

**Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
Food and Feed Safety Division**

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Version #: 1	Effective Date: 1/18/2017
Title: <b>Food Sampling Program</b>	

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**1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to describe the sampling program and policies for the Retail Food Inspection Program and Manufactured Food Inspection Program in the Food and Feed Safety Division (FFSD) of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

**2. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all sampling procedures and practices used by the Retail Food Inspection Program, Manufactured Food Inspection Program, and FFSD Units in the Minnesota Department of Agriculture – Food and Feed Safety Division. This policy does not apply to the Feed Inspection Program.

**3. POLICY**

Sampling Program

FFSD collects food and filth samples, further known as samples, for many different reasons including: investigation, complaint, response, enforcement, and surveillance. Samples are critical to support regulatory actions, investigations, and conduct response activities. Samples are also important to provide baseline information and can be used to characterize current potential risks in the food supply.

Sample collection may be initiated by the:

1. Inspector (during an inspection)
2. RRT Coordinator
3. Compliance Unit
4. Program and Division Leadership (Supervisors, Managers, Director)

Procedures and Work Instructions

The Retail Food Inspection Program and Manufactured Food Inspection Program use the same sampling procedures for samples collected at retail and manufacturing facilities with the exception of environmental sampling. There are separate procedures for environmental sampling at retail and manufacturing facilities and/or processing areas. With the exception of environmental sampling, all retail and manufactured food are provided the same training on sampling and expected to follow the same procedures.

The Food Programs have multiple Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Work Instructions (WIs). The SOPs describe the process for initiation, coordination, and communication related to sample collection and submission. The SOPs are divided by sample types referenced in the *Partnership for Food Protection Food/Feed Testing Laboratories Best Practices Manual*. These

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procedures specifically define the roles and responsibilities of coordinators and samplers. The WIs describe the specific methods and equipment used by inspection staff to collect, document, seal, transport, and submit samples. The appropriate sampling method and equipment is determined by the sample initiator based on the product or environment being sampled.

Sample Integrity

Sample integrity and proper chain of custody is essential to the FFSD sampling program. All samples must be handled, packaged, and shipped using appropriate procedures to prevent compromising condition of the sample and ensuring security of the sample. All chain of custody actions (collection, transfer, and submission) must be recorded on the sample documentation. All samples must be uniquely identified as described in the appropriate WIs. The MDA-Lab Services Division (LSD) conducts a review of all samples submitted by the Food Programs and notified FFSD if there are any issues with sample seals, documentation, or condition. All deviations are reported to FFSD and corrected if possible. If corrections are not possible, the sample is rejected. Samples may be hand delivered or shipped to the lab using approved courier services based on required submission timeframes. Refer to *Food Programs Sample Acceptance Criteria*.

Use of Laboratory Services

FFSD uses the MDA-LSD for all samples collected and all samples should be submitted to the LSD based on the *Food Sample Acceptance* document. The MDA-LSD has a large scope and an extensive ability to conduct analysis of samples submitted by FFSD. MDA-LSD is also ISO/IEC 17025 accredited and part of the FERN network. Refer to the *FFSD Food Program Summary – Chemistry and Microbiology Analysis* for more information.

If the MDA-LSD is unable to analyze samples submitted due to analysis type or resource issues, all samples will be submitted to a FDA lab for analysis. RRT Coordinator and Program Leadership will coordinate with the FDA and provide shipment instructions to sampler and LSD.

**4. RESPONSIBILITY**

**Food Inspection Staff:** All FFSD Staff will follow all sampling procedures and work instructions, communicate any concerns or deviations from samples to direct supervisor, maintain chain of custody and integrity of samples, and participate in routine sampling plans along with complaint and investigation samples as assigned.

**Division Director:** The Division Director will approve this policy and oversee the implementation of this policy. The Division Director will also support the division in resources and training required to implement the sampling program.

**Food Inspection Supervisors and Manager:** The Supervisors and Managers will create sampling assignments based on surveillance sampling plan, complaint, response, and investigation sampling, and provide direction to inspector initiated samples as required.

**RRT Coordinator and Response, Outreach, and Training (RTO) Supervisor:** The RRT Coordinator will identify need for samples due to response and investigation activities. The RRT Coordinator and RTO Supervisor will also assist the Food Programs in creating and completing routine surveillance sampling plans. Finally, the RRT Coordinator and RTO Supervisor are the main contacts for the MDA-LSD if samples deviate from procedures or acceptance criteria.

**Compliance Unit:** The Compliance Unit staff will identify and assign compliance and complaint samples in coordination with program leadership and RRT Coordinator.

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**5. RELATED DOCUMENTS (includes References, Attachments)**

Food Sampling SOPs and WIs

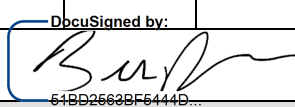
FFSD Food Program Summary-Chemistry and Microbiology Analysis

Food Programs Sample Acceptance Criteria

**6. CIRCULATION**

This policy will be circulated to Retail Food Program Staff, Manufactured Food Program Staff, and FFSD Units that support the food programs. The current version will be stored electronically on the FFSD document control site.

**7. APPROVAL/DOCUMENT HISTORY**

Document History		
Version #	Status (I, R)	Change History
1	I	Initial Policy Drafting.
DocuSigned by:  <small>548D2663BF5444D...</small>		1/18/2017
Approved By:		Date
Approved By:		Date

I = Initial document; R = Revised document