

# **Appendix B: Food Recall Focus Groups Moderator Guide**

# **Food Safety Consumer Research Project Food Recall Focus Groups Moderator Guide**

## **I. Introduction—Welcome Group (5 minutes)**

- Who we are and who we represent
  - o Introduce moderator.
  - o Study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture or USDA.
- Why you have been asked to participate
  - o You are consumers who prepare some of the products we want to talk about.
  - o Your experiences as consumers are important to USDA.
  - o You have opinions and ideas that we'd like to know about.
- How the discussion will work
  - o Session will last about 1.5 hours.
  - o So I can give you my full attention, tonight's session will be audio- and video-recorded. I will use the recordings to write a summary report, but I will not use names in any report.
  - o Staff members from USDA have come tonight to hear your opinions firsthand. They'll be listening via live streaming.
  - o We would like the discussion to be open and informal and encourage interaction.
  - o We would like to hear from everyone in the group.
  - o One person talks at a time.
  - o There are no right or wrong answers or ideas—we want YOUR opinions.
  - o Please silence or turn off cell phones and try to minimize any background distractions.
- Participant introductions
  - o First name and favorite food to prepare at home.

## **II. Understanding of Food Recalls (20 minutes)**

1. Tonight, let's focus our discussion on meat and poultry products. These are the foods that are regulated by the USDA. Let's start our discussion by talking about why meat and poultry products are recalled. What do you think causes a meat and poultry product to get recalled?
  - a. Do you think every recalled product can make you sick?

2. As some of you have mentioned, there are different types of recalls. Let's briefly discuss each type of recall and what they mean to you. What does it mean to you if a food is recalled because it ...
  - a. Is contaminated with bacteria? (If needed, can cause foodborne illness)
  - b. Contains an allergen like milk or nuts that wasn't listed on the product label?
  - c. Is misbranded? (If needed: Misbranding means the label on the product is false or misleading in some way; for example, the product is labeled as made with chicken sausage, but it was made with pork sausage.)
  - d. Contains a foreign object or material like plastic?
3. Did you know there are different classes of recalls? (Moderator: different classes are Class I, Class II, Class III and increase in severity)
  - a. If yes, what are they/what do they mean to you?
  - b. If majority of the group not aware, probe on whether they have heard of the different classes.
4. When a product is recalled, how do you determine if you have the recalled product in your home? (Probe: physical appearance, brand information)
  - a. Think about the most recent recall you heard about for a meat or poultry product. What specific information did you look for on the product to see if it was affected? (Probe: lot or establishment number)
  - b. Did you search for other information? Where did you look? (Probe: online and specific website)
    - i. If yes, what information were you looking for?
  - c. How confident are you that you had or did not have the recalled product?
  - d. If you had the recalled product at home, what did you do with it?
    - i. Would you still cook or eat the product? Why or why not?
      1. If yes, how would you cook it?
5. What do you think the USDA wants you to do when they provide information on a food recall?
6. Considering the different types of recalls—bacteria, allergen, misbranding, foreign object (point to list on flip chart), are there some types of recalls that you find more or less severe? Why?
  - a. For which types of recalls would you return the product to the store or discard it? Why?

7. Does knowing that people were hospitalized because of the recalled food affect what you do with the recalled food?
  - a. What if there were deaths because of the recalled food? How would that affect your response?
8. Think about a recall you heard about in which the product was recalled due to an undeclared allergen. If you or someone in your household was allergic to the allergen, what would you do with the recalled product?
9. Now, think about a recall you heard about in which the product was recalled because it contained a foreign object like plastic or metal. What would you do if you had the recalled product at home?
  - a. Would the type of foreign object affect your decision; for example, whether it was plastic, metal, or glass?
  - b. Would whether the plastic was hard vs. soft affect your decision?

### III. Response to FSIS Food Recall Alerts (55 minutes)

P = pathogen, FO = foreign object, 1 = current, 2 = revised)

Group	First Recall Alert	Second Recall Alert
1	P 1	P 2
2	P 1	P 2
3	P 2	P 1
4	P 2	P 1
5	FO 1	FO 2
6	FO 1	FO 2
7	FO 2	FO 1
8	FO 2	FO 1

*(Moderator shares screen of press release handout and link so participants can view on their device)*

10. Now let's talk about an alert that USDA released about a recalled product. Have you seen an alert or press release like this before? If yes, where did you see it?
11. What is your first impression of the recall alert?
12. What are the top three most useful pieces information to you? Why is that information useful?
13. Is there other information you need to know?
14. Is there anything you don't need to know that could be eliminated? If yes, why is the information not needed?
15. Is anything confusing? If yes, how can it be clarified?
16. What do you think about the format? What do you like/don't like?

17. What do you think the recall alert is telling you to do?
  - a. How easy or hard was it for you to find this information?
  - b. How likely or unlikely are you to take this action (e.g., throw away or return the product)?
  - c. What would encourage you to take this action?
  - d. What would stop you from taking this action?
  - e. What do you think about the location of the information on what to do with a recalled food?
    - i. Would you put this information somewhere else or leave it where it is? Where would you put it?
  - f. What, if anything, would you change about the format of the recall alert and how the information is presented to make it more likely that you would take the desired action?

*(Moderator shares screen of press release handout and link so participants can view on their device)*

18. Now let's talk about another alert that USDA released about a recalled product. What is your first impression of the recall alert?
19. What are the top three most useful pieces information to you? Why is that information useful?
20. Is there other information you need to know?
21. Is there anything you don't need to know that could be eliminated?
22. Is anything confusing? If yes, how can it be clarified?
23. What do you think about the format? What do you like/don't like?
24. What do you think the recall alert is telling you to do?
  - a. How easy or hard was it for you to find this information?
  - b. How likely or unlikely are you to take this action (e.g., throw away or return the product)?
  - c. What would encourage you to take this action?
  - d. What would stop you from taking this action?
  - e. What do you think about the location of the information on what to do with a recalled food?
    - i. Would you put this information somewhere else or leave it where it is? Where would you put it?
  - f. What, if anything, would you change about the format of the recall alert and how the information is presented to make it more likely that you would take the desired action?

25. [Moderator shares screen showing allergen text] When USDA communicates about allergens, this is the kind of information they include in an alert or release. What do you think the alert is telling you to do?
- Is there other information you need to know?
  - Is there anything you don't need to know that could be eliminated?
  - Is anything confusing? If yes, how can it be clarified?

**IV. Response to Receiving Information on Food Recalls via the News (10 minutes)**

26. Now let's talk about food recalls that are announced on the local or national news. When you hear about a recall on the news, what specific information do you want to know about the recall?
27. After hearing about the recall on the news, do you usually have to look for more information?
- What information are you looking for? Where do you look?
28. The government wants to make sure consumers have the information they need to properly respond to a food recall. Do you have any additional thoughts on how to get this information to consumers quickly?

**V. Wrap Up**

- Any other comments or questions before we wrap up?
- Thank you for participating.
- Your gift card and free gift will be sent to you within 14 business days.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0583-0184 and the expiration date is 03/31/204. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 1.5 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.