



**Don't hide from Listeria, hunt for it!**

## **Worried About What You Might Be Missing?**

### **Transfer Points *versus* Niches**

Many positive sites found during monitoring are not growth niches. They are transfer points (i.e., a product handler's gloved hands, floor sample in high traffic pathway).

**Transfer points are not growth niches because the organism is eliminated during the cleaning and sanitizing process. Eliminate the transfer point and improve elimination of the Listeria source.**

#### **Examples:**

- Hollow roller on conveyor transporting food product
- Hollow rollers not disassembled, cleaned and sanitized or heat treated in a manner
- to eliminate any contaminating organisms can become growth niches.
- Hollow roller with solid stainless steel shaft in center (almost press fit). When center shaft is removed, organic matter is evident.
- ***The potential to support growth still exists within the machine, part or area.***
- Bolts, studs, mounting plates, brackets, junction boxes, name plates, end caps, sleeves and other such items with attached, drilled and tapped holes are all potential sources for problems.

#### **Areas to Check:**

- Zone 3 environmental (floors, ceilings walls)
- Zone 4 adjacent to RTE areas (employee welfare areas, hallways, dry storage)
- Sampling the line components and everything that comes to the line over a period of time. This should typically start during setup and assembly. Samples should be taken as workers and product come to the line, repeated after line is running, then every 2 hrs thereafter.

#### **Among direct contact surfaces where priority should be given to:**

- Slicing
- Packaging
- Conveyors
- Water or ice used in processing or storage
- Racks used for transporting finished product
- Hand tools, gloves, aprons, and similar items that contact finished product
- Containers used for holding food while it awaits packaging or further processing

### **Where non contact surfaces present an area of concern:**

In addition to floors, ceilings and walls, other non- contact surfaces that can lead to contamination of contact surfaces include:

- Equipment framework
- Drains
- Cleaning tools
- Wet insulation
- Condensate
- Catwalks and overhead structures
- Trolleys, forklift. Walk-alongs

According to the American Meat Institute, the overriding objective to sanitation is twofold: to prevent *Listeria* from establishing harborage points in plant equipment and to eliminate it in the event this occurs.

Consider *Listeria* as homeless, looking for a harborage location.  
It can easily be transferred from an area outside of the high risk RTE area

### **Growth niches within High-Risk in RTE area:**

- This means they are established and have found a protective home in equipment or facility
- They may exist in a transient home such as rework pans, trash containers or other difficult to clean
- mobile container/environment
- Cold storage facilities have a tendency to collect food debris and where there is food debris, you can bet *Listeria* is not far behind.
- Interior components should be as accessible as possible to promote sanitation and avoid niches.

**There is no one department responsible.**

**For every one dollar spent up front, multiple dollars are saved later.**

**No one is immune.**

\*\*May 2009 meetingplace

Keeping *Listeria* at Bay, Meetingplace 9/09