

Interest in Irradiated Meat Continues In U.S. and Canada

Three states in the nation will offer irradiated meat products to students this year as part of the National School Lunch Program, according to the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. School districts and daycare facilities in Nebraska, Texas and Minnesota have placed orders for irradiated ground beef and/ or irradiated beef patties for the coming school year.

Irradiation was approved for use on meat products in February 2000 and is available in limited quantities in some retail stores. Irradiated meat is also being sold to some healthcare facilities serving food to immuno-compromised individuals.

While the irradiated meat is still relatively new in U.S. markets, irradiation is used widely around the world on a host of foods. In fact, Health Canada officials this week are recommending that more irradiated products be available for sale in Canada. Such products would include irradiated ground beef, chicken, shrimp and certain fruits. Currently, Canada allows potatoes, onions, spices, wheat and flour to be irradiated.

The recommendation was made to the Health Minister after 22 months of deliberation and scientific study. Health Canada believes that the offering of these products in the marketplace will reduce the annual health costs associated with food borne illnesses.

For more information on irradiation, visit AMI's press center at http://www.meatami.com/content/presscenter/factsheets_Infokits/FactSheetIrradiation.pdf