FAQ

Q1.What do you mean by HACCP?
HACCP Definition and Procedures. HACCP stands for Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points. This is a preventative food safety system in which every step in the manufacture, storage and distribution of a food product is scientifically analyzed for microbiological, physical and chemical hazards.

Q2. What is the difference between hazard and risk?
A hazard is a physical, chemical or biological agent, in, or condition of food with the potential to cause an adverse health effect. A risk is an estimate of the probability and severity of the adverse health effects in exposed populations, consequential to the hazards in food.

Q3. What are the principles of HACCP?
HACCP systems must be based on the seven principles articulated by the NACMCF. The seven principles are: (1) hazard analysis, (2) critical control point identification, (3) establishment of critical limits, (4) monitoring procedures, (5) corrective actions, (6) record keeping, and (7) verification procedures.

Q4. Why is it important to have a HACCP system?
HACCP is important because it prioritizes and controls potential hazards in food production. By controlling major food risks, such as microbiological, chemical and physical contaminants, the industry can better assure consumers that its products are as safe as good science and technology allows.

Q5. When should the CCP decision tree be used?
Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) decision trees are tools that can be used to help you decide whether a hazard control point is a critical control point (CCP) or not. A CCP is a step at which control can be applied.

Q6. What are the Major Food Hazards?
While many public opinion studies report that consumers are concerned primarily about chemical residues, such as from pesticides and antibiotics, these hazards are nearly non-existent. The more

significant hazards facing the food industry today are microbiological contaminants, such as Salmonella, E. coli O157:H7, Listeria, Campylobacter, and Clostridium botulinum. HACCP is designed to focus on and control the most significant hazards.

Q7. How Does HACCP Compare to the Current Food Production and Inspection Programs?
The current food inspection program is based on a "see, smell and touch" approach that relies more on detection of potential hazards than prevention. Furthermore, the current inspection program was designed in the 1930s when the threat of diseased animals and physical contaminants were the main concerns. Today, microbiological and chemical contamination, which cannot be seen, are of greater interest. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently mandated HACCP for the nation's 7,000 meat and poultry plants.

Q8. What is the Status of the Adoption of HACCP within the Meat and Poultry Industry?
Many of the nation's meat and poultry processing facilities have implemented some or all of the HACCP principles into their operations. Many companies have also provided HACCP training to management and in-plant workforce.

Q9. What is USDA's Pathogen Reduction/HACCP Regulation?
USDA is pursuing a farm to table approach to food safety by taking steps to improve the safety of meat and poultry at each step in the food production, processing, distribution and marketing chain. On July 25, 1996, USDA released its Pathogen Reduction/HACCP final rule. The final rule will further target pathogens that cause foodborne illness, strengthen industry responsibility to produce safe food, and focus inspection and plant activities on prevention objectives. The final rule covers three major areas:
Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures
Microbiological Testing
Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) system

Q10. How Would HACCP Be Applied From Farm to Table?
For the most successful implementation of HACCP, it should be applied from farm to table -- starting on the farm and ending

with the individual preparing the food, whether in a restaurant or home. On the farm, there are actions that can be taken to prevent contamination from occurring, such as monitoring feed, maintaining farm sanitation, and practicing good animal health management practices.
In the plant, contamination must be prevented during slaughter and processing. Once meat and poultry products leave the plant, there should be controls in place during transportation, storage and distribution.
In retail stores, proper sanitation, refrigeration, storage and handling practices will prevent contamination. Finally, in restaurants, food service and homes, food handlers must store, handle and cook foods properly to ensure food safety.

Q11. How Can HACCP Be Applied in Distribution and Retail?
FSIS plans to work with the Food and Drug Administration and state and local governments to begin to implement HACCP in the distribution and retail sectors. FSIS intends to work with FDA to develop federal standards for safe handling of food during transportation, distribution and storage prior to delivery to retail stores. Also, FSIS will work with FDA to provide food safety guidance to retail stores through the updated Food Code. The Food Code is a model ordinance intended to serve as a guide for state and local authorities. Following proper sanitation and handling guidelines will help ensure that further contamination and cross contamination do not occur.

Q12. How Can Consumers Use HACCP?
Consumers can implement HACCP-like practices in the home by following proper storage, handling, cooking and cleaning procedures. From the time a consumer purchases meat or poultry from the grocery store to the time they cook and serve a meal, there are many steps to take to ensure food safety. Examples include properly refrigerating meat and poultry, keeping raw meat and poultry separate form cooked and ready-to-eat foods, thoroughly cooking meat and poultry, and refrigerating and cooking leftovers to prevent bacterial growth.