

Introduction

Recalls.

A recall is a voluntary action conducted by a firm to remove adulterated or misbranded meat and poultry products from commerce. Although it is your company's decision to recall a product, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), the public health regulatory agency within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), coordinates with you to ensure that you have properly identified and removed recalled product from commerce by verifying the effectiveness of your recall activities. FSIS also notifies the public about product recalls. There are three levels of meat and poultry recalls categorized by FSIS. The type of recall depends upon the potential risk to consumers.

◇ Class I.

There is a reasonable probability that eating the product will cause serious, adverse health consequences or death. Examples of a Class I recall include the presence of pathogens in ready-to-eat meat or poultry products or the presence of *E. coli* O157:H7 and other Shiga-toxin producing *E. coli* O157:H7 or non-O157 STEC in raw ground beef.

◇ Class II.

There is a remote probability of adverse health consequences if the product is eaten. Examples of a Class II recall include the presence of very small amounts of undeclared allergens typically associated with milder human reactions, e.g., wheat or soy, or small-sized, non-sharp-edged foreign material in a meat or poultry product.

◇ Class III.

Eating the product will not cause adverse health consequences. An example of a Class III recall is the presence of undeclared ingredients, such as excess water in meat or poultry products.