

Mr. MYERS. Nor with proper cooking? It still wouldn't destroy this disease?

Dr. DECKER. In this particular group; no.

Mr. MYERS. Then you really can't protect yourself, can you? Even USDA with their 15° criterion still wouldn't prevent this; would it?

Dr. DECKER. Their 15° criterion is based on the assumption that the product never got above that temperature from the time it was processed to the point where it was delivered; and, of course, under those circumstances it definitely would.

That organism wouldn't be there in numbers sufficient to produce any detectable quantity of the toxic material at that kind of temperature.

Mr. MYERS. The organism you are speaking about, then, comes about when the product gets above 38°?

Dr. DECKER. It would multiply and produce significant amounts of its poison at 45° or above; something in that range.

Mr. MYERS. For personal information, are you experimenting or do you know of experimentation with gamma radiation?

Dr. LEWIS. I know of others who are, and we have done a little. I assume you are talking about exposure to cobalt 60 and this sort of thing. We have done work with viruses in cooperation with two other agencies, the National Cancer Institute and the Natick Laboratories of the military.

This project was to determine whether the viruses would be killed by the doses that will kill ordinary bacteria. Our data, though yet not complete, suggest that the viruses may be more resistant than most other micro-organisms and require a substantially higher dosage to be destroyed.

Mr. MYERS. Still isn't satisfactory, then?

Dr. LEWIS. The process, you are speaking of, Mr. Myers? I guess this would depend on the kind of food. I doubt that human viruses very often will contaminate some kinds of food.

Mr. MYERS. What I am speaking about is the packaging of meat and then subjecting it to gamma.

Dr. LEWIS. Let me say, on the other hand, that there is nothing in the raw meat processing today that would exclude the possibility of a virus being present if it weren't picked up by veterinary inspection; so you are no worse off than you are with the kind of procedure we use now.

Mr. MYERS. A few years ago, they were experimenting with a process whereby you didn't have to refrigerate the meat.

Dr. LEWIS. Because the spoilage organisms will not grow. Neither will the viruses. They require live tissue to grow.

Mr. MYERS. But that still hasn't been perfected.

Dr. LEWIS. I am sure more work needs to be done, though I think we are at a point where commercial treatment can be considered, if not for sterile products, at least for reduction of microbial content to extend shelf life in ways that would not be harmful.

Mr. MYERS. Thank you.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Thank you very much for your taking the time out to come from Cincinnati to appear with us this morning. We shall keep the record open for any of those whose names have been mentioned to submit a statement or for anyone else who has a legitimate interest.

The subcommittee stands adjourned.

(Whereupon, at 12:20 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.)