

Appendix P

Recommendations of The Prevention of *E. coli* O157:H7 Infection: A Shared Responsibility (11)

1. ON-FARM -Recommendations

- Campaigns should be undertaken to raise farmers' awareness of the serious illness caused by VTEC and their role in its control.
- A task force should be established to determine the animal husbandry practices required to ensure the production of clean livestock under Irish conditions.
- Advice should be made available to farmers on the best animal husbandry practices required to produce clean livestock.
- Only cattle meeting the standards of cleanliness of categories 1, 2 and 3 of the Clean Livestock Policy of the Department of Agriculture and Food should be supplied to the abattoir. Only clean sheep should be supplied.
- Surveillance should be undertaken to determine the VTEC levels in animals.
- Animal slurry and manure should be managed in a manner that prevents contamination of water supplies or ready-to-eat fruit and vegetables.
- Fruit and vegetables should be produced under a food safety management system based on Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP).
- Unpasteurised milk should not be consumed.

2. THE ABATTOIR AND PRIMARY PROCESSOR -Recommendations

- Abattoir management should ensure that only clean cattle and sheep are accepted for slaughter. Only cattle meeting the standards of cleanliness of categories 1, 2 and 3 of the Clean Livestock Policy should be accepted.
- A clean carcass initiative should be adopted at all abattoirs, applying a policy of zero tolerance for visible faecal contamination on carcasses and red offal.
- Legislation should be introduced to require abattoirs to put in place a food safety management system based on the principles of HACCP. In the interim, abattoirs should adopt such a system on a voluntary basis.
- A task force comprising the FSAI, official agencies and industry should be established to advance a national hygiene training strategy for the meat industry.

3. THE FOOD PROCESSING, DISTRIBUTION, RETAIL AND CATERING SECTOR-Recommendations

3.1 Processors

- To fulfil their statutory obligation to implement a food safety management system based on the principles of HACCP, food processors should use the *Guide to Good Hygiene Practice* (IS 342:1997).
- Raw and cooked food should be physically separated at all times during processing, storage, distribution and display.
- There should be a continual process of food safety education and awareness in the workplace. • Food processors should ensure that minced meat and minced meat products and rolledmeat joints are supplied with clear cooking instructions.
- Minced meat and minced meat products must be labelled to aid traceability and recall.
- Vegetables and salads, prepared as ready-to-eat foods, must be washed with potable water.
- Milk Pasteurising plants should regularly monitor pasteuriser effectiveness.

3.2 Retailers

- Food retailers should use the guide entitled *Hygiene in Food Retailing and Wholesaling* (IS 341:1998) to fulfil their statutory obligation to implement a food safety management system based on the principles of HACCP.
- Raw and cooked food should be physically separated at all times during storage and display.
- Appropriate temperatures should be used in the storage and cooking of food.

- Products manufactured from unpasteurised milk should be so labelled, indicating the risk of VTEC infection associated with their consumption.
- Retailers should ensure that minced meat/products and rolled-meat joints are supplied to consumers with clear handling and cooking instructions.

5.3 Caterers

- Caterers should use the guide entitled *Hygiene in the Catering Sector* (IS 340:1994).
- Raw and cooked food should be physically separated at all times during storage, preparation and display.
- Caterers should ensure that their cooking procedures result in high risk meat products attaining at least 70°C for two minutes or equivalent.
- Fruit and vegetables should be washed thoroughly with potable water prior to consuming them raw.
- Voluntary groups catering at functions should be made aware of the importance of good hygiene and food handling practices.

6. CONSUMER ADVICE –Recommendations

- Consumer awareness programmes on food handling and hygiene should be a priority. The prevention of cross contamination and temperature control should be the key messages.
- Food hygiene education in the school curriculum should be expanded to reach all students, in the primary and secondary sectors.
- Persons suffering from VTEC infection and their carers should receive detailed advice on personal hygiene and cooking procedures.
- Persons suffering from VTEC infection should comply with work/school attendance restrictions.
- Manufacturers of domestic kitchen equipment should achieve higher and more uniform standards, particularly, the incorporation of thermometers in refrigerators.