



## Tips for a Faster Label Approval Process

Labels are currently taking **about 5-6** business days to evaluate.

**TIP: FSIS recommends that establishments clearly indicate within a label application if an ingredient, such as a sauce or spice blend, used in a meat or poultry product is purchased or produced in-plant to avoid unnecessary application returns for clarification.**

Label applications must include a complete product formula and processing procedures for FSIS to fully evaluate the label. When meat or poultry is used in a secondary product such as a spaghetti, meatball and marinara sauce entrée, FSIS recommends that the application clearly indicate what components are produced in-plant and if any are purchased products. For product produced in-plant, this distinction is often clear when the establishment lists each sub-ingredient in, for example a marinara sauce, within the product formula and includes the percentage of each sub-ingredient. Additionally, the application will include the steps involved in making the marinara sauce in the processing procedures. A purchased sauce is typically listed in the formula as a single ingredient and since the product is purchased, the processing steps are not described. As part of the label evaluation process, the FSIS Staff Officer must determine if the formula and processing procured are complete. When an ingredient, such as a sauce, marinade, or spice rub, is not identified in the application as purchased, the Staff Officer may return the label application requesting the percentage of sub-ingredients in that product and that the processing procedures reflect the steps involved in processing the component. If the application clearly identifies the ingredient (e.g., sauce) as purchased, then the Staff Officer would not return the application for clarification on the percentage of individual ingredients in the sauce or requesting that the processing procedures include a reference to making the sauce.

For guidance about entering product formula and processing procedures in the Label Submission and Approval System (LSAS) please see the [LSAS User Guide](#) starting on page 112.

FSIS will continue to provide updates regarding label turnaround time, as well as suggestions to assist industry to streamline label submissions in its *Constituent Update*.

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## Export Requirements Update

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

New Zealand

For a complete list of countries, visit <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/inspection/import-export/import-export-library>

# FSIS Posts Updated Dataset on Import Refusals

On March 15, 2021, FSIS will update the publicly posted dataset on import refusals for products that they regulate. Federal law requires every commercial shipment of imported meat, poultry, and egg products to be re-inspected prior to product entering U.S. commerce. FSIS re-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, or issued a replacement certificate).

This dataset is updated around the 15th of each month and contains each shipment with product that was refused entry. To access these datasets or view more information about them, please visit the [Import and Export Data](#) page.

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# FSIS to Host Eastern Laboratory Open House as Part of the Laboratory Open House Series

FSIS plans to host a virtual open house at the Eastern Laboratory in Athens, Georgia on March 29, 2021, from 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Topics have been specifically chosen based on recent feedback and frequent questions received by the FSIS laboratories.

Topics covered will include:

- Recent updates on how the FSIS laboratories perform analyses to support the regulatory, public health mission of FSIS
- How our laboratories receive samples and common reasons for sample discards that do not meet acceptance criteria
- How FSIS uses histopathology techniques to support FSIS' Public Health Veterinarians in performing their inspection duties
- This open house will also pay particular attention to the following methods: confirmation of anti-fungal dyes in Siluriformes, speciation of Siluriformes, isolation of *Listeria monocytogenes*, and updates to the Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) method
- Timeline of Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) and how WGS supports illness investigations and informs regulatory science

Participants must pre-register. Please go to <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/news-events/events-meetings/usda-fsis-eastern-laboratory-open-house-registration> to register.

# Policy Update

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 update was recently issued:

**FSIS Notice 10 -21** - Annual Notice to High-Mileage Drivers – Fiscal Year 22