

PQ Template 2018 (3)_PQN_2019-20_2020_00044

Parliamentary Question: 12832

TARGET DATE 10th February

MP Question

Sir Christopher Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 28 January 2020 to Question 7113 on Food: Chlorine, whether the Food Standards Agency advises that chlorinated water can be used as a rinsing aid to control process hygiene during the washing of chicken; and if he will make a statement. 12832

Suggested reply

The Food Standards Agency advice is that no substance other than potable water can be used to remove surface contamination from chicken carcasses.

Any substance to be used to remove surface contamination from chicken carcasses must be specifically approved for that purpose. Chlorine has not been approved for this intended purpose and so cannot be used as a rinsing aid to control process hygiene during washing by food businesses to remove surface contamination from chicken carcasses.

Background

1. Substances used to remove surface contamination from products of animal origin such as meat or fish need to be subject to risk assessment and approved under hygiene legislation before they can be used in the UK.
2. The UK, having left the EU, will follow EU legislation until the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020. Substances used to remove surface contamination need to be assessed in the EU by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and approved under EU hygiene legislation before they can be used in the UK/Europe.
3. EFSA has issued opinions on the use of different substances to remove surface contamination of poultry carcasses e.g. chlorine dioxide, acidified sodium chlorite and peroxy acids. However, none of these substances have been approved for use and so only potable water can be used.
4. No substances other than potable water are approved to remove surface contamination from chicken carcasses. There is no intention currently to change this when the UK leaves the EU.
5. After the end of the transition period, Health Ministers will decide whether or not any application for use of chlorinated wash to remove surface contamination from chicken carcasses is to be approved. This decision will be based on recommendations from the food safety authority (Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland). An approved substance would require a statutory instrument with usual parliamentary scrutiny.

Health Orals – Chlorinated Chicken

From: [REDACTED] S40
Sent on: Monday, January 27, 2020 4:11:58 PM
To: [REDACTED] S40
CC: [REDACTED] S40 David
Self <david.self@food.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] S40 Mike
O'Neill <Mike.Oneill@food.gov.uk>; Phil
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[REDACTED] S40

Subject: RE: Health Orals - Chlorinated Chicken

Tracey

As requested, lines to take follow on 'chlorinated chicken'. A line has been added on salad, as salad was mentioned in the UK ambassador's letter. These have been cleared by Phil.

Lines to take:

What is the government's stance on chicken washed with chlorine?

Any substance to be used to remove surface contamination from chicken carcasses must be specifically approved; chlorine has not been approved and so cannot be used. Therefore, chicken that has been washed with chlorine cannot be placed on the UK market.

Is the Government intending to approve the use of chlorinated wash or similar substance to remove surface contamination from chicken carcasses after the UK leaves the EU?

No substances other than potable water are approved to remove surface contamination from chicken carcasses. There is no intention currently to change this when we leave the EU.

Can chlorine-wash be used on salad?

The FSA advises that chlorine washes can be used on fresh produce, including salad, but are legally not permitted on products of animal origin or meat. Only potable water can be used to remove surface contamination from poultry carcasses in the UK.

[REDACTED] S40
[REDACTED] S40
[REDACTED] S40

From: [REDACTED] S40

Sent: 27 January 2020 15:17

To: Phil Flaherty <Philip.Flaherty@food.gov.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED] S40

Subject: FW: Health Orals - Chlorinated Chicken

Importance: High

Please note, this e-mail originated from outside the FSA. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Phil

Hope you can help with this. PS(P) is concerned that following media coverage of US Ambassador's comments about chlorinated chicken something might come up in health orals tomorrow. As a result I have been asked if the FSA could provide some lines to take by 16.30 today in case this is raised.

The links to the articles are in the message below from PO.

Apologies for a short turnaround.

Happy to discuss

From: [REDACTED] S40

Sent: 27 January 2020 15:11

To: [REDACTED] S40

Subject: Health Orals - Chlorinated Chicken

Importance: High

Hi all,

There has been media coverage of US Ambassador's comments about chlorinated chicken (see below) and PS(P) thinks that there might be a chance of this being raised at Health Orals tomorrow. Apologies for a short turnaround, but could you check with the FSA and provide some lines to take by 16.30 in case this is raised?

Thanks,

[REDACTED] S40

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7931315/US-ambassador-Woody-Johnson-says-chlorinated-chicken-included-post-Brexit-trade-deal.html>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/trump-us-uk-trade-deal-chlorinated-chicken-woody-johnson-food-safety-a9302506.html>