

March 22, 2002

Consumer Research on Food Safety Labeling Features for the Development of Responsive Labeling Policy

Volume 1 Final Report

Prepared for

Robert C. Post, Ph.D.
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service
Labeling and Additives Policy Division
300 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20250-3700

Prepared by

Sheryl C. Cates
Connie Cignetti
Katherine M. Kosa
RTI
Health, Social, and Economics Research
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709



Executive Summary

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA, FSIS) needs data on consumers' use and understanding of different labeling features and whether consumers desire that certain labeling features be mandatory for some meat, poultry, and egg products. FSIS contracted with RTI to conduct focus group discussions with household grocery shoppers and food preparers. FSIS can use the findings from the focus groups to guide labeling policy development.

RTI conducted six focus groups—two groups in each of three locations (Raleigh, North Carolina; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and St. Louis, Missouri). In each location, we conducted one focus group with individuals who have a high school education or less and one focus group with individuals who have a college education. We conducted two focus groups with individuals in each of the following age groups: 18 to 30 years old, 35 to 55 years old, and 60 years old or older.

BEYOND THE SCOPE

BEYOND THE SCOPE

BEYOND THE SCOPE

000001

ES-1

Consumer Research on Food Safety Labeling Features for the Development of Responsive Labeling Policy

- preferences for labeling of irradiated meat and poultry products; and

~~BEYOND THE SCOPE~~

~~BEYOND THE SCOPE~~

Prior to the focus group discussions, participants completed a 13-item questionnaire that collected information on their use of product dates and preparation instructions, their awareness of irradiated meat and poultry products, and demographics (e.g., education, age, race). The moderator then led participants in a discussion to unveil participants' usage and understanding of different labeling features—

(BTS)

In addition, participants discussed their preferences for labeling of irradiated meat and poultry products, and Finally,

(BTS)

~~BEYOND THE SCOPE~~

~~BEYOND THE SCOPE~~

~~BEYOND THE SCOPE~~

~~BEYOND THE SCOPE~~

000002

Consumer Research on Food Safety Labeling Features for the Development of Responsive Labeling Policy

BEYOND THE SCOPE

BEYOND THE SCOPE

BEYOND THE SCOPE

BEYOND THE SCOPE

BEYOND THE SCOPE

Labeling of Irradiated Meat and Poultry Products

Participants think it is misleading to label irradiated meat and poultry products as "pasteurized."

- Many participants are unaware of irradiated meat and poultry products and are unsure of the safety of irradiated products given their limited knowledge.
- Participants like the following statements for irradiated meat and poultry products:
 - ✓ "Irradiated to Decrease Harmful Bacteria"
 - ✓ "Irradiated for Your Safety"
 - ✓ "Treated by Irradiation"
- Participants consider irradiation and pasteurization to be two different processes; hence, they consider it misleading to label irradiated meat and poultry products as "pasteurized."

BEYOND THE SCOPE

BEYOND THE SCOPE

000003