

Research & Education Spotlight

Comprehensive Survey of Nitrite Levels in Food

Through an AMIF grant, Texas A&M University in 2009 conducted the most comprehensive survey ever done of the nitrite levels in food products. The researchers determined that nitrite levels in cured meats have remained consistently low since the last food survey in 1997 and that levels in cured meats are far lower than those found in most vegetables.

Research Demonstrate Intervention Effects

A 2011 Colorado State University project funded by AMIF determined that current intervention strategies used in beef plants to destroy *E. coli* O157:H7 are equally effective against non-O157 Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli*.

Listeria Intervention and Control Workshop

AMI Foundation staff assembled leading experts in 1999 to create a course to teach best practices in *Listeria* Intervention and Control Workshop for ready-to-eat meat (RTE) meat and poultry products. Peer-to-peer instruction that evolves with scientific developments has made this course one of AMIF's most popular and has helped contribute to sustained declines in the incidence of *Listeria monocytogenes* in RTE meats.

Allergen Control Program

In response to growing concerns about preventing recalls from allergens, AMIF partnered with the Food Allergy Research and Resource Program to develop a course for the meat industry about control of allergens during processing to prevent contamination. The popular course was first offered in 2005 and again in 2011 and is a case study in AMIF's responsiveness in empowering the industry to improve food safety.

A Final Note

Research, education and information provided by the Foundation have helped to improve the safety of the nation's meat and poultry supply. Foodborne illnesses and outbreaks are at an all-time low. The nutrition profiles of meat and poultry products have changed to meet consumer expectations. And the quality and consistency of the nation's protein supply continues to improve. The Foundation is pleased to be a part of this progress.

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American Meat Institute Foundation

Dedicated to Research, Education and Information



AMI Foundation

The American Meat Institute Foundation (AMIF) is a non-profit research, education and information foundation established by the American Meat Institute. AMIF seeks to identify technologies and practices that enable meat and poultry companies to produce safer and more nutritious meat and poultry products. The Foundation also provides resources to consumers to empower them with information to select and prepare safe and nutritious meat and poultry products for their families.

History

While the current Foundation was started in 1992, AMIF has a rich history dating back nearly 70 years.

1944

In 1944, the Institute established the first AMI Foundation, complete with a commercial laboratory, on the University of Chicago campus in Chicago, Illinois.

1944 - late 1970s

From 1944 until the late 1970s, the Foundation invested millions in research projects examining meat processing, safety and nutrition for the industry.

1970s

When the Institute moved to Washington, DC, in the 1970s, the Foundation was phased out.

1992

By 1992, the need for a solutions-focused research foundation became clear and AMIF was re-launched.

1999

AMIF launches Food Safety Initiative, an effort aimed at reducing and ultimately eliminating *E. coli* O157:H7 on fresh beef products and *Listeria monocytogenes* on ready-to-eat meat and poultry products.

Today

Today, AMIF provides research grants to universities, private institutions, non-profit organizations and other foundations. AMIF disseminates research findings, knowledge and best practices through briefings, workshops and other industry communication efforts.

Research Priorities and Projects

AMIF focuses its priorities on areas the meat and poultry industry deems most critical. These include microbiological food safety, animal welfare, hazard analysis critical control point (HACCP), worker safety, nutrition and environmental concerns.

In 1999, AMIF launched a multi-million dollar, multi-year Food Safety Initiative with the goal of: reducing *Listeria monocytogenes* and *E. coli* O157:H7 in meat and poultry products. In 2004, the research priorities were expanded to include *Salmonella*. The scope of the *E. coli* research priorities was broadened in 2006 to include additional Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli*.

Since 1999, nearly \$8 million in research grants have been awarded for projects that show promise in advancing food safety.

The AMIF Research Advisory Committee is comprised of technical representatives from AMI member companies, government and university researchers. Each year the committee establishes priorities for each target research area as well as emerging food safety concerns.

Education and Information

AMIF offers both annual conferences that meat and poultry companies rely upon for educating their employees, as well as timely briefings created in response to new challenges.

Annual conferences include the Worker Safety, Health and the Environment Conference, Animal Care & Handling Conference and Annual Meat Conference.

Multiple workshops are held each year about *Listeria* intervention and control, ground meat and poultry safety and in response to other challenges that arise, like allergen control and animal disease concerns.

Educating media and consumers is an important function for the Foundation. AMIF regularly briefs media on scientific issues. In addition, AMIF develops materials to educate consumers like the "Ask the Meat Scientist" video series, which reaches consumers about a variety of timely topics from



proper cooking to proper portion size.

Staff, Governance and Funding

The Foundation is managed by the American Meat Institute and governed by a Board of Directors comprised of AMI Members who meet twice a year to review progress and identify future strategies.

AMIF is staffed by seven experts in meat and animal science, food safety, animal welfare, communications and education.

The Foundation is a 501c3 funded entirely by the American Meat Institute.

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