

How to Collect 1-Pound of Product for Multi-Component RTEPROD Sampling *Products with meat or poultry and non-meat or poultry ingredients*

As is explained in [FSIS Directive 10,240.3](#), *FSIS Ready-To-Eat Sampling Programs* FSIS reduced the finished product weight to 1-pound of product, for all RTE products. FSIS made this change because FSIS laboratories no longer enumerate organisms in positive samples; and therefore, no longer require additional product for such testing. This change applies to products where the meat or poultry is commingled (in contact or mixed with) non-meat or poultry ingredients and products where the meat or poultry component is not commingled (not in contact or mixed with) non-meat or poultry ingredients. In all cases, IPP are to follow the instructions in the [FSIS Directive 10,240.3](#). The information below helps to explain the amount of product to submit to reduce sample discards related to an insufficient amount of sample submitted.

Products sampled under the RTEPROD_RAND and RTEPROD_RISK sampling codes may contain non-meat and poultry components. This document provides photos and examples for IPP to better understand:

- How to distinguish commingled and non-commingled samples;
- How to collect samples for each sample type;
- How to calculate the amount of sample to send to the lab.

If you have additional questions, please submit a question to [askFSIS](#).

IPP are to collect 1-pound of RTE product.

It is very important that a minimum of 1-pound is provided for RTEPROD samples so all analyses can be performed. For multi-ingredient products, if the product is commingled (meat or poultry ingredients are in contact or mixed with non-meat or poultry ingredients), send a 1-pound sample of the complete product in the final package. If the product is not commingled (meat or poultry ingredients are not in contact or mixed with non-meat or poultry ingredients), send a 1-pound sample of only the meat or poultry components in the final package. Failure to collect 1-pound of RTE product will result in a sample discard. See the examples below for clarification.

Sample Weight

$$1 \text{ lb} = 16 \text{ oz} = 454 \text{ g}$$

Commingled Multi-Ingredient Products

If the meat or poultry and non-meat or poultry ingredients are commingled (in contact or mixed with) in the final package (e.g., a salad with meat or poultry mixed in, bread

product stuffed with meat), IPP are to collect a 1-pound sample of the complete product (including the meat or poultry and non-meat or poultry component). All food components count towards the sample weight in commingled products. In photo A below, the weight of the meat stuffed buns stated on the label is 9 ounces (oz) or 255 grams (g) so IPP would send 2 packages of product to exceed 1 pound (16 oz).

Examples of commingled products that IPP are to collect in the final package.

Photo A. Meat stuffed buns.

Photo B. Meat and poultry wraps.

Photo C. 7-layer salad.



Non-Commingled Multi-Ingredient Products

If the meat and non-meat ingredients are not commingled (not in contact) in the final package (e.g., an entree with separate compartments for meat or poultry and vegetables), then IPP are to collect a 1-pound sample of the meat or poultry component only. IPP are to either send in enough final packages to reach the 1-pound sample weight for the meat or poultry component as shown in photo D or **the establishment** may slack-fill the meat or poultry component only into the final package as shown in photo E. Other components that are non-meat or poultry do not count towards the sample weight in non-commingled products. More information regarding slack-filling including the use of sterile packaging, such as Whirl-Pak bags, by the establishment can be found in [FSIS Directive 10,240.3, Chapter III Section III.K.](#)

A 1-pound sample is 16 oz or approximately 454 g. In Photo D below, the final package contains 2 oz (57 g) of meat along with other products. If the product is not slack-filled, IPP would have to send at least 8 final packages to reach the required 16 oz (454 g) of non-commingled meat.

In Photo E below, the establishment filled the final package with meat alone. Each package holds approximately 7 oz (200 g) of meat. Because the establishment slack-filled the package in this way, IPP sent 3 packages [each containing 7 oz (200 g) x 3 packages shipped = **21 oz** (600 g) total] to ensure the minimum sample size of 1-pound was met.

Examples of non-commingled products that IPP are to collect slack-filled or in the final package.

Photo D. Example of a product that is not commingled. Note the compartments separating the meat or poultry from the other components. IPP are to collect a 1-pound sample of meat and poultry only in the final package (see photo E).

Photo E. Example of non-commingled meat sample collected in the final package.



Reduce Sampling Discard Rate

To reduce the sample discard rate and under special circumstances, when IPP do not submit the minimum 1-pound sample correctly, the laboratories may reach out to IPP to request an additional 1-pound sample from the **same lot** be collected and resubmitted to the FSIS laboratories.