



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety
and Inspection
Service

Washington, D.C.
20250

DEC 23 2011

Midwest Coalition for Human Rights
C/o University of Minnesota
214 Social Sciences
267 19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

Dear Sir or Madam:

Your letter requesting that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) slow down the line speeds in meat and poultry processing plants has been forwarded to the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) for consideration. The letter, which is dated December 7, 2011, asserts that reduced line speeds are crucial to ensuring both the safety of the worker and the safety of the consumer. Your letter also includes the signatures of 504 individuals that support the requested action.

As Secretary Vilsak explained in his initial response to you, FSIS is the public health regulatory agency in the USDA responsible for ensuring that meat, poultry, and processed egg products are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled. FSIS prescribes maximum line speeds for meat and poultry processing plants to ensure that FSIS inspection personnel are able to perform a visual inspection of each carcass to determine whether each carcass is not adulterated. The Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is the primary Federal agency charged with the enforcement of safety and health legislation.

Because the action you are requesting would require that FSIS amend the meat and poultry products inspection regulations, your request is being considered as a rulemaking petition under the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553(e)), USDA's administrative regulations (7 CFR 1.28), and FSIS's regulations on petitions (9 CFR part 392). Your petition has been referred to the FSIS Office of Policy and Program Development for review and has been assigned petition number 11-13. As provided in 9 CFR 392.6, your petition will be made available to the public in the FSIS docket room and will be posted on the FSIS Website at:
http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/Petitions/index.asp.

Information on FSIS's petition process is available at:
<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/2005-0020.pdf>.

Because FSIS is responsible for ensuring the safety of meat and poultry products, you may want to supplement the petition with information on the effects of line speeds on food safety.

You may contact Mary Porretta, Petitions Manager, Policy Issuances Division, at (202) 720-5627 if you have any questions regarding the status of your petition.

Sincerely,



for Charles E. Williams
Acting Director
Policy Issuances Division
Office of Policy and Program Development