

FSIS Product Categorization

FSIS has developed this document to assist with accurate identification of the meat, poultry, and egg products certified for export to the United States.

Process Category:

There are nine (9) process categories identified in 9CFR 417.2(b). Of the nine (9) listed, Slaughter is considered an internal process that occurs in establishments where the animals or birds are slaughtered. This category is not used for imported products. An additional process category that is not contained in 9CFR 417.2(b) is Egg Products.

Note that FSIS has recently renamed two process categories: Raw Product – Ground and Raw Product – Not Ground are now referred to as Raw Product – Non-Intact and Raw Product – Intact, respectively. However, use of either terminology will be acceptable to FSIS.

Note that official foreign inspection certificates should reflect the process category name, rather than the obsolete coding previously used by FSIS (e.g. 03B, 03C, etc.). These codes have been included in the table as some countries previously certified the process categories on the inspection certificates with this coding.

Raw Product – Non-Intact: This process category applies to establishments that further process by using processing steps such as grinding, comminuting, injecting product with solutions, or mechanical tenderization by needling, cubing, pounding devices or other means of creating non-intact product. Examples of finished products in this category include raw products reconstructed into formed entrees, mechanically separated species and advanced meat recovery product. If the establishment produces bench trim or pieces of meat produced from non-intact meat, then the bench trim or pieces are also considered non-intact.

Raw Product – Intact: FSIS considers raw products to be intact unless they have undergone any of the processes associated with the Raw Product – Non-Intact process category.

Thermally Processed – Commercially Sterile: This process category applies to establishments that use a thermal processing step. Thermally processed, commercially sterile finished products are products in cans or flexible containers such as pouches, or semi-rigid, as in lunch bowls. Thermally processed, commercially sterile products are addressed in Subpart G, 318.300 – 311 for meat food products, and Subpart X, 381.300 to 311, for poultry products.

Not Heat Treated – Shelf Stable: This process category applies to establishments that further process by curing, drying, or fermenting processing step as the sole means by which product achieves food safety. Establishments in this process category may apply a low-level heat treatment as long as the heat treatment is not used as means to achieve food safety. The finished products produced under this Process Categories are shelf stable. FSIS does not require shelf stable products to be frozen or refrigerated for food safety purposes.

Heat Treated – Shelf Stable: This process category applies to establishments that further process by using a heat treatment processing step to achieve food safety in combination with curing, drying, or fermenting processing step to achieve food safety. The finished products produced under this process category are shelf stable. FSIS does not require shelf stable products to be frozen or refrigerated for food safety purposes. If the establishment produces using the processing steps applicable under this process category and the product is not shelf stable, then establishment is producing product under the process category Fully Cooked – Not Shelf Stable.

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Fully Cooked – Not Shelf Stable: This process category applies to establishments that further process products by using primarily a full lethality heat process step (e.g. cooking) to achieve food safety. The finished products that establishments produce under this process category are not shelf stable. FSIS requires the products to be frozen or refrigerated for food safety purposes. These products also meet the definition of Ready to Eat (RTE) as defined in 9 CFR 430.1.

Heat Treated but Not Fully Cooked – Not Shelf Stable: This process category applies to an establishment that further processes products that are (1) not ready-to-eat products (NRTE) or (2) raw otherwise processed products that are refrigerated or frozen throughout the product's shelf life. Meat and poultry products are produced using a heat process that meets one of the following criteria:

- a. The heat processing step is not adequate to achieve food safety. Products may be partially cooked or heated to set batter on a raw product.
- b. The heat processing step applied to meat or poultry component was adequate to achieve food safety, however product is further processed, assembled, or packaged so that cooked meat or poultry products contacts non-ready to-eat product ingredients. In this case, the final product is in a form that is not edible without additional preparing to achieve food safety. An example of this product is pot pie product that contains cooked chicken and raw dough.

Products with Secondary Inhibitors – Not Shelf Stable: This process category applies to establishments that further process by using a curing processing step or a processing step using other ingredients that inhibit bacterial growth. These products are generally refrigerated or frozen throughout the product's shelf life. Depending on the process and ingredients, these products may or may not meet the definition of RTE as defined in 9 CFR 430.1.

Eggs/Egg Products: This process category applies to shell eggs and egg products.

Product Category (with Applicable Species)

The Product Categories are shown in the FSIS Product Categorization table with the appropriate species indicated for each.

The Species designations FSIS is using for PHIS are: for Meat: Beef, Veal, Pork, Lamb, Mutton, and Goat, including for Equine: Horse, and Equine other than horse; for Poultry: Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea, and Squab, including for Ratites: Emu, Ostrich, and Rhea; for Eggs: Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose and Guinea; and for Egg Products: Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, and Guinea. For each product, the certification must indicate which species is predominant in the product to assure the appropriate regulations are applied to the product when applicable.

Product Group. The product group defines the product down to a level that FSIS can program appropriate types of inspections (TOI) for examinations and laboratory sampling. Regulatory references are added where applicable for clarification. While these appear to be self-explanatory, for Raw Product – Intact, Cuts are cuts of meat (e.g., steaks, chops, etc.) that are below the Primal and Subprimal level.

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The following table displays the process categories and the types of finished products that can be present in a process category.

Finished Product Types by Process Category				
Process Categories	Finished Products			
	Raw Product	NRTE Product	RTE Products	Thermally Processed Product
Slaughter	•			
Raw –Non Intact (Raw Ground)	•			
Raw – Intact (Raw Not Ground)	•			
Thermally Processed – Commercially Sterile				•
Not Heat-Treated - Shelf Stable		•	•	
Heat Treated – Shelf Stable		•	•	
Fully Cooked – Not Shelf Stable			•	
Heat Treated but Not Fully Cooked – Not Shelf Stable		•		
Product with Secondary Inhibitors – Not Shelf Stable		•	•	
Eggs/Egg Products	Not Applicable			

Ready to Eat applies to any product intended for human consumption without further preparation steps. Note: Products that appear fully cooked or are customarily consumed without further preparation, but the label does not include cooking instructions, are by default considered RTE.

RTE fully cooked means that the products have been sufficiently cooked so that they are safe to eat as they are, with no further preparation required by the consumer. Note: Many of these products are customarily eaten hot, and heating instructions may be included on the label. This does not affect the classification of these products as RTE.

Some frozen RTE products require reheating for palatability. These frozen products are still safe to eat without this further preparation by the consumer and are therefore still considered RTE. Some examples include: fully cooked hams, cooked beef, roast beef, pastrami, corned beef, hot dogs, meat loaves, meat and poultry salads, sliced luncheon meats, baked chicken, frozen entrees, and poultry rolls. These finished products must be labeled in a manner that identifies them as RTE by the consumer.

Fresh or frozen entrees with fully cooked meat or poultry portions combined with fully cooked sauces, vegetables, pasta, or other ingredients are RTE products. These products are designed to be re-heated by the consumer, and may include instructions for re-heating.

Not Ready to Eat applies to products with cooking instructions or labeled with statements on the principal display panel such as “Cook Thoroughly, Cook and Serve, Not Ready to Eat, or For Safety and Quality- follow these cooking instructions.” These products are considered NRTE.

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Some NRTE finished products are heat treated but are not fully cooked. These NRTE products are required to have sufficient labeling information to inform the consumer that the product must be cooked for safety. This information may be contained within the product name on the principal display panel, as well as bear cooking instructions that refer to cooking the product for safety rather than heating the product for best quality. The product often times may bear a safe handling instruction.

Some NRTE finished products are prepared with both meat/poultry components that have received a lethality treatment in combination with non-meat/poultry components that need to receive a lethality treatment. These multi-component products, e.g., meals, dinners, and entrees, have labeling features which are conspicuous so that intended users are fully aware that the product must be cooked for safety. The principle display panel on the label defines these products, e.g., "Cook and Serve," "Must be thoroughly cooked," "Cook before eating", and the product must include cooking instructions.

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[HACCP] Process Category	[Finished]Product Category	Species	Product Group
Raw Product – Non-Intact	Raw ground, comminuted, or otherwise non-intact beef	Beef, Veal	-Ground Beef [§319.15(a)] -Hamburger [§319.15(b)] -Beef Patty Product [§319.15(c)] -Formed Steaks [§319.15(d)] -Sausage [§319.142; 319.143] -Advanced Meat Recovery Product (AMR) [§318.24] -Finely Textured Beef -Non-Intact Cuts -Trimmings from Non-Intact -Bench Trim from Non-Intact -Other Non-Intact -Low Temperature Rendered Product -Partially Defatted Chopped Beef (PDCB) -Partially Defatted Beef Fatty Tissue (PDBFT)[§319.15(a)]
	Raw ground, comminuted, or otherwise non-intact pork	Pork	-Ground Product -Sausage [§319.141; 319.143; 319.144; 319.145] -Other Non-Intact (includes PDPFT [§319.29]) -Advanced Meat Recovery Product (AMR) [§318.24] -Mechanically Separated [§319.5]
	Raw ground, comminuted, or otherwise non-intact meat – other:	Goat, Lamb, Mutton, Horse, Equine other than horse	-Ground Product -Sausage -Other Non-Intact -Advanced Meat Recovery Product (AMR) [§318.24] -Mechanically Separated [§319.5]
	Raw ground, comminuted, or otherwise non-intact chicken	Chicken	-Ground Product -Sausage -Other non-intact -Mechanically Separated [§381.173]
	Raw ground, comminuted, or otherwise non-intact turkey	Turkey	-Ground Product -Sausage -Other non-intact -Mechanically Separated [§381.173]
	Raw ground, comminuted, or otherwise non-intact poultry – other	Duck, Goose, Guinea, Squab, Emu, Ostrich, Rhea	-Ground Product -Sausage -Other non-intact -Mechanically Separated [§381.173]
Raw Product – Intact	Raw Intact Beef	Beef, Veal	-Carcass (including halves or quarters) -Primals and Subprimals -Cuts -Bnls. Mfg. Trimmings -Head Meat

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[HACCP] Process Category	[Finished]Product Category	Species	Product Group
Raw Product – Intact (con't)	Raw Intact Beef (con't)	Beef, Veal	-Cheek Meat -Weasand Meat -Heart Meat -Edible Offal -Other Intact
	Raw Intact Pork	Pork	-Carcass (including halves or quarters) -Primals and Subprimals -Cuts -Bnls. Mfg. Trimmings -Edible Offal -Other Intact
	Raw Intact Meat – Other	Goat, Lamb, Mutton, Horse, Equine other than horse	-Carcass (including halves or quarters) -Primals and Subprimals -Cuts -Bnls. Mfg. Trimmings -Edible Offal -Other Intact
	Raw Intact Chicken	Chicken	-Whole Bird -Poultry Parts (including necks/feet & giblets) -Boneless and/or Skinless Parts -Bnls. Mfg. Trimmings
	Raw Intact Turkey	Turkey	-Whole Bird -Poultry Parts (including necks/feet & giblets) -Boneless and/or Skinless Parts -Bnls. Mfg. Trimmings
	Raw Intact Poultry – Other	Duck, Goose, Guinea, Squab, Emu, Ostrich, Rhea	-Whole Bird -Poultry Parts (including necks/feet & giblets) -Boneless and/or Skinless Parts -Bnls. Mfg. Trimmings
Thermally Processed – Commercially Sterile	Thermally Processed – Commercially Sterile	Beef, Veal, Pork, Goat, Lamb, Mutton, Horse, Equine other than horse	-Sausage [§319.140; 319.180; 319.181]
		Pork	-Ham (includes: Shoulders, Picnics, Butts and Loins [§319.104]; Chopped Ham, Pressed Ham, Spiced Ham, etc. [§319.105])
		All meat or poultry	-Soups -Corned (Species) -Other
		Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea, Squab, Emu, Ostrich, Rhea	-Sausage

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[HACCP] Process Category	[Finished]Product Category	Species	Product Group
Not Heat Treated – Shelf Stable	Not Ready-To-Eat (NRTE) Otherwise Processed Meat	Beef, Veal, Pork, Goat, Lamb, Mutton, Horse, Equine other than horse	-Rendered Fats, Oils -Bacon -Meals/Dinners/Entrees -Sandwiches/Filled Rolls/ Wraps -Sauces -Pies/Pot Pies -Smoked Parts -Soups -Other
	Not Ready-To-Eat (NRTE) Otherwise Processed Poultry	Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea, Squab, Emu, Ostrich, Rhea	-Rendered Fats, Oils -Bacon -Meals/Dinners/Entrees -Sandwiches/Filled Rolls/ Wraps -Sauces -Pies/Pot Pies -Smoked Parts -Soups -Other
	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Acidified/Fermented Meat (w/o cooking)	Beef, Veal, Pork, Goat, Lamb, Mutton, Horse, Equine other than horse	-Sausage/Salami – Not Sliced -Sausage/Salami – Sliced -Other – Not Sliced -Other – Sliced
	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Acidified/Fermented Poultry (w/o cooking)	Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea, Squab, Emu, Ostrich, Rhea	-Sausage/Salami – Not Sliced -Sausage/Salami – Sliced -Other – Not Sliced -Other – Sliced
	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Dried Meat	Beef, Veal, Pork, Goat, Lamb, Mutton, Horse, Equine other than horse	-Jerky -Other, Sliced (<i>Except Ham</i>) -Other, Not Sliced (<i>Except Ham</i>)
	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Dried Meat	Pork	-Ham, Sliced -Ham, Not Sliced (Ham includes: Shoulders, Picnics, Butts and Loins [§319.104]; Chopped Ham, Pressed Ham, Spiced Ham, etc. [§319.105])
	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Dried Poultry	Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea, Squab, Emu, Ostrich, Rhea	-Jerky -Other, Sliced -Other, Not Sliced
	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Salt Cured Meat	Beef, Veal, Pork, Goat, Lamb, Mutton, Horse, Equine other than horse	-Not Sliced -Sliced

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[HACCP] Process Category	[Finished]Product Category	Species	Product Group
Not Heat Treated – Shelf Stable (con't)	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Salt Cured Poultry	Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea, Squab, Emu, Ostrich, Rhea	-Not Sliced -Sliced
Heat Treated – Shelf Stable	Not Ready-To-Eat (NRTE) Otherwise Processed Meat	Beef, Veal, Pork, Goat, Lamb, Mutton, Horse, Equine other than horse	-Rendered Fats, Oils -Bacon -Meals/Dinners/Entrees -Sandwiches/Filled Rolls/ Wraps -Sauces -Pies/Pot Pies -Smoked Parts -Soups -Other
	Not Ready-To-Eat (NRTE) Otherwise Processed Poultry	Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea, Squab, Emu, Ostrich, Rhea	-Rendered Fats, Oils -Bacon -Meals/Dinners/Entrees -Sandwiches/Filled Rolls/ Wraps -Sauces -Pies/Pot Pies -Smoked Parts -Soups -Other
	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Acidified/ Fermented Meat (w/o cooking)	Beef, Veal, Pork, Goat, Lamb, Mutton, Horse, Equine other than horse	-Sausage/Salami – Not Sliced -Sausage/Salami – Sliced -Other – Not Sliced -Other – Sliced
	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Acidified/ Fermented Poultry (w/o cooking)	Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea, Squab, Emu, Ostrich, Rhea	-Sausage/Salami – Not Sliced -Sausage/Salami – Sliced -Other – Not Sliced -Other – Sliced
	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Dried Meat	Beef, Veal, Pork, Goat, Lamb, Mutton, Horse, Equine other than horse	-Jerky -Other, Sliced (<i>Except Ham</i>) -Other, Not Sliced (<i>Except Ham</i>)
	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Dried Meat	Pork	-Ham, Sliced -Ham, Not Sliced (Ham includes: Shoulders, Picnics, Butts and Loins [§319.104]; Chopped Ham, Pressed Ham, Spiced Ham, etc. [§319.105])
	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Dried Poultry	Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea, Squab, Emu, Ostrich, Rhea	-Jerky -Other, Sliced -Other, Not Sliced

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[HACCP] Process Category	[Finished]Product Category	Species	Product Group
Heat Treated – Shelf Stable (con't)	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Salt Cured Meat	Beef, Veal, Pork, Goat, Lamb, Mutton, Horse, Equine other than horse	-Not Sliced -Sliced
	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Salt Cured Poultry	Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea, Squab, Emu, Ostrich, Rhea	-Not Sliced -Sliced
Fully Cooked – Not Shelf Stable	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Fully Cooked Meat	Beef, Veal, Pork, Goat, Lamb, Mutton, Horse, Equine other than horse	-Hot Dog Products (<i>including applicable sausages</i>) [§319.180; 319.181] -Sausage products [§319.140] -Salad/Spread/Pate -Meat + Non-meat Component -Diced/Shredded -Nuggets -Parts -Other, Sliced (<i>Except Ham</i>) -Other, Not Sliced (<i>Except Ham</i>) -Patties (<i>Except Ham</i>)
	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Fully Cooked Meat	Pork	-Ham, Sliced -Ham, Not Sliced (Ham includes: Shoulders, Picnics, Butts and Loins [§319.104]; Chopped Ham, Pressed Ham, Spiced Ham, etc. [§319.105]) -Ham Patties [§319.105(d)]
	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Fully Cooked Poultry	Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea, Squab, Emu, Ostrich, Rhea	-Hot Dog Products -Salad/Spread/Pate -Poultry + Non-poultry component -Sausage Products -Diced/Shredded -Patties/Nuggets -Parts -Other, sliced -Other, not sliced
	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Fully Cooked Meat (w/o post lethality exposure)	Beef, Veal, Pork, Goat, Lamb, Mutton, Horse, Equine other than horse	-Hot Dog Products (<i>including applicable sausages</i>) [§319.180; 319.181] -Sausage products [§319.140] -Salad/Spread/Pate -Meat + Non-meat Component -Diced/Shredded -Nuggets -Parts -Other, Sliced (<i>Except Ham</i>) -Other, Not Sliced (<i>Except Ham</i>) -Patties (<i>Except Ham</i>)

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[HACCP] Process Category	[Finished]Product Category	Species	Product Group
Fully Cooked – Not Shelf Stable (con't)	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Fully Cooked Meat (w/o post lethality exposure)	Pork	-Ham, Sliced -Ham, Not Sliced (Ham includes: Shoulders, Picnics, Butts and Loins [§319.104]; Chopped Ham, Pressed Ham, Spiced Ham, etc. [§319.105]) -Ham Patties [§319.105(d)]
	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Fully Cooked Poultry (w/o post lethality exposure)	Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea, Squab, Emu, Ostrich, Rhea	-Hot Dog Products -Salad/Spread/Pate -Poultry + Non-poultry component -Sausage Products -Diced/Shredded -Patties/Nuggets -Parts -Other, sliced
Heat Treated but Not Fully Cooked – Not Shelf Stable	Not Ready-To-Eat (NRTE) Otherwise Processed Meat (con't)	Beef, Veal, Pork, Goat, Lamb, Mutton, Horse, Equine other than horse	-Rendered Fats, Oils -Bacon -Meals/Dinners/Entrees -Sandwiches/Filled Rolls/ Wraps -Sauces -Pies/Pot Pies -Smoked Parts -Soups -Other -Sausage products [§319.140]
	Not Ready-To-Eat (NRTE) Otherwise Processed Poultry	Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea, Squab, Emu, Ostrich, Rhea	-Rendered Fats, Oils -Bacon -Meals/Dinners/Entrees -Sandwiches/Filled Rolls/ Wraps -Sauces -Pies/Pot Pies -Smoked Parts -Soups -Sausages -Other
Products with Secondary Inhibitors - Not Shelf Stable	Not Ready-To-Eat (NRTE) Otherwise Processed Meat	Beef, Veal, Pork, Goat, Lamb, Mutton, Horse, Equine other than horse	-Rendered Fats, Oils -Bacon -Meals/Dinners/Entrees -Sandwiches/Filled Rolls/ Wraps -Sauces -Pies/Pot Pies -Smoked Parts -Soups -Other

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[HACCP] Process Category	[Finished]Product Category	Species	Product Group
Products with Secondary Inhibitors - Not Shelf Stable (con't)	Not Ready-To-Eat (NRTE) Otherwise Processed Poultry	Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea, Squab, Emu, Ostrich, Rhea	-Rendered Fats, Oils -Bacon -Meals/Dinners/Entrees -Sandwiches/Filled Rolls/ Wraps -Sauces -Pies/Pot Pies -Smoked Parts -Soups -Other
	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Salt Cured Meat	Beef, Veal, Pork, Goat, Lamb, Mutton, Horse, Equine other than horse	-Not Sliced -Sliced
	Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Salt Cured Poultry	Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea, Squab, Emu, Ostrich, Rhea	-Not Sliced -Sliced
Eggs/Egg Products	Shell Eggs	Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea	-for breaking -for consumer – unpasteurized -for consumer – pasteurized -for consumer – irradiated
	Egg Products	Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea	-Pasteurized (Frozen or Liquid) - Whole egg (with or without added ingredients) - Egg whites (with or without added ingredients) - Yolk (with or without added ingredients) - Egg Products (blends of whole egg, egg whites and/or yolks) (with or without added ingredients) -Pasteurized (Tanker/Large Totes) - Whole egg (with or without added ingredients) - Egg whites (with or without added ingredients) - Yolk (with or without added ingredients) - Egg Products (blends of whole egg, egg whites and/or yolks) (with or without added ingredients) -Unpasteurized (Frozen or Liquid) - Whole egg (with or without added ingredients) - Egg whites (with or without added ingredients) - Yolk (with or without added ingredients) - Egg Products (blends of whole egg, egg whites and/or yolks) (with or without added ingredients) -Unpasteurized (Tanker/Large Totes) - Whole egg (with or without added ingredients) - Egg whites (with or without added ingredients) - Yolk (with or without added ingredients) - Egg Products (blends of whole egg, egg whites and/or yolks) (with or without added ingredients)

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[HACCP] Process Category	[Finished]Product Category	Species	Product Group
Eggs/Egg Products (con't)	Egg Products (con't)	Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Guinea	-Dried - Whole egg (with or without added ingredients) - Egg whites (with or without added ingredients) - Yolk (with or without added ingredients) - Egg Products (blends of whole egg, egg whites and/or yolks) (with or without added ingredients)