



Pink Slime: University of Florida's Dr. Carr Responds

There has been so much publicity lately about *pink slime* and its use by manufacturers in hamburger. Dr. Chad Carr, Assistant Professor in Animal Science at the University of Florida recently up-dated Family and Consumer Sciences Agents on his reaction to the media coverage.



Mechanically Separated Chicken



Lean, Finely-Textured Beef

Dr. Carr offered these conclusions. **Lean Finely Textured Beef** is not a filler but is a product that is safe, wholesome and nutritious. He feels that the incident and its wide coverage on this issues resulted because of consumer's general distrust of science and commercial food production.

Dr. Carr supports the American Meat Institute representative's explanation:

- Lean finely textured beef (LFTB) is a category of beef products that uses high-technology food processing equipment to separate lean meat from fat because doing it by hand is impossible. LFTB products prevent the waste of valuable, lean, nutritious, safe beef by using technology to do what human hands cannot.
- Lean, finely textured beef is regulated and inspected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. During the last two decades during which these products have been produced, they have had an excellent food safety record.

- To make boneless lean beef trimmings (BLBT), the trimmings are warmed to about 100° F to separate the meat from the fat resulting in a very low fat product. This process is very similar to the one used to separate cream from milk.
- Food grade ammonium hydroxide, which has been declared safe by the FDA since 1974, is used to produce a number of products such as puddings and baked goods and can be used in the processing of boneless lean beef trimmings to control any harmful bacteria that may be present in the beef. Another variation, known as finely textured beef (FTB) is made through the use of citric acid to destroy bacteria.
- When any form of lean finely textured beef is blended into ground beef it is not singled out as a separate ingredient on ground beef packages.
- After examining the product for safety, Dr. Gary Acuff, from Texas A&M and Dr. John Floros, Pennsylvania State University report that all forms of lean finely textured beef are safe when produced in compliance with USDA regulations.
- Why is this process done by manufacturers? Because manufacturers can recover lean meat that would otherwise be wasted. The industry wants to maximize as much lean meat as possible from the cattle raised. It ensures that the product remain as affordable as it can be to assist in feeding America and the world. If it was not used in fresh ground beef products, approximately 1.5 million additional head of cattle would need to be harvested annually to make up the difference.

For more information visit, www.MeatMythCrushers.com or contact me at sswenson@ufl.edu.