



FSIS Modifies its Sample Scheduling Procedure for Raw Poultry Products to Reduce the Number of Uncategorized Establishments

On November 9, 2018, FSIS announced revisions to its procedures for categorizing establishments producing raw poultry products subject to a pathogen reduction performance standard for Salmonella ([83 FR 56046](#)). According to the new procedures, FSIS no longer includes follow-up sample results to determine the category, and FSIS updates each establishment's category on a weekly basis, based on the most recent single 52-week window.

FSIS categorizes poultry establishments as **Category 1** if they achieve 50% or less of the standard, as **Category 2** if they meet the standard but have results greater than 50% of the standard, or as **Category 3** if they exceed the standard. Establishments are uncategorized if FSIS does not collect and test a sufficient number of samples in a 52-week period. FSIS posts monthly reports on the category of individual establishments on or about the 20th of the month.

FSIS recently evaluated its data and determined that there was an uptick in the number of uncategorized establishments as a result of the November 2018 procedure revisions. Based on this analysis, FSIS determined that establishments producing comminuted chicken and turkey were scheduled to receive a sufficient number of samples, but many establishments producing chicken parts and chicken and turkey carcasses were not. FSIS also determined that the agency could significantly reduce the number of uncategorized establishments by scheduling at least 2 samples per month at all poultry establishments subject to the standards. Therefore, beginning in August 2019, at establishments producing chicken parts, chicken carcasses, or turkey carcasses, FSIS will schedule two samples per month for eligible establishments producing between 1,001 and 250,000 lbs. per day, and 5 samples per month to those eligible establishments producing over 250,000 lbs. per day.

Prior to this change, FSIS assigned a number of samples per month roughly proportional to the establishment's production volume, depending on product type. For example, FSIS assigned fewer samples to an establishment producing chicken parts compared to an establishment producing chicken carcasses of the same production volume.

Continues on page 2

In This Issue

- 1 FSIS Modifies its Sample Scheduling Procedure for Raw Poultry Products to Reduce the Number of Uncategorized Establishments
- 1 Export Requirements Updates
- 2 Tips for Faster Label Approval Process
- 3 FSIS Posts Individual Category Status and Aggregate Results for Poultry Carcasses, Chicken Parts, and Comminuted Poultry Tested for *Salmonella*
- 3 Policy Update

Export Requirements Updates

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

Chile
Colombia
Honduras
Japan
Peru
Singapore

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

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Continued from page 1

With these announced scheduling changes, some establishments will receive more sample assignments. Many establishments will not notice a difference in sample assignments. These changes will ensure that establishments producing greater than 1,000 lbs. per day are consistently categorized and improve FSIS' ability to assess whether establishments maintain process control and track progress towards reducing foodborne illness.

Tips for Faster Label Approval Process

Labels are currently taking **about 12-15** business days to evaluate.

TIP: Exotic species product labels cannot be generically approved. These labels must be submitted to FSIS before they can be used on product. Submitting blanket applications for exotic species labels speeds up the approval process and reduces the number of submissions companies need to make.

As non-amenable products under voluntary inspection, labels of meat product from exotic species, such as bison, elk, yak, and deer cannot be generically approved. As a result, most new labels and label changes that would otherwise be considered generic for an amenable product must be submitted to FSIS for sketch approval. However, there are some label changes that are permitted that do not require label submission to the agency for a new approval. These changes include:

- varied weights
- adding a date
- any non-mandatory product codes
- graphic design changes to the label that do not affect the mandatory features or any claims

Blanket approvals for exotic species product labels can speed up the approval process for both FSIS and establishments. For these products, single-ingredient cuts and ground product may be grouped together as one blanket application. To submit a blanket application, the establishment should send one complete example of the label and include a list of all possible single-ingredient cuts or ground products they will produce at their establishment using the label. If FSIS approves the blanket application, the blanket approval will cover all cuts or ground products listed in the application, eliminating the need for the establishment to submit multiple labels for sketch approval. The blanket approval process should not be used for multi-ingredient exotic products. Label applications for multi-ingredient exotic species products must be submitted individually due to formulation differences.

NOTE: Labels of amenable products that include meat from exotic species as an ingredient (e.g., pork sausage with bison meat) are eligible for generic approval.

FSIS will continue to provide bi-weekly updates regarding the label turnaround time, as well as suggestions to assist industry to streamline label submissions. For more information about the mandatory label features and considerations relating to each feature, please see the following guidance: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulatory-compliance/labeling/labeling-procedures/label-submission-checklist>.

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 Individual Category Status and Aggregate Results for Poultry Carcasses, Chicken Parts, and Comminuted Poultry Tested for *Salmonella*

FSIS has updated the individual establishment *Salmonella* performance standard category information for raw poultry carcasses, raw chicken parts and comminuted poultry products at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/data-collection-and-reports/microbiology/salmonella-verification-testing-program/establishment-categories>. Additionally, FSIS has posted the aggregate sampling results showing the number of establishments in categories 1, 2, or 3 for establishments producing young chicken or turkey carcasses, raw chicken parts or not ready-to-eat (NRTE) comminuted poultry products at: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/data-collection-and-reports/microbiology/salmonella-verification-testing-program/aggregate-data>.

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 Directive 6090.1 - Firearms Safety In Official Livestock Establishments