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# Minimizing Changeover Inefficiencies in Meat Processing

## What is changeover in meat processing?

Changeover refers to switching from the production of one product with multiple ingredients to another using the same equipment and personnel—for example, moving from hot dogs to bologna or adjusting ingredient formulations in fresh sausage.



## How can scheduling strategies reduce changeover downtime?

Planning production carefully minimizes sanitation needs and product loss. Key scheduling strategies include:

- Establishing a clear production plan to prevent last-minute changes that can lead to allergen-related recalls.
- Grouping products with similar **allergens** together (e.g., producing soy-containing products consecutively).
- Assessing **shared equipment usage** (grinders, mixers, stuffers) to streamline transitions.
- Prioritizing production based on **processing needs**—for example, longer cooking cycles for smoked products may require starting earlier in the day.

## Does batch size impact changeover efficiency?

Yes. Larger batch sizes result in fewer changeovers. Consolidating production into one or two products per shift, rather than multiple smaller batches, reduces downtime and sanitation requirements.

## How do ingredients affect changeover planning?

Keeping ingredient lists current is crucial to preventing inefficiencies. Some ingredient adjustments may allow smoother transitions, such as modifying formulations to retain previous batch components and avoid unnecessary cleaning steps (e.g., adding beef to a fresh pork sausage).

## What are key considerations for allergen control during changeover?

- Operators must be fully aware of **ingredient changes** to prevent unintentional allergen contamination.
- Cleaning and sanitation may be **required** when switching between allergen-containing and allergen-free products.
- **Allergen testing** to verify removal during sanitation is optional.