



FPL Food – Additional Information

Background information

FPL Food is a family-owned beef processing company, employing more than 1,300 team members in Southeast Georgia. Our business focus is supplying beef products to grocery outlets and foodservice companies.

OSHA Investigations

Team member safety is a priority. We focus on providing a safe work environment and enforcing safety procedures we have in place. As a company, our incident rate is below the industry average; however, unfortunately, accidents occur, and a team member may be injured.

The incidents you requested information on occurred at our plant in Augusta. When a team member is injured, we take every step possible to ensure they receive proper medical attention. We have a safety manager who organizes the ongoing training sessions and reviews processes to determine safety measures are being implemented. If OSHA finds an area where we need to improve, we swiftly implement procedures and implement precautionary measures to rectify the situation.

USDA Inspectors & Veterinarians

The 12 full-time USDA inspectors, including two veterinarians, at our facility are not employees of FPL Food. They are employed by USDA. This is a process in place at all food facilities to ensure safety and animal welfare measures are followed. The inspectors check that plants are sanitary and help ensure that good manufacturing processes are followed. The meat and poultry industries are some of the most heavily regulated and inspected industries in the U.S.

Regarding the USDA Notice of Suspension dated January 31, 2020, FPL Food appealed the notice to receive a clearer case of the issue. FPL Food was issued a permit to continue production on Monday, February 3, 2020. The plant was scheduled to be closed that day and we began production on Tuesday, February 4, 2020. We continue to be on scheduled production which includes oversight by the 12 full-time USDA inspectors in our facility. The current status of the appeal is awaiting feedback from USDA.



Food Safety

At FPL Food, we recognize we have an enormous responsibility to provide wholesome products to millions of Americans and we are focused on implementing food safety processes that help us meet that goal.

FPL Food is a USDA inspected and HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) facility. This plan provides a preventive food safety approach and is considered the “gold standard” food safety process management system. To provide some background, we routinely sample raw materials for total aerobic bacteria. We also use a third-party auditing company to ensure processes and procedures are updated and followed. This validates our process control and allows products to meet Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) guidelines. Our facility is also certified by the British Retail Consortium (BRC). BRC is a Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) benchmarked food safety standard covering food safety and management of product quality in food manufacturing.

Raw agricultural products like bananas, broccoli and beef contain bacteria. It’s naturally occurring. Our commitment at FPL Food is to reduce pathogens on products. Each year we test more than 60,000 samples with approximately 250 samples tested per day. If any test comes back abnormal, the critical control points (CCP) are identified and steps in the process are controlled. All materials are tested and held to ensure any beef that tests positive are not utilized as raw materials for ground beef production.

The positive E. coli O157:H7 and Salmonella results referenced were part of intensive testing procedures in place at meatpacking plants. The sampling process is validation that the testing process works. When a positive test is received, we follow the HACCP plan and determine the critical control points. All product is tested and must be released prior to use in products like raw ground beef.

As a food safety precaution, consumers need to cook ground beef products to 160 degrees Fahrenheit using an instant read thermometer.

COVID-19

FPL Food implemented precautionary measures very early in the pandemic and we have had one confirmed case at our Augusta plant. The team member contracted the virus offsite. We followed the protocol we have in place and the team member, who was asymptomatic, was sent home, quarantined, and has now returned to work.