



## FSIS Will Propose Revisions to Nutritional Fact Panel for Meat and Poultry Products

On Dec. 1, 2016, FSIS announced that it will soon publish a proposed rule to propose amending the nutrition labeling regulations for meat and poultry products to parallel the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) final nutrition regulations, which were published on May 27, 2016. The proposed rule will improve the presentation of nutrition information to assist consumers in maintaining healthy dietary choices. The proposed changes will include updates on nutrient listings and reference values, special requirements for foods represented or purported to be specifically for certain population subgroups, format changes and a new definition of a single-serving container.

The advance copy of the rule may be viewed on the FSIS website at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/a8674ea1-0c26-4bf3-8413-43b6551c0680/2014-0024.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>.

FSIS will seek public comment for 60 days from the publication date. Comments may be submitted online through the Federal eRulemaking Portal; by mail to: Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Patriots Plaza 3, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Mailstop 3782, Room 8-163B, Washington, DC 20250-3700; or by hand at Patriots Plaza 3, 355 E Street SW., Room 8-163B, Washington, DC 20250-3700.

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### Export Requirement Updates

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

Belarus  
Brazil

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

## Policy Updates

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

**Notice 89-16** - Completion of the FSIS Western Laboratory

**Docket No. FSIS-2016-0042** - National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods

# FSIS Announces Label Backlog Update and Provides Tips to Assist Plants with Label Review and Approval Process

The Labeling and Program Delivery Staff (LPDS) in FSIS is currently experiencing a 33-37 business day backlog in label evaluation for labels that require FSIS review prior to use. This delay is significantly beyond the targeted 15-day turnaround time and is occurring because of an increase in the wide variety of special claims, such as animal raising claims and quantitative nutrient values highlighted outside of the nutrition facts panel. The backlog is also due to the fact that establishments make errors, including failing to submit required documents such as support for certain claims or complete processing procedures during the label submission process. LPDS continues to respond to many label requests quickly. However, applications submitted with errors or missing information result in a slower label application turnaround time due to the lengthy follow-up process between LPDS and the establishment which is required to complete the application.

One easy step establishments could make during the label submission process is to ensure that all required documentation submitted for claims is current. For example, organic certificates for labels bearing "organic" claims and certificates for "Halal Certified" claims made on a label must be submitted with the application and should be dated within the past 12 months. If no documentation or expired documentation for a statement or claim is submitted with an application, the label reviewer will return the application to the establishment with a request for updated documentation, significantly slowing down the overall label turnaround time.

In an effort to reduce the label turnaround time, the *Constituent Update* will now include a weekly backlog update that will highlight common mistakes observed during the label review process and provide suggestions to assist industry in streamlining their label submissions. LPDS is hopeful that by working with industry to facilitate the label review process we will reach our shared goal: a faster, more efficient label review process.

Updates on the label application backlog and additional tips for reducing the volume of label submissions will continue to be published in the *Constituent Update* and at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/ffsis/topics/regulatory-compliance/labeling>.

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

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## FSIS Announces the Fiscal Year 2017 Annual Sampling Plan

A key FSIS inspection verification activity is the sampling of product for microbiological contaminants or chemical residues. FSIS released the Report on the Food Safety and Inspection Service Microbiological and Residue Sampling Programs in December 2011, which identified all of FSIS' sampling programs and discussed the statistical and policy basis for the programs. FSIS has released a new sampling plan for each subsequent fiscal year. These sampling plans continued FSIS' efforts to comprehensively identify the Agency's microbiological and chemical residue sampling activities and consider them in light of data-driven strategic planning efforts. The Fiscal Year 2017 Annual Sampling Plan is available at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/6dd9dba0-7710-4bd3-a4c2-cc149c15a58a/Sampling-Program-Plan-FY2017.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>.

# Proposed Changes to Equivalence Section of FSIS' Website Available for Public Comment

In January 2017, FSIS will release an improved equivalence section of the FSIS' website. The new webpage is relevant to individuals interested in the process a foreign country goes through in order to gain approval to export meat, poultry or egg products to the US.

FSIS has developed a PowerPoint presentation "Proposed FSIS Equivalence Webpage Improvements," that discusses the proposed changes to the equivalence section of FSIS' website. FSIS developed this presentation to provide stakeholders an opportunity to review the proposed changes, provide feedback and facilitate the transition to the new website. FSIS will review feedback received and make additional improvements to the webpage as needed.

To view the PowerPoint presentation and send FSIS comments on the proposed Equivalence webpage, go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal online <https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FSIS-2016-0046>. The comment period will be 90 days. To request a webinar on the PowerPoint presentation, contact the Office of International Coordination at [InternationalCoordination@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:InternationalCoordination@fsis.usda.gov) or 1-202-708-9543.

## Siluriformes Fish Products Self-Reporting Tool Available

FSIS posted the Siluriformes Fish Products Self-Reporting Tool (SRT) to the Siluriformes fish section of the FSIS' website. To continue to ship Siluriformes to the US after Sept. 1, 2017, foreign countries need to send a letter informing FSIS of their interest and then they need to complete this SRT. The SRT provides an organized means for the country's government to demonstrate that its inspection system achieves an equivalent level of protection. FSIS assesses the information collected through the SRT in order to determine whether a country's food safety inspection system achieves an equivalent level of public health protection as applied domestically in the US.

As stated in the preamble to final rule, "Mandatory Inspection of Fish of the Order Siluriformes and Products Derived From Such Fish," countries must provide a complete equivalence packet to FSIS before Sept. 1, 2017 to continue shipping fish product to the US. An equivalence packet consists of a completed SRT along with all supporting documentation. For more information, please visit <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/b1383586-d229-43d2-808b-e3e983718a0c/Siluriformes-SRT.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>.

## Food Recalls and Alerts

For information regarding recalls, please contact the Congressional and Public Affairs Staff at (202) 720-9113. You can also receive e-mail notifications when public health alerts and recalls are issued by registering at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/subscribe>.

# Italy's Eligibility to Export Raw Pork Products to the United States

FSIS has completed its record review and conducted an on-site audit of Italy's inspection program for raw pork products. FSIS' review of Italy's documented inspection program and FSIS' recent on-site verification audit of Italy's pork slaughter and further processing of pork into raw pork, particularly raw pork for ham production and ready-to-eat pork products conducted May 16 - June 3, 2016, support FSIS' decision that Italy has implemented a raw pork products inspection system equivalent to FSIS's domestic inspection system. Thus, Italy is now eligible to export raw pork derived from swine slaughtered on and after Dec. 1, 2016 to the US. The countries/products eligibility table on the FSIS' website has been updated to reflect this change. For more information, visit [https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/4872809d-90c6-4fa6-a2a8-baa77f48e9af/Countries\\_Products\\_Eligible\\_for\\_Export.pdf?MOD=AJPERES](https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/4872809d-90c6-4fa6-a2a8-baa77f48e9af/Countries_Products_Eligible_for_Export.pdf?MOD=AJPERES).

Italy has been ineligible to export raw pork products to the US due to animal health restrictions imposed by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) after the 1990 outbreaks of Classical Swine Fever (CSF) and Swine Vesicular Disease (SVD). Italy requested that FSIS evaluate its eligibility to export raw pork to the US following the 2015 USDA APHIS regulation that lifted restrictions on the importation of raw pork from regions of the country classified as "free" for SVD and "low risk" for CSF.

The 2016 audit report is available at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/international-affairs/importing-products/eligible-countries-products-foreign-establishments/foreign-audit-reports>.