Gov't to speed tracking of E. coli in meat

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(AP) -- The government plans to speed up the process for testing E. coli in meat, a move that will help authorities more quickly track the source of the deadly bacteria and hasten recalls.

The new Agriculture Department program would begin tracing the source of potentially contaminated meat as soon as there is an initial positive test.

Under current procedures, USDA officials wait until additional testing confirms E. coli before starting their investigation.

The new process could help the government find the source of E. coli 24 to 48 hours sooner.

The USDA will take comments on the new plan for 60 days. It is expected to go into effect in July, in time for the peak of summer grilling season.

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