

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, DC

# FSIS DIRECTIVE

6400.1  
Revision 1

1/31/24

## HARVESTING, HANDLING AND LABELING OF DETACHED FOWL OVA FOR HUMAN FOOD PURPOSES

### I. PURPOSE

This directive instructs FSIS inspection program personnel (IPP) assigned to poultry slaughter establishments and egg products plants that handle detached fowl ova for human food purposes on how to verify the handling of fowl ova. This directive is being rewritten in its entirety to add instructions related to the [Egg Products Inspection Regulations Final Rule](#), and align the formatting to current standards.

#### KEY POINTS:

- *Describes requirements for harvesting inspected and passed detached ova*
- *Describes requirements for raw ova product operations*
- *Provides instructions to verify labeling for packaged ova product prior to shipment to an egg products plant*
- *Provides instructions for the sealing of transportation vehicles between FSIS-inspected establishments*

### II. CANCELLATION

FSIS Directive 6400.1, *Fowl Ova*, 8/22/1983

### III. BACKGROUND

A. Detached fowl ova harvested in an official establishment may only be moved from the official poultry slaughter establishment to an official egg products plant for further processing (e.g., pasteurization) under establishment controls (e.g., company seals) per [9 CFR 381.65\(e\)](#). Detached ova from inspected and passed poultry may be harvested for human food and handled only in accordance with [9 CFR 590.440](#) and [9 CFR 381.65\(e\)](#). Detached ova are defined as yolks that are harvested from the ovary or oviduct (funnel) of mature hens during slaughter operations. The egg white and shell have not yet been developed. An egg that has completely formed in a slaughtered hen is considered a shell egg. Shell eggs from inspected and passed poultry may be harvested for human food purposes subject to the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) requirements under [21 CFR part 118](#). Follicles (ova) from inspected and passed poultry, that are attached to the reproductive tract can be harvested with oviduct/uteri and sold as a poultry product.

B. Ova from inspected and passed slaughtered poultry may be brought into an official egg products plant for further processing, provided that the ova are from wholesome poultry inspected in an establishment operating under FSIS jurisdiction and that such products are harvested in a sanitary manner, properly handled, cooled, packaged, and labeled ([9 CFR 590.440](#)).

#### IV. IPP VERIFICATION RESPONSIBILITIES AT POULTRY SLAUGHTER ESTABLISHMENTS

A. IPP assigned to a poultry slaughter establishment are to follow the instructions within [FSIS Directive 5000.1](#), *Verifying an Establishment's Food Safety System*, when verifying that ova are handled in accordance with the following conditions during routine sanitation tasks:

1. Detached ova are harvested from inspected and passed birds in a sanitary manner at some point in the slaughter process after the online postmortem inspection station;
2. Ova from condemned carcasses are condemned and handled as required in [9 CFR 381.95](#);
3. Each ovum is handled in a sanitary manner during collection, cooling, storage, packaging, and labeling (9 CFR part 416);
4. Poultry slaughter establishments do not give raw ova products to their employees ([9 CFR 381.65\(e\)](#)); and
5. Packaged ova are transported to a FSIS inspected egg products plant under company control (e.g., company seals).

B. IPP are to perform the General Labeling verification task, as instructed in FSIS Directive 7221.1, *Prior Labeling Approval – Revision 3*, to verify that the harvested ova sent to an egg products plant for further processing are labeled as follows:

FOWL OVA ELIGIBLE FOR FURTHER PROCESSING IN AN OFFICIAL EGG PRODUCTS PLANT HARVESTED UNDER SANITARY SUPERVISION OF FSIS PLANT NO.                      Lot No.
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#### V. IPP VERIFICATION RESPONSIBILITIES AT EGG PRODUCTS PLANTS

A. IPP assigned to an egg products plant are to follow the instructions in [FSIS Directive 5000.1](#) to verify that ova are handled in accordance with the following conditions:

1. The ova and egg products containing ova have been processed in a sanitary manner, filtered, cooled, and pasteurized in the official plant in the same manner as liquid, frozen, or dried egg yolks as required by [9 CFR 590.440\(b\)](#);
2. The official egg products plant has identified a specific processing methodology for the ova to ensure compliance is met for [9 CFR part 591](#); and

3. The ova have received a lethality step (e.g., pasteurization or other method of treatment sufficient for the product to be edible without additional preparation to achieve food safety) as per the requirements set forth under [9 CFR 590.570](#).

B. IPP are to verify the finished egg products are labeled as instructed in [FSIS Directive 5030.1](#), *Labeling and Import Verification in an Official Egg Products Plant*, and that the ingredient statement on the finished packaged product declares ova. IPP are to verify that the finished egg product does not bear the Kosher insignia; egg products that contain ova are not eligible for Kosher identification. IPP are to verify the official egg products plant has met labeling requirements in accordance with [9 CFR 590.411](#).

C. IPP are to sample the finished processed egg product, including finished egg products that contain ova source material harvested at slaughter, in accordance with the instructions within [FSIS Directive 10,230.3](#), *FSIS Verification Testing of Domestic Egg Products*. IPP are to verify the official egg products plant has conducted *Salmonella* Surveillance testing of the finished product in accordance with [9 CFR 590.580](#).

## VI. QUESTIONS

Refer questions regarding this directive to your supervisor or as needed to the Office of Policy and Program Development through [askFSIS](#) or by telephone at 1-800-233-3935. When submitting a question, complete the [web form](#) and select General Inspection Policy for the inquiry type or Labeling for the inquiry type for labeling questions.

**NOTE:** Refer to [FSIS Directive 5620.1](#) *Using askFSIS*, for additional information on submitting questions.



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