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Proposed changes to the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) “*Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* Verification Testing Program” have elicited reactions across the food industry – pro and con and a lot in between. At one of the nation’s leading research-focused non-profits, The Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew), the Safe Food Project staff highlighted “weaknesses” in the proposed FSIS rule changes.

[On its website](#), Pew states, “Infections by *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* cause approximately 1.9 million foodborne illnesses in the U.S. each year, resulting in an estimated 28,000 hospitalizations and nearly 500 deaths.

Contaminated poultry accounts for up to 35 percent of *Salmonella* infections and causes 10 to 72 percent of *Campylobacter*-related illnesses.”

While most of the non-profit’s criticism focused on regulatory control of poultry processing, Pew also pointed out there was an opportunity to lower pathogen contamination in birds prior to processing.

Pew recommended that FSIS “consider establishing performance standards that specify maximum permissible pathogen contamination levels at the time animals enter the slaughter facility.”

Pew goes on to state, “This may reduce contamination on all products produced in the facility by limiting *Salmonella* quantities present in the facility.” [Read more here.](#)

Advisor Access

“Maximum permissible pathogen contamination”



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Just the week before, the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) program *Frontline* aired a feature on *Salmonella* and poultry, [The Trouble with Chicken.](#) The expose opens with the statements: “*Salmonella* sickens and kills more of us than any other foodborne pathogen” and “About one in four pieces of raw chicken carries *Salmonella*.”

The National Chicken Council (NCC) was ready for the PBS program with [FAQs on *Salmonella* in poultry products.](#)

As it turned out, no major public outcry developed, although Tom Super at NCC noted that there was an uptick in social media activity. Also, legislators in Washington, D.C. had some questions. The NCC’s “contingency statement” included the following:

“Americans eat about 160 million servings of nutritious chicken every day, and virtually all of them are eaten safely. But we understand consumers have concerns about *Salmonella*, and regret any instances when someone becomes ill from eating chicken products – which is why our members are investing heavily in food safety research and are using the best science, research and technology available to break the chain of *Salmonella* at every stage of production.”

Diamond V research, technology, and expertise help break the *Salmonella* chain and forge strong food safety links in the pre-harvest stage. To get full access to Diamond V’s growing body of pre-harvest food safety research, contact your Diamond V representative.

We welcome your comments and questions. Diamond V Poultry Advisors are ready to respond. Please let us know how we can help.

Thank you!

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