

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, DC

**FSIS NOTICE**

50-04

10/7/2004

**BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY (BSE): ISSUES RELATING TO  
TONSILS AND BRAIN COLLECTION**

FSIS is issuing this notice to clarify which practices are acceptable for removing tonsils from cattle for purposes of 9 CFR 310.22, the regulations that prescribe requirements for the removal, segregation, and disposition of specified risk materials (SRMs). Also, this notice clarifies the notification protocol related to the off-site collection of brain samples for BSE testing described in FSIS Notice 33-04.

**Tonsils**

The regulations in 9 CFR 310.22 require that establishments develop, implement, and maintain written procedures for the removal, segregation, and disposition of SRMs, and that they incorporate these procedures into their food safety systems (i.e., HACCP plans or Sanitation SOPs or other prerequisite programs). Under 9 CFR 310.22, the tonsils from cattle of all ages are among the materials designated as SRMs. As described in FSIS Notice 9-04, inspection program personnel are to verify that all SRMs are completely removed from the carcasses of cattle, segregated from edible tissue, and disposed of as inedible.

When FSIS designated the tonsils of all cattle as SRMs, it was not FSIS' intention to have establishments modify their existing practices for properly removing bovine tonsils. In the preamble to 9 CFR 310.22, FSIS stated that tonsils of all livestock species, including cattle, were already required to be removed and were prohibited for use as ingredients in meat food products under 9 CFR 318.6(b)(6). The accepted practice for removing the tonsils from livestock has been to remove all visible tonsils. In cattle, this includes separation of the palatine tonsils and lingual tonsils from the tongue (in establishments that harvest the tongue for human food) by a transverse cut caudal (just behind) the last vallate papillae. During accepted head dressing procedures, tongues are removed with associated tissues including lymph nodes, fatty tissues, salivary glands and tonsils (i.e., palatine and lingual tonsils). FSIS is not aware of any new evidence that would require a change in its accepted practice. FSIS expected that establishments would continue to remove tonsils from cattle in accordance with the procedures that they had implemented to comply with 9 CFR 318.6(b)(6), and, in

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Inspectors; Plant Mgt; T/A Plant Mgt; TRA; ABB;  
TSC; Import Offices

**NOTICE EXPIRES:** 11/1/05

**OPI:** OPPED

addition, they would incorporate their procedures for the removal, segregation, and disposition of tonsils into their food safety systems. Establishments that slaughter cattle should have been following these practices before tonsils were designated as SRMs.

## **INSPECTION PROGRAM PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Inspection program personnel are to verify that the establishment's procedures for the removal, segregation, and disposition of tonsils include:

1) accepted head dressing procedures are followed including removal of the tongue and its associated lymph nodes, visible tonsils (palatine and lingual), fatty tissues and salivary glands, and

2) for those establishments that harvest the tongue for human food, removal of edible tongue is accomplished by making a transverse cut caudal (just behind) the last vallate papillae.

If an establishment does not have such procedures in place, or fails to execute such procedures, FSIS inspection program personnel are to take the appropriate action as set out in FSIS Notice 9-04 and FSIS Directive 5000.1, Revision 1.

**NOTE:** Additional information and diagrams on the location of the tonsils are posted on the FSIS Technical Service Center (TSC) web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/ofotsc/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/ofotsc/)

## **Off Site Collection of Brain Samples for BSE Testing**

FSIS Notice 33-04, "Compliance and Investigations Division (CID) Protocol for Off-Site Collection of Brain Samples for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) Testing," issued on June 14, 2004, provides the protocol for CID inquiries related to the collection of brain samples for BSE testing of bovine animals that were "U.S. Condemned" on antemortem inspection at federally-inspected establishments and that are moved from the federally-inspected establishment to an off-site sample collection location (See also FSIS Notice 28-04 and 29-04).

### **PROGRAM PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **A. FSIS Public Health Veterinarian (PHV)**

When an animal is condemned for signs of a Central Nervous System (CNS) disorder at a federally-inspected establishment that has made arrangements through the Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Area Veterinarian in Charge (AVIC) to test for BSE at an off-site sample location, the PHV is to:

1) immediately notify, through supervisory channels, the Office of Program Evaluation and Enforcement Review (OPEER), Regional Manager (RM), of the CNS condemnation, and

2) provide the RM with the date of condemnation, and the establishment number where the animal was condemned.

B. Regional Manager

When the OPEER RM has been notified of a CNS condemned animal, he or she is to verify:

- 1) that the carcass was received at the off-site location, and
- 2) that a brain sample for BSE testing was collected by APHIS.

The RM should document this activity in accordance with established procedures.

*/s/ Philip S. Derfler*

Assistant Administrator  
Office of Policy, Program, and Employee Development

General Information

**PRODUCT TITLE : BEEF TONGUES #1 WHITE PREMIUM TRIM**

Customer :	Product Code #2 :
Product Code : 82056	Effective Date : 01/01/1994
Product Grade:	Revision Date : 04/15/2005
Product Line :	Product Spec Group :
Realization Codes : TNPT	
Carcass Selection/Raw Material Criteria :	
Product Description :	
THE TONGUE CONSISTS OF A MASS OF MUSCLE COVERED BY MUCOUS MEMBRANE. THIS MEMBRANE IS COVERED WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF PAPILLAE, MAINLY ON THE DORSAL (TOP) SURFACE OF THE TONGUE.	
In compliance to USDA-FSIS Notice 50-04, visible tonsil material shall be removed from the tongue. The palatine tonsil material shall be removed for the gullet portion and disposed to inedible. The lingual tonsil material shall be removed by making an incision directly behind the last vallate papilla, then rotating the knife blade downward, the dorsal or topside skin of the tongue base shall be "skinned" off. This shall leave the muscle of the base of the tongue still attached to the root of the tongue.	

Packaging Information

Pieces per Bag :	Tie:
Bags per Box :	High:
Inner Tare:	
Box # :	6C 1pc SELF LOCKING 17 3/4 X 16 5/8 X 4 1/4
Box Top # :	
Box Bottom # :	
Insert Box # :	
Slip Sheet :	
Sheet/Divider :	
Roll Stock Film :	24 x 24 (10)
Poly Bag :	
Poly Cap :	
Poly Sheets :	YES
Bone Guard :	
Diaper :	
Clip :	
Bag Label:	
#1 Vacuum Bag :	
#2 Vacuum Bag :	

Select Plant Type :

Fabrication Spec.  Slaughter Spec.  Ground Beef



**Other Relevant Information**

Edible : YES  
Inedible : NO  
Pharm : NO  
Other : NO  
Frozen : YES  
Fresh : NO

**Product Description**

Product Description :

THE TONGUE CONSISTS OF A MASS OF MUSCLE COVERED BY MUCOUS MEMBRANE. THIS MEMBRANE IS COVERED WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF PAPILLAE, MAINLY ON THE DORSAL (TOP) SURFACE OF THE TONGUE

Label Description : BEEF TONGUES #1 WHITE PREMIUM TRIM

Box Description : 6C 1 pc Self Locking 17 3/4 x 16 5/8 x 4 1/4

Strapping :	BOTH WAYS	Waxed Liner :	NO	Bag :	
Divider :		Individual Wrap :	YES	Number of Bags :	0
Net Weight :		Catch Weight :	NO	Poly Liner :	

**Special Packaging Instructions**

TONGUES ARE TO BE INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED WITH THE BLADE EXTENDED. PLACE FIVE TONGUES IN A ROW WITH TWO ROWS IN A BOX AND THE TIPS TOWARD THE CENTER, WITH ONE ROW (SIDE) OVERLAPPING THE OTHER.

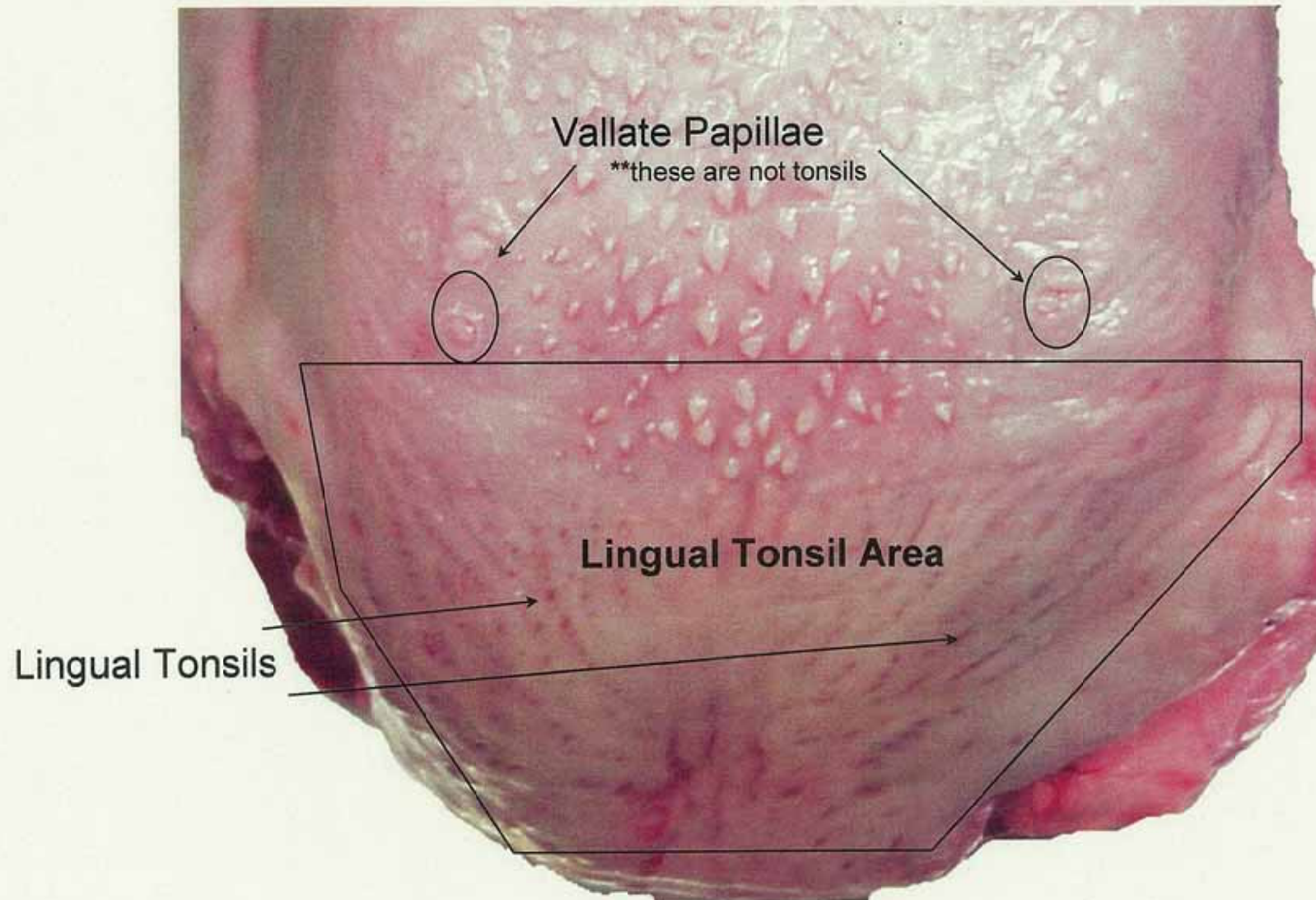
BEEF TONGUES #1 WHITE PREMIUM TRIM 82056

**Quality Specifications**

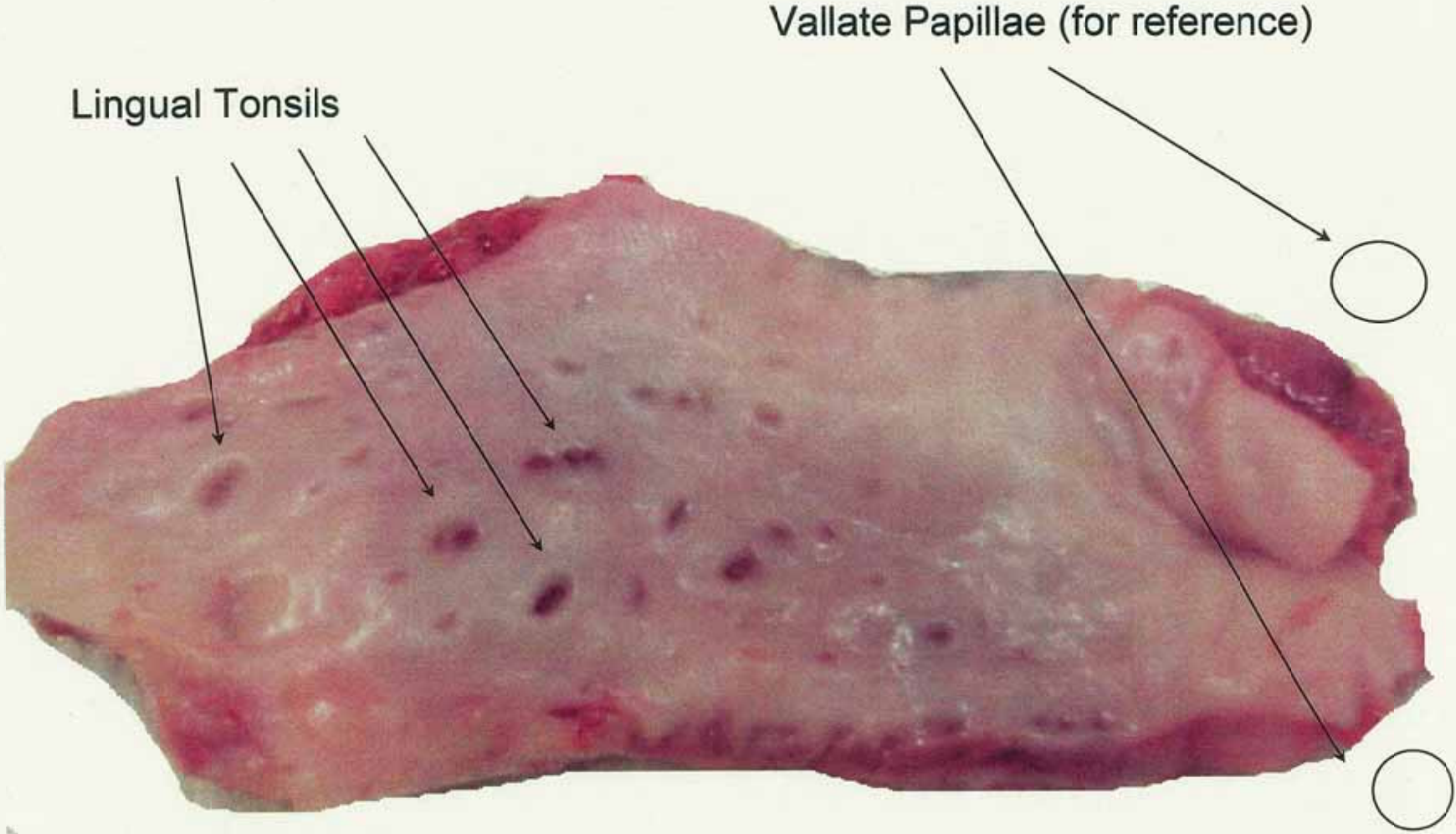
TONGUES ARE TO BE SEPARATED FROM THE GULLET DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE EPIGLOTTIS. THE HYOID BONE (HINGE BONE) IS TO BE REMOVED BY CUTTING UNDER THE TONGUE MEAT THAT LIES DIRECTLY ON TOP OF THE HYOID BONE. THE FLAP THAT RESULTS FROM THIS SHOULD NOT BE MORE THAN ONE INCH IN LENGTH FROM THE BODY OF THE TONGUE AND MUST HAVE TONGUE MEAT UNDER THE SKIN. THIS LEAVES AS MUCH TONGUE MEAT ON THE BACK SIDE OF THE TONGUE AS POSSIBLE. THE REMOVAL OF THE HYOID BONE CAN NOT RESULT IN A KNIFE CUT INTO THE TONGUE. THE LEDGE OR STRINGERS (MUSCLES LYING UNDERNEATH THE HYOID BONE) MUST BE BLOCKED OFF SQUARE, NO MORE THAN ONE INCH PAST THE STAR (CARTILAGE SPOT LEFT ON THE TONGUE FROM THE TIP OF THE HYOID BONE). THE TONGUES ARE TO BE THOROUGHLY WASHED AND DRAINED PRIOR TO PACKAGING TO REMOVE ALL BLOOD STAINS. FAT SHALL BE TRIMMED TO ZERO PERCENT IN A MANNER THAT DOES NOT RESULT IN DAMAGE TO THE ROOT MUSCLE ON THE BASE OF THE TONGUE. THE GRADE OF THIS TONGUE IS A NUMBER ONE WHITE. THEREFORE, THE TONGUE CANNOT HAVE ANY BLACK PIGMENTS GREATER THAN A DIME IN SIZE OR MORE THAN FIVE SPOTS LESS THAN A DIME IN SIZE. IN ADDITION, THEY CANNOT HAVE ANY KNIFE CUTS AND/OR DAMAGE THAT FIT THE NUMBER TWO TONGUE CRITERIA. ALL TONSIL TISSUE MUST BE REMOVED.

In compliance to USDA-FSIS Notice 50-04, visible tonsil material shall be removed from the tongue. The palatine tonsil material shall be removed for the gullet portion and disposed to inedible. The lingual tonsil material shall be removed by making an incision directly behind the last vallate papillae, then rotating the knife blade downward, the dorsal or topside skin of the tongue base shall be "skinned" off. This shall leave the muscle of the base of the tongue still attached to the root of the tongue.

## LINGUAL TONSIL ORIENTATION ON THE TONGUE



**LINGUAL TONSILS REMOVED FROM THE TONGUE**

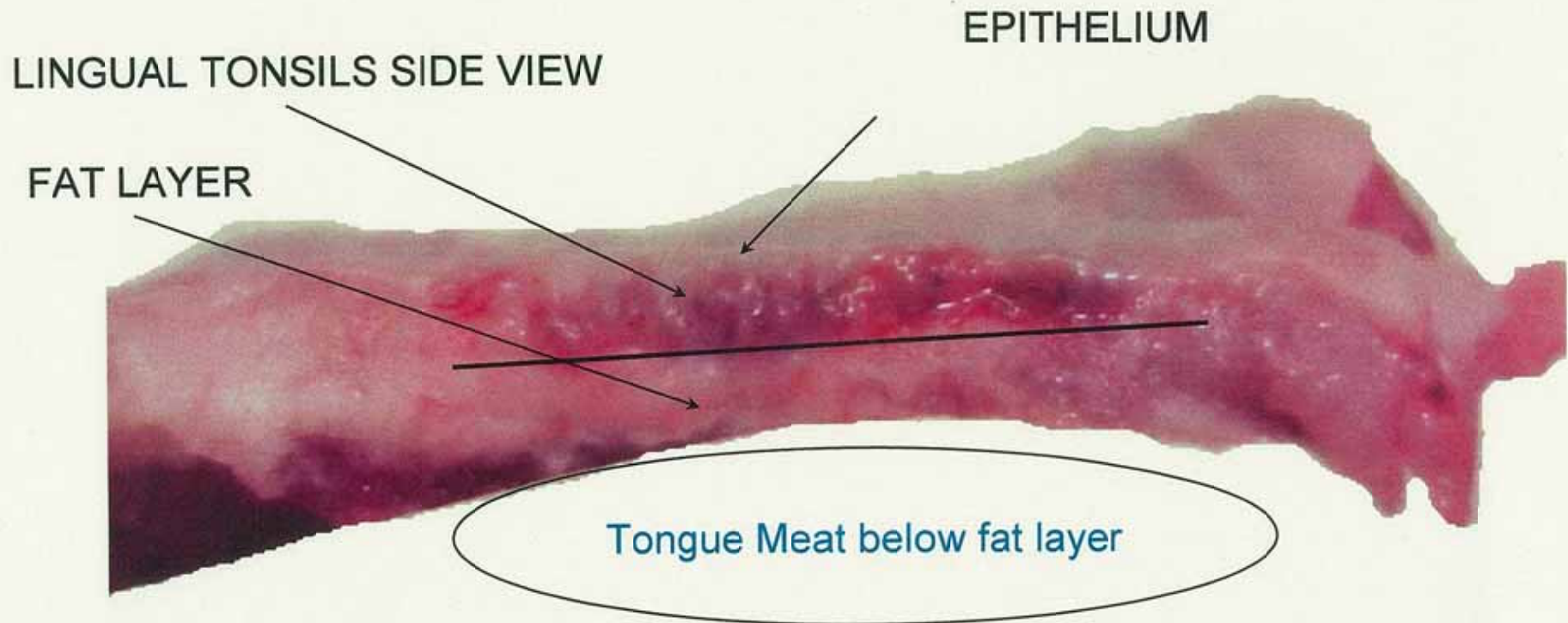




## LINGUAL TONSIL REMOVAL {SIDE VIEW}

Note the removal of the epithelium (skin), and tissue immediately underneath, which includes the fat layer, will effectively remove the lingual tonsil

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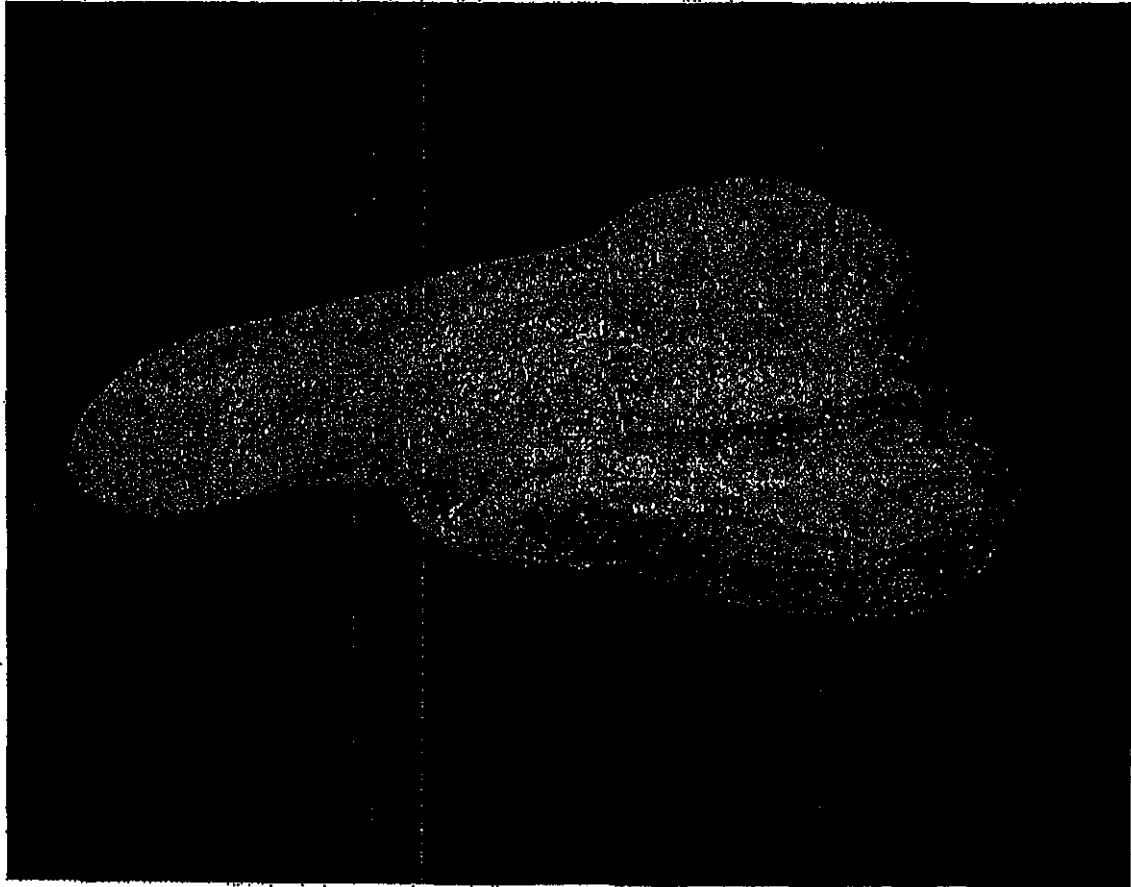
## LINGUAL TONSIL REMOVAL FROM WHOLE TONGUE

- Lingual tonsil can be effectively removed without making a transverse cut caudal (just behind) the last vallate papillae as noted in Notice 50-04
- Starting at a reference point (caudal) just behind the last vallate papillae, remove the epithelium covering the root of the tongue and all tonsil tissue underneath the skin layer
- All Fat is to be removed lying between the skin and meat of the tongue
- Lingual tonsil is included in the tissue being removed

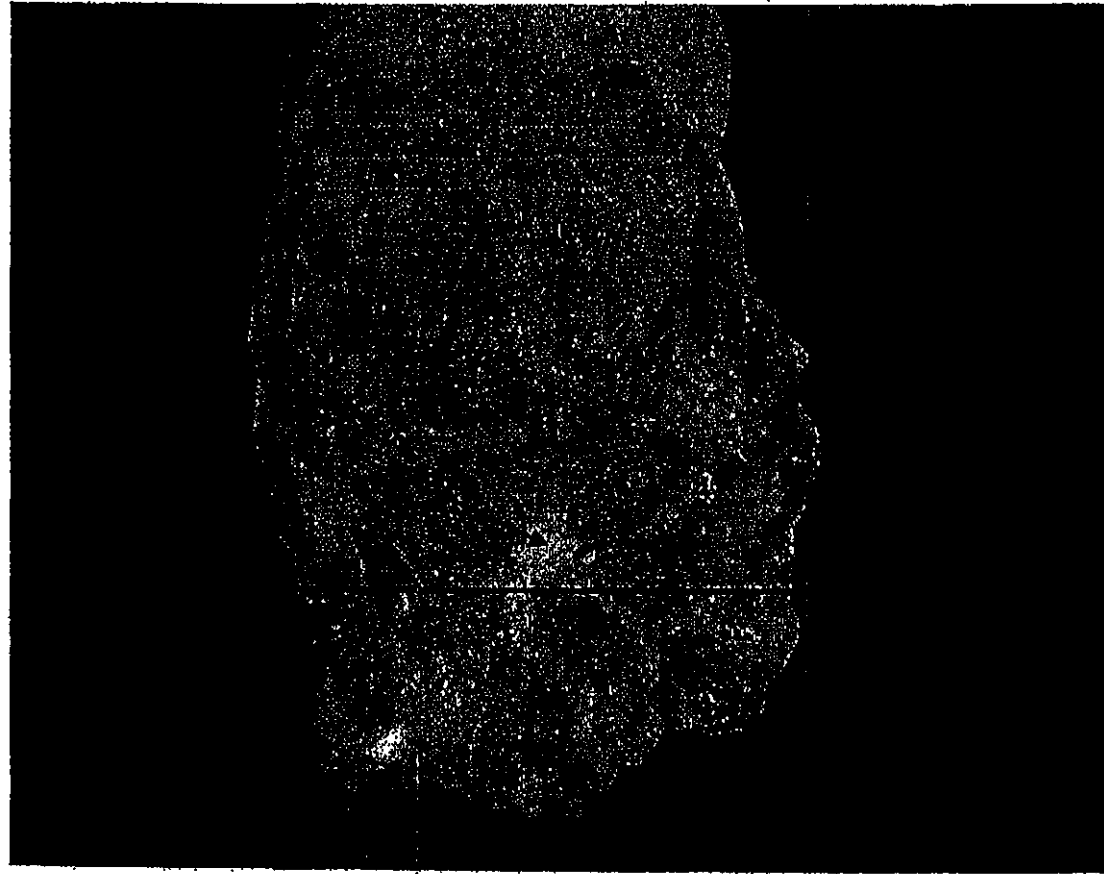
LINGUAL TONSIL REMOVAL



#1 White Tongue



#1 White Tongue



In order to address specific points of USDA-FSIS Notice 4-04 (01/09/04), this SOP has been written to give establishment guidance for documentation of removal, segregation, and disposition of SRMs. Age of animals is determined by dentition if written documentation of the age is not provided or is considered to be 30 months or older.

**Tonsils:** This item is removed in accordance to regulations and this SOP prior to inspection of beef animals of all ages harvested by this company. The tonsils of all animals are disposed of to inedible rendering of the slaughter process.

**Small intestine:** This item is removed from the carcass during the evisceration process in accordance with regulations and company SOP prior to inspection of beef animals of all ages harvested by this company. After the viscera and its respective carcass have proceeded through viscera post-mortem inspection, the small intestines are disposed of to inedible rendering of the slaughter process.

**Skull, eyes, brain, and trigeminal ganglia:** These items are removed from the carcass when the head is dropped and prepared for FSIS inspection in accordance with the company SOPs. These items are not specifically harvested, but cheek meat, head meat, and/or oxlips may be harvested from heads that have passed post-mortem inspection and have not presented cross-contamination with SRM material. Skulls that do not present direct exposure of the brain cavity (i.e., deboning) shall be disposed of to the establishment's slaughter inedible rendering. Acceptable heads shall have further contamination control maintained by not splitting skulls to expose SRMs. Skulls, eyes, brains, and trigeminal ganglia shall be disposed of to slaughter inedible rendering after product harvesting has been completed.

**Spinal cord:** This item is removed in accordance with regulations and company SOP of beef animals of all ages harvested by this company. The spinal cords of all animals are disposed of to inedible rendering of the slaughter process. Carcasses that have a missplit associated with the vertebral column shall be identified by marking the complete vertebral column and the respective SRM diverted and removed from the meat-tissue edible product.