

***Salmonella* Ground Sampling Procedure (05A03)**

It is important to have good aseptic sampling techniques and follow the step-by-step procedure when sampling. The procedure FSIS personnel use to collect samples for *Salmonella* testing is the same aseptic procedure used by plant personnel to collect carcass sponge samples. Information regarding sampling is available in FSIS Directive 10,230.5, Amendment 1, and the questions and answers section of FSIS Directive 10,011.1.

If an establishment has an antimicrobial spray as a CCP in their HACCP plan, carcass samples are taken after the spray and prior to packaging or cut-up. If poultry carcasses are cut up prior to entering the chill tank, any equivalent pieces that make a whole bird can be selected and sampled for *Salmonella* testing. Ground product samples are collected after grinding and before final packaging. When possible, samples should be collected before spices or seasonings are added.

The sample location and time for the product identified for sampling (beef, chicken, or turkey) are randomly selected. The sampling area is sanitized. The FSIS sampler must wash and sanitize hands and arms to the mid-forearm, and then dry them. Open the Whirl-Pak® filter bag identified with a pink fluorescent label and set it aside. Open the sterile bag containing the 25 gram sample ring is push the plastic-wrapped ring up to the top of the bag without touching the plastic wrap or the inner surface of the bag. Then the bag and its contents are set aside on a sterile surface.

The sampler puts on the sterile gloves. The sampler then removes the sterile plastic-wrapped ring template from the bag, without touching the outside of the bag or any other non-sterile surface. The sterile tape or seal on the plastic wrap is opened. The ring is unwrapped. The sterile sheet is placed on the sanitized work surface. The ring is placed in the center of the wrap.

Without touching anything but the sample and the ring, the sampler collects enough raw ground product to fill the ring. Ground product is selected from various portions of the batch to ensure that the sample is representative of the product. On a sterile surface the sample is firmly packed into the ring, eliminating air pockets. The sample is packed until it is even with the top of the ring. The rings are designed to collect 25 grams of product, the required sample size for the laboratory analysis.

The filled ring is lifted from the sheet and held over the open Whirl-Pak bag. With a gloved finger the sampler pushes the ground product out of the ring into the bag. Do not include the ring with the sample or the sample will be discarded.

Excess air is expelled and the top of bag is folded over 3 to 4 times. It is sealed.

