

Qualitative risk assessment to support a policy decision on partially-eviscerated (effilé) poultry production

Area of research interest: [Meat Hygiene Research Programme](#)

Study duration: 2013-08-01

Project code: FS101044

Conducted by: Food Refrigeration & Process Engineering Research Centre, Grimsby Institute/ University of Lincoln

Background

Partially-eviscerated poultry are produced by removing the intestines from the poultry carcass but leaving the heart, liver, lungs, kidneys, crop, proventriculus and gizzard inside the body cavity. Regulation (EC) 853/2004 allows production of partially-eviscerated poultry, provided it is authorised by the competent authority.

At present, the UK has little experience of the production of partially-eviscerated poultry. Therefore, this research was designed to help the Food Standards Agency in considering whether the risks of this type of poultry production can be managed to an acceptable level and the practice authorised in the UK.

Research Approach

This project provided a comprehensive risk assessment of partially-eviscerated (effilé and similar) poultry by examining processes currently undertaken in the UK and those from other effilé-producing countries. Recommendations for controls were also provided to help the FSA in considering whether the risks of this type of poultry production can be managed to an acceptable level such that the practice could be authorised in the UK.

The project approach followed four main tasks:

- an initial risk assessment of the public health implications of allowing partially-eviscerated birds into the food chain was conducted along with a review of all appropriate literature/company information relating to the control of partially-eviscerated poultry production
- an industrial survey of current production of partially-eviscerated poultry was conducted
- a series of short practical evaluations of any processes where further data is required was carried out
- a full analysis of all the data and findings was carried out and a final project report produced

Results

A critical review of all available relevant and appropriate literature and data was carried out, supplemented by a survey of current industrial practice and a practical evaluation of processes, to form a risk assessment of the public health implications of allowing partially-eviscerated birds into the food chain.

The main conclusion from the risk assessment was that while there are risks of zoonotic infection to the consumer associated with preparation and consumption of partially-eviscerated (effilé) poultry, these risks are generally no different to those associated with the preparation and consumption of traditionally processed poultry. Therefore, it is the author's view that the production of partially-eviscerated birds in the UK, subject to the controls outlined in their report, would not result in any significantly increased risk to public health than current poultry processing.

The author recommends that future studies in this area could focus on the prevalence or concentration of pathogens in partially-eviscerated birds, the risk of cross-contamination during the combined skinning and partial-evisceration of feathered carcasses and the risk of cross-contamination during the removal of organs from partially-eviscerated poultry, whether performed by the retailer, catering establishment or consumer.

Next steps

Our organisation is considering the outcomes of this report to assess how best to authorise businesses that wish to produce effilé poultry as allowed for by Regulation 853/2004.

Research report
PDF

[View Qualitative Risk Assessment to support a policy decision on partially-eviscerated \(effilé\) poultry production as PDF\(Open in a new window\) \(5.05 MB\)](#)