

What is advanced meat recovery?

Advanced meat recovery (AMR) is a technology in place in some meat plants that uses a special machine to remove meat from beef and pork bones. Just as fruit processors use machines to remove fruit from peels thoroughly and efficiently, meat companies use similar equipment to remove meat from some hard to trim bones.

What do you call the meat that is removed using this equipment?

Meat derived by AMR is called meat. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulates and inspects all meat plants on a continuous basis. USDA has reviewed meat derived by advanced meat recovery and determined that it is similar to meat trimmed from bones by hand. Therefore it is simply called “beef” or “pork.”

How much meat is produced using AMR equipment each year?

U.S. meat companies produce over 150 million pounds of beef and pork using AMR each year. In contrast, the U.S. produces almost 50 billion pounds of beef each year. Meat derived by AMR is valued at an estimated \$100 million annually.

Are there any special regulations required when using AMR equipment?

Yes. AMR machines may not crush, grind or pulverize bones when removing meat. Certain bone including the vertebral column from older cattle cannot be processed through AMR equipment.

In addition, because more than 50 percent of the meat derived from AMR equipment comes from the hard-to-trim backbones and neck bones, USDA requires that the spinal cord be removed from the spinal column before these bones are placed in AMR machines. This helps ensure that the spinal cord is not added inadvertently to meat. Spinal cords are not meat, and therefore are not permitted in meat products.

It is important to note that the process of AMR, like all meat processing systems, is overseen by USDA inspectors on a continuous basis to ensure wholesomeness and safety. USDA routinely test for the presence of spinal cord and the nervous system tissues.

Why do meat companies use AMR systems?

AMR systems help ensure that all valuable meat is removed from bones. The greater value a meat company can derive from an animal, the more affordable meat products sold by a company become.

In addition, AMR equipment helps reduce hand trimming by employees. Hand trimming requires repetitive cuts with a knife, which can result in repetitive motion injuries to employees. Reducing hand trimming protects employees.

What consumer products use meat derived from AMR?

Meat from AMR equipment can be used in any product. It is typically used in further-processed meat products, like ground beef, pork sausage, meatballs and taco fillings.

Does meat derived using AMR equipment have to be labeled?

Meat derived using AMR equipment is meat. Therefore no special labeling is required on a processed product other than the species from which it is derived - like beef or pork.

Is the removal of Specified Risk Materials (SRMs) another firewall to protect people from the human version of BSE?

SRMs are removed from carcasses during processing and before bones enter AMR systems. Vertebral columns from animals over 30 months of age may not be used in AMR systems. If SRMs are detected in AMR product, the product would be considered adulterated and subject to recall. USDA data demonstrate substantial compliance with this regulation.

Helpful Links

American Meat Institute

<http://www.meatami.com>

<http://www.meatsafety.org>

U.S. Department of Agriculture

<http://www.usda.gov>

Third-Party Experts

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