

OIA OUTREACH PROGRAMS

FSIS Meat and Poultry Inspection Seminars

The purpose of these seminars is to familiarize international government officials with U.S. inspection regulations and procedures used by USDA to ensure that the Nation's meat, poultry, and processed egg products are safe, wholesome, and properly labeled. These seminars cover issues from farm to table, including pathogen reduction, the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point plans, animal production, import and export procedures, and the roles of the Food and Drug Administration, and State and local inspection agencies.

FSIS Visitor's Program

Each year, FSIS receives a large number of requests from foreign government officials to visit the FSIS Headquarters and field locations and to meet with FSIS officials. The OIA International Equivalence Staff oversees the FSIS Visitor's Program. The coordinator of the FSIS Visitor's Program facilitates all aspects of foreign official visits to the United States.

Contact Information

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Food Safety and Inspection Service
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(202) 720-6382 (TDD).

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Food Safety and Inspection Service

FSIS OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



GENERAL INFORMATION

This brochure introduces the United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service's Office of International Affairs.

The Office of International Affairs (OIA) represents the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) in contacts with foreign governments on intergovernmental, operational, and technical issues pertaining to the import and export of meat, poultry, and processed egg products. OIA works with other FSIS program areas, including the International Policy Division of the Office of Policy, Program and Development in the development of import and export policy documents; the Office of Public Health Science to assess laboratory methodology; the Office of Data Integration and Food Protection for data analysis support; and the Office of Field Operations that performs verification activities for products exported from the United States.

MISSION

OIA provides executive leadership for FSIS international food safety activities conducted in support of the strategic objectives established by the FSIS Administrator and the Under Secretary for Food Safety.

PROGRAM AREAS

Export Programs Staff (EPS)

EPS facilitates the export of U.S. meat, poultry, and processed egg products. EPS maintains the FSIS Export Library and provides technical experts to negotiate the requirements that are considered necessary to export FSIS-regulated products to importing countries. EPS manages audits in the United States by inspection officials of importing countries, as well as provides interpretation and guidance to the Office of Field Operations and the U.S. food industry on export issues. For further information, please call (202) 720-0082.

International Audit Staff (IAS)

IAS is responsible for verifying that foreign countries that previously have been approved to export meat, poultry, or processed egg products to the United States are maintaining inspection programs that provide food safety protection at a level equivalent to that in the United States. IAS also actively participates in the planning and conducting of initial team audits in countries that are seeking first-time approval to export meat, poultry, or processed egg products to the United States. For further information, please call (202) 720-6400.

International Equivalence Staff (IES)

IES is responsible for ensuring that meat, poultry, and processed egg products imported into the United States are produced under standards equivalent to U.S. food safety standards. IES makes determinations of equivalence by evaluating whether foreign food regulatory systems attain the appropriate level of protection provided by the U.S. domestic system. Foreign food regulatory systems do not need to be identical to the U.S. system, but they must employ equivalent sanitary measures that provide the same level of protection against food hazards that is achieved domestically. IES evaluates foreign food regulatory systems for equivalence through document reviews, on-site audits, and port-of-entry reinspection of products at the time of importation. For further information, please call (202) 720-6400.

Import Inspection Division (IID)

IID plans and administers the national import reinspection program, ensuring that imported products meet U.S. domestic requirements while validating foreign inspection systems. This is accomplished by performing port-of-entry reinspection, collecting laboratory samples (residue, chemical, and microbiological), and enforcing food security and related surveillance, as well as handling liaison activities that track imported products from the port of entry to the place of reinspection. For further information, please call (202) 720-9904.