JOB AID: Time and Temperature Control for Safety Foods

This job aid is intended to be used in conjunction with the FDA Food Code. It will help the user determine if a food is considered a Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food, according to the definition provided in the FDA Food Code.

Does the food consist of, or contain, any of the following?
- An animal food that is raw or heat-treated
- A plant food that is heat-treated
- Raw seed sprouts
- Cut melon
- Cut leafy greens
- Cut tomatoes or mixtures of cut tomatoes
- Garlic-in-oil

If yes, proceed. If no, continue with the next question.

Is the food:
- In an unopened, hermetically sealed container that is commercially processed to achieve and maintain commercial sterility under conditions of non-refrigerated storage and distribution?
- Or
  - An air-cooled hard-boiled egg with shell intact, or an egg with shell intact that is not hard-boiled, but has been pasteurized to destroy all viable salmonellae?

If yes, proceed. If no, continue with the next question.

Do you have additional information about pH and water activity?

- pH and water activity parameters lands in a “Non-TCS Food” box in Table A or Table B
- pH and water activity parameters lands in a “Product Assessment” box in Table A or Table B

If yes, this should be considered a TCS food until a product assessment or challenge study demonstrates that this product does not require time or temperature control for safety.

If no, this is not a TCS Food.
Table A. Interaction of pH and $A_w$ for control of spores FOOD heat-treated to destroy vegetative cells and subsequently PACKAGED.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$A_w$ values</th>
<th>pH: 4.6 or less</th>
<th>pH: &gt; 4.6 – 5.6</th>
<th>pH: &gt; 5.6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤0.92</td>
<td>Non-TCS Food*</td>
<td>Non-TCS Food</td>
<td>Non-TCS Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;0.92 – 0.95</td>
<td>Non-TCS Food</td>
<td>Non-TCS Food</td>
<td>PA**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;0.95</td>
<td>Non-TCS Food</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>PA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* TCS Food means Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food

** PA means Product Assessment required.

Table B. Interaction of pH and $A_w$ for control of vegetative cells and spores in FOOD not heat-treated or heat-treated and not PACKAGED.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$A_w$ values</th>
<th>pH: &lt; 4.2</th>
<th>pH: 4.2 – 4.6</th>
<th>pH: &gt;4.6 – 5.0</th>
<th>pH: &gt; 5.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;0.88</td>
<td>Non-TCS Food*</td>
<td>Non-TCS Food</td>
<td>Non-TCS Food</td>
<td>Non-TCS Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.88 – 0.90</td>
<td>Non-TCS Food</td>
<td>Non-TCS Food</td>
<td>Non-TCS Food</td>
<td>PA**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;0.90 – 0.92</td>
<td>Non-TCS Food</td>
<td>Non-TCS Food</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;0.92</td>
<td>Non-TCS Food</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>PA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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