

Definitions (§430.1)

Antimicrobial agent: A substance in or added to an RTE product that has the effect of reducing or eliminating a microorganism, including a pathogen such as *L. monocytogenes*, or that has the effect of suppressing or limiting growth of *L. monocytogenes* in the product throughout the shelf life of the product. Examples of antimicrobial agents added to RTE products are potassium lactate and sodium diacetate. FSIS Directive 7120.1, Amend 5, identifies more antimicrobial agents used in the production of meat and poultry products.

Antimicrobial process: An operation, such as freezing, applied to an RTE product that has the effect of suppressing or limiting the growth of a microorganism, such as *L. monocytogenes*, in the product throughout the shelf life of the product. Drying and fermenting are operations that may be applied to a product to make it RTE and subsequently suppress or limit the growth of microorganisms, such as *L. monocytogenes*.

Deli product: A ready-to-eat meat or poultry product that is typically sliced, either in an official establishment or after distribution from an official establishment, and assembled in a sandwich for consumption.

Hot dog product: A ready-to-eat meat or poultry frank, frankfurter, or wiener, such as a product defined in 9 CFR 319.180 and 319.181 (cheesefurters).

Lethality treatment: A process, including the application of an antimicrobial agent, that eliminates or reduces the number of pathogenic microorganisms on or in a product to make the product safe for human consumption. Examples of lethality treatments are cooking or the application of an antimicrobial agent or process that eliminates or reduces pathogenic microorganisms.

Post-lethality exposed product: Ready-to-eat product that comes into direct contact with a food contact surface after the lethality treatment in a post-lethality processing environment.

Post-lethality processing environment: The area of an establishment into which product is routed after having been subjected to an initial lethality treatment. The product may be exposed to the environment in this area as a result of slicing, peeling, re-bagging, cooling semi-permeable encased product with a brine solution, or other procedures.

Post-lethality treatment: A lethality treatment that is applied or is effective after post-lethality exposure. It is applied to the final product or sealed package of product in order to reduce or eliminate the level of pathogens resulting from contamination from post-lethality exposure.

Prerequisite program: A procedure or set of procedures that is designed to provide basic environmental or operating conditions necessary for the production of safe, wholesome food. It is called "prerequisite" because it is considered by scientific experts to be prerequisite to a HACCP plan.

Ready-to-eat (RTE) product: A meat or poultry product that is in a form that is edible without additional preparation to achieve food safety and may receive additional preparation for palatability or aesthetic, epicurean, gastronomic, or culinary purposes. RTE product is not required to bear a safe-handling instruction (as required for non-RTE products by 9 CFR 317.2(l) and 381.125(b)) or other labeling that directs that the product must be cooked or otherwise treated for safety, and can include frozen meat and poultry products.

Additional Definition

Indicator organisms are bacteria used to determine objectionable microbial conditions of food, such as the presence of potential pathogens, as well as the sanitary conditions of food processing, production or storage areas. *Listeria spp.* are such indicators for *Listeria monocytogenes*.