Changes in Consumer Knowledge, Behavior, and Confidence Since the 1996 PR/HACCP Final Rule

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1. Purpose
RTI conducted an evaluative evaluation of the 1996 Pathogen Reduction/ Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (PR/HACCP) Final Rule. Final Rule for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA FSIS). As part of this evaluation, RTI conducted a study to measure changes in consumer knowledge, safe food handling practices, and confidence in the safety of meat and poultry since the PR/HACCP Final Rule was implemented.

2. Methodology
2.1. Analytical review
2.2. Analysis of existing studies and consumer data
2.3. Conducted consumer focus groups

3. Findings: Reported vs. Actual Behavior
3.1. In surveys and focus groups, consumers report that they are more knowledgeable about food safety and have improved in adopting safe food-handling practices (e.g., washing hands and surfaces, cleaning and discarding food at proper temperatures, and avoiding cross-contamination). However, in observations and audits, food-handler behaviors are inconsistent with reported behavior.

4. Findings: Reported Safe Handling Practices
4.1. Clean and Separate
4.2. Cook

5. Findings: Knowledge of Pathogens, High-Risk Foods, and High-Risk Populations
5.1. Consumer knowledge of pathogens has increased (FDA/FSIS Food Safety Survey, 1993, 1998, and 2001). Perception that salmonella is a serious food-safety problem has increased (from 56% in 1993 to 62% in 2001). Awareness of specific pathogens has increased since 1993. Knowledge about food safety has increased since 1993. Consumers are more aware of the risks associated with foodborne illness.

6. Findings: Changes in Consumer Knowledge and Behavior
6.1. In focus groups, participants report that consumer confidence in the safety of meat and poultry has increased (from 36% in 1993 to 53% in 2001). However, in focus groups, participants reveal that they unknowingly engage in unsafe food-handling practices and that the confidence in the safety of meat and poultry may have been influenced by these collective efforts.

7. Findings: Changes in Consumer Confidence
7.1. In surveys and focus groups, consumers express confidence in their ability to handle and prepare meat and poultry safely.

References


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Presented at: Thinking Globally—Working Together: Food Safety and Security. Session 3A94-00-06, “Evaluation Studies of Pathogen Reduction and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points.” All views expressed here are those of the authors and not necessarily of the Food Safety and Inspection Service.