

SAFE FOOD COALITION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Consumer Groups Applaud Final Rule on Mechanically Tenderized Beef

Members of the Safe Food Coalition today applauded the release of the final rule to require labeling of mechanically tenderized beef products. Importantly, the rule will be implemented next year, rather than waiting until 2018 as originally required under U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) labeling regulations. Consumer groups have been urging the USDA to require labeling of mechanically tenderized beef since 2009.

“USDA’s new rule will better protect consumers from foodborne illness by providing them with accurate information about whether the steak they are buying has been mechanically tenderized and how to safely prepare it,” said the groups. “We are grateful to Secretary Vilsack and USDA for their efforts to finalize this important consumer protection rule.”

Mechanically tenderized beef products (such as steaks and roasts) are repeatedly pierced by small needles or blades, thereby increasing the risk that pathogens – such as *E. coli* O157:H7 and *Salmonella* – located on the surface of the product will be transferred to the interior. Since mechanically tenderized products look no different than intact products, consumers have no way of knowing that the product must be cooked to a higher internal temperature to ensure safety.

Under the new rule, beef products must be identified as mechanically tenderized and the label must include safe cooking instructions.

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The Safe Food Coalition is made up of consumer groups, public health groups, groups representing victims of foodborne illness, and labor organizations dedicated to reducing the burden of foodborne illness in the United States by improving government food inspection programs.

Safe Food Coalition members include:

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