salmonella detections including notification to the VAFP head office technical group following the third detection in a consecutive sampling window.
- In the event of *Salmonella* detections, records from the original product sampled are to be traced back to the catchment area of the stock being processed (s6.7).

For E. coli O157 Sampling:

- When notified of a screen positive result by the operator, and then subsequently a confirmed result (positive or negative), the VTS must complete the VA Notification of O157:H7 form. Only a Regional Technical Specialist (formerly unit coordinator) or head office Specialist Adviser may issue a disposition for the

release of product. Premises VTS's are not authorised to release product following a screen positive result without input from their Regional Technical Specialist.

- All Regional Technical Specialists will now be involved in issuing dispositions for product detained following a screen positive detection for E. coli O157.
- All VA Notification of O157:H7 forms and lab reports are now to be emailed by the VTS to their local Regional Technical Specialist for a disposition to be made on confirmed lab results. **The generic E. coli results mailbox will no longer be monitored.**

Other aspects:

· Operators and verifiers should review the updated NMD Notice and Schedule, together with Technical Brief 11-01 to ensure all recent changes have been implemented, including:

· Confirming verification of temperatures during transport is being carried out 6 monthly (s3.5.2).

1 Audits are being carried out by the authorised representative of the laboratory (Notice, part 2 clause 10 (5))
2 All E. coli O157 samplers have been reviewed / audited and deemed competent by the laboratory conducting E. coli O157 analysis for the premises.

Background: The Animal Products (National Microbiological Database Specifications) Notice 2011 came into effect on the 14 March 2011. It has become apparent that some aspects of this notice haven't been implemented, or are not being complied with in some cases.

There have also been some cases where E. coli O157 screen positive detections have not been correctly reported by the operator or the VTS.

Historically only some Regional Technical Specialists were involved in issuing product dispositions for E. coli O157 screen positive lots. It has been decided that this function should be carried out by all Regional Technical Specialist so VA procedures have been updated accordingly.

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