

## Appendix B – Moderator Guide Consumer Labeling Research Focus Groups

### Introduction—Welcome Group (5 minutes)

- Who we are and who we represent:
  - o My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I work for RTI International, a nonprofit research organization.
  - o Study is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, or USDA.
- Why you have been asked to participate:
  - o You are consumers who prepare food products at home.
  - o Your experiences as consumers are important to USDA.
  - o We want to hear your opinions and ideas about topics related to cooking at home.
- 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-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 may be listening to hear your opinions firsthand.
  - 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 For Spanish speaking groups: If you feel more comfortable explaining something in your native language, please feel free to do so.
  - o Please silence or turn off cell phones.
  - o There are no right or wrong answers or ideas—we want YOUR opinions.

### Ice Breaker (5 minutes)

- What is your first name and your favorite meat or poultry dish to prepare at home?

## Response to New Food Safety Instruction Labels (45 minutes)

First, I am going to show you some potential labels that were created to be put on packages of raw meat products. Similar labels will be created for raw poultry products.

For purposes of today's discussion, the label is shown on a package of raw ground beef patties [Moderator: Show mock physical product with current SHI], do not refer to label as SHI. We are going to look at four different labels, one at a time. I'm going to pass out a sheet that shows the first label. Please take a moment to read over this label and then we will talk about it.

*Moderator will show one label at a time, rotating the order of the four labels to prevent order effects. Each label will be shown on the back of a package of raw ground beef patties on a sheet of paper.*

### **First Impressions**

1. ↑ What do you like about the label?
2. ↑ What do you not like about the label?
3. Is there anything offensive or annoying about the label?

### **Format**

4. What do you think about how the label looks? [Probe: Shape, font size, bolding of text]
  - a. Does it get your attention or not? Why or why not?
5. How would you improve the format to better get your and other consumers' attention?
  - a. [If needed] Label shape, font size for text, bolding of text.

### **Alert Word and Title**

6. What do you think about the word at the top, referred to as the Alert Word, and the title?

<b>Label</b>	<b>Alert Word and Title</b>
A	Attention - Food Safety Handling Instructions
B	Caution - Food Safety Steps
C	How to Handle Raw Meat Products Safety
D	Important - Avoid Illness

- a. Does it get your attention or not? Why or why not?
7. Any suggestions for revising the wording or how the alert word and title look to better get your attention?

**Risk Message, Instructions, Icons**

8. What do you think about the statement [Moderator: read risk messaging on label]?

Label	Risk Message
A	Follow these instructions to prepare raw meat products safely.
B	Reduce your risk of illness when preparing raw meat products by following these steps.
C	Follow these instructions to prevent foodborne illness.
D	This raw meat product may contain bacteria. Follow these practices to avoid illness

- a. What is your reaction after reading this information?
  - b. Do you find this information concerning or not? If yes: how does that make you feel?
  - c. Is there anything you would change about this statement?
9. ↑ What do you think about the food safety instructions provided on the label? [NOTE: The instructions are the same for all the labels except the length so the moderator will only ask these questions for the first label.]
- a. What information did you already know?
  - b. What information was new to you?
  - c. Are the instructions clear? If no, what would you change?
  - d. What information is missing that would be useful to have to prepare the product safely?
  - e. What are your thoughts on including the end-point temperature for the product?
    - i. Is this information useful or not?
10. What do you think the icons mean? [NOTE: The icons are in the same format for all of the labels so the moderator will only ask these questions for the first label.]
- a. Are they useful or not?
    - i. ↓ Do they help convey the main message or not?
  - b. Is there anything confusing about the icons?
  - c. How would you change the icons to make them better?

- i. [If any participants find the thermometer icon confusing] Would an icon that looks like this be more meaningful? [Moderator will show handout with an iconic representation of dial thermometer.]

**QR Code Questions—Only Ask for Label with QR Code**

11. ↑ Have you seen this type of code before? [Moderator points to QR code]
  - a. What is it?
12. ↑ If you were at home preparing a raw meat or poultry product and saw this QR code on a label, how likely is it that you would use the code?
13. What information would you expect to find after accessing the code?

**Manufacturer's Cooking Instructions (MCI) Note—Only Ask for Label with the MCI Note**

14. Did you notice the note at the bottom about referring to the cooking instructions? If yes:
  - a. Do you think you would refer to the cooking instructions or not?
  - b. Is this note useful or not?

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 REPEAT QUESTIONS FOR EACH LABEL

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**Questions for Labels 2 – 4 (Repeat for each Label)**

OK, now I'm going to show you another label. As much as possible, I want you to consider it on its own merits and not compare it with the others.

## Consumer Motivation to Follow Instructions on Safe Handling (5 minutes)

[Moderator: Ask after discussing all four labels]

15. ↑ What are the labels asking you to do?
16. ↑ What would you do after reading labels like these?
17. How likely are you to do this? Why?
18. How can we motivate people like you to read and follow these instructions when preparing raw meat and poultry products?

## Voting Exercise (15 minutes)

*[Moderator hangs the labels on a wall in the room.]*

I've put the different labels you've looked at on the [wall or easel or table].

I'm giving you two Post-it Notes in [insert color] color. I want you to ...

*[Moderator, go through each color one at a time.]*

- Put a [COLOR 1] Post-it Note on the label you like the most.
- Put a [COLOR 2] Post-it Note on the label that best catches your attention.
- Put a [COLOR 3] Post-it Note on the label you like the least.
- ↓ Put a [COLOR 4] Post-it Note on the label you think does the best job of encouraging you to follow the recommended instructions. [May need to eliminate for time]

For each color, you can put both Post-its on the same label to count two votes, or put on two different labels to count one vote for each.

*[Moderator will demonstrate an example to make sure participants understand.]*

*[Give group opportunity to place votes, then repeat for each color.]*

OK, let's talk about our votes. [Moderator: if there is a tie or close second, discuss both]

19. ↑ It looks like [label x] has the most [COLOR 1] votes for overall favorite. Why did those who voted for this one vote for it?
20. ↑ On the other hand, [label x] has the most [COLOR 2] votes for least favorite. Why is that?
21. ↓ And [label x] has the most [COLOR 3] votes for the label that best catches your attention. Why did those who voted for this one vote for it? [Probe on shape if not mentioned].
22. ↓ Finally, [label x] has the most [COLOR 4] votes for doing the best job of encouraging you to follow the recommended instructions. Why is that?

## Ranking Exercise (5 Minutes)

Now let's dig a little deeper into the different parts of the labels we've been discussing. **I'm going to pass out a handout and we will briefly review each page.** Please don't turn the pages until I've asked you to do so.

23. Okay, please turn to the first page. The labels used different alert words. Please rank order these by putting a 1 by the alert word that most attracts your attention, a 2 by the second best, and a 3 by the one that is least effective at attracting attention. There is also a space to write in and rank other suggestions you have for an alert word.
24. Now please turn to the next page. The labels used different titles. Please rank order these by putting a 1 by the title word that most attracts your attention, a 2 by the second best, a 3 by the third best, and a 4 by the one that is least effective at attracting attention. There is also a space to write in and rank other suggestions you have for a title.
25. Now turn to the next page. The labels used different messages to help convey the importance of following the instructions. Please rank order the messages by putting a 1 by the message that does the best job of encouraging you to follow the recommended instructions, a 2 by the second best, a 3 by the third best, and a 4 by the one that is least effective at encouraging you to follow the recommended instructions. There is also a space to write in and rank other suggestions you have for a motivating message.
26. Please turn to the last page. As shown here, the labels had two different sets of instructions that varied in terms of length. Please select the option—short vs. long—that you think is most useful.
27. Thank you. You can pass the sheets back to me. Any thoughts on the ranking exercise that you would like to share?

## Response to Visual Cue Concepts (10 Minutes)

Now let's talk about a visual cue that could be shown on the front of a raw meat or poultry package. The purpose of this cue is to make consumers aware that the product is raw and needs to be handled safely to avoid illness. This visual cue would be in addition to the detailed food safety instruction label like the ones we've been looking at. **I'm going to pass out a handout that shows [#] different visual cues.** Please take a few minutes to look at each one and then the use last page in the handout to rank them.

*Each of the [#] cues will be shown separately on the front of a package of raw meat or poultry and then a summary page provided with just the visuals and a place to rank them.*

28. Please rank order the visual cues by putting a 1 by the one that most attracts your attention, a 2 by the second best, a 3 by the third best, and so on. We'll discuss your rankings after you are done.
  - a. [Moderator: go through each visual cue and ask for a show of hands for who ranked it as #1 and ask a few participants to explain why, e.g.,]

- i. Who picked visual cue A as the one that best attracts their attention?
  - ii. Why does this one do the best job?
  - iii. What do you think about the words on this visual cue?
  - iv. What do you think about the icon on this visual cue?
  - v. What would you change, if anything, to make it better?
- b. What would you do if you were preparing a product at home and saw something like this on the front of the package?
- c. Do you think having a visual food safety cue like this would be useful or not? Why?

## Wrap Up

Any final thoughts before we conclude the discussion? Thank participants and provide instructions for getting their incentive and mention free thermometer and magnet.

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