



New Procedure for Submitting Previously Approved Exotic Species Labels

Establishments may slaughter and process exotic species listed in 9 CFR 352.1(k) (i.e., reindeer, elk, deer, antelope, water buffalo or bison) under the Voluntary Exotic Species Reimbursable Inspection Program. Currently all labels and any modifications to those labels applied to these products must be submitted to FSIS for sketch approval.

FSIS will evaluate certain exotic species labels within a shorter time frame if the label was previously sketch approved by FSIS. Specifically, if an establishment is making a modification to a previously sketch approved label, and that modification is one that would not affect any special claims and would typically qualify for generic approval under 9 CFR 412.2 for meat and poultry products under FSIS jurisdiction and inspection, the label will be handled within a shorter time frame. Examples of changes to a prior approved exotic species label that will qualify for the reduced evaluation time frame are changes to brand names, net weight, company address and nutrition facts serving size. FSIS recognizes that such changes present no health, safety, or economic policy issues and resubmitting a prior sketch approved label for changes of these types may result in an unnecessary delay for establishments.

To take advantage of the reduced evaluation time, when submitting the modified label, establishments producing exotic species products under voluntary inspection must note the prior approval number in Box 6b of FSIS Form 7234-1 or in the "Approval Information" section of the online Labeling Approval Submission System (LSAS). Additionally, establishments must indicate in Box 14 of the paper application or in the "Special Claims Information" tab within the "Other" text box: "exotic previously approved." This information will alert FSIS that the exotic species label is eligible for a reduced evaluation time because the changes to the label would be made generically if the label was for a meat or poultry product under FSIS jurisdiction and inspection. For assistance in determining if a change made to a previously approved exotic species label will qualify for a reduced evaluation time or if the change to the label requires that label to be submitted as a new label, please submit a copy of the label along with a description of the change you wish to make through askFSIS at <https://askfsis.custhelp.com/>.

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Export Requirements Updates

The Library of Export Requirements has been updated for the following countries:

Japan
Mexico
Qatar

For a complete list of countries, visit <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/international-affairs/exporting-products>.

FSIS Extends Comment Period for CSPI Petition on Nitrate/Nitrite Labeling

FSIS is extending the comment period by 30 days for a petition submitted by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) on nitrate/nitrite labeling.

The CSPI petition requests that FSIS amend its labeling regulations to prohibit the statements “No Nitrates or Nitrites Added” and “Uncured” on meat products that have been processed using any sources of nitrates or nitrites, including non-synthetic sources, such as celery powder. The petition also requests that FSIS require labeling of these products to include the statement “nitrates or nitrites added” in lettering at least one-half the size and prominence of the product name. Additionally, the petition requests that ingredients used as a source of nitrates and nitrites be declared as such in the product labeling, e.g. “Celery powder (source of nitrates or nitrites for curing)” and that FSIS take additional steps to minimize levels of residual nitrates and nitrites in these products. The petition was submitted on August 29, 2019, and posted to the FSIS website on August 30, 2019. The petition is available on the FSIS website at: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/ab431015-e161-4b72-9935-f822c86fde81/19-03-CSPI-082919.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>.

FSIS’ regulations permit interested persons to submit comments on petitions filed with the agency and provide for posting these comments on the FSIS website (9 CFR 392.7). The regulations also state that comments on a petition should be submitted within 60 days of the posting date of the petition (9 CFR 392.7(b)). Presently, the comment period for the CSPI petition is scheduled to close on November 12, 2019. However, the petition has generated significant interest from stakeholders, and on September 23, 2019, FSIS received a request to extend the comment period. Therefore, FSIS is extending the comment period until December 12, 2019.

To facilitate submission and public posting of comments, interested persons may submit comments online via the Federal eRulemaking portal at <https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FSIS-2019-0022>; by mail, including CD-ROMs, sent to Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Mailstop 3782, Room 6065, Washington, DC 20250-3700; or by hand or courier-delivery to 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 6065, Washington, DC 20250-3700.

All comments submitted by mail or electronic mail must include the agency name and identification number FSIS-2019-0022. Comments on this petition will be made available for public inspection and posted without change, including any personal information, to: <https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FSIS-2019-0022>. Comments on the petition should be submitted by December 12, 2019.

FSIS Constituent Update is prepared by the Congressional and Public Affairs Staff, Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Education

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FSIS Posts Updated Dataset on Imports

On October 15, 2019, FSIS will update the publicly posted dataset on import refusals for products regulated by the agency. Federal law requires every commercial shipment of imported meat, poultry, and egg products to be inspected prior to product entering U.S. commerce. FSIS inspects each shipment to verify labeling, proper certification, general condition, any signs of tampering and to identify product adulterated by transportation damage. FSIS also performs additional activities on a random and/or for-cause basis, such as physical product examination and laboratory sampling for pathogens and chemical residues.

Any product that does not meet FSIS requirements is refused entry, and the importer has up to 45 days (30 days for egg products) to have the product destroyed for use as human food, re-exported/returned to the foreign country, converted to animal food, or brought into compliance with FSIS requirements, if applicable (e.g., relabeled, remarked, replacement certificate).

This dataset is updated around the 15th of each month and contains each shipment with product that was refused entry. For more information, please visit <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/data-collection-and-reports/data>.

Policy Updates

FSIS notices and directives on public health and regulatory issues are available at: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulations>. The following policy updates were recently issued:

FSIS Notice 37-19 - *Barcodes in Lieu of Shipping Marks Pilot Program for Fresh Meat Products from Australia*

FSIS Directive 6300.1 Rev. 2 - *Manufacture of Animal Food or Uninspected Articles at Official Establishments*

FSIS Notice 36-19 - *The National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System Surveillance Program for Fiscal Year 2020*