



FSIS Finalizes Modernization of Swine Slaughter Inspection Rule

On September 17, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a final rule to modernize swine slaughter inspection and bring it into the 21st century. For the first time in more than five decades, the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is modernizing inspection at market hog slaughter establishments with a goal of protecting public health while allowing for food safety innovations.

The final rule has new requirements for microbial testing that apply to all swine slaughterhouses to demonstrate that they are controlling for pathogens throughout the slaughter system. Additionally, FSIS is amending its meat inspection regulations to establish a new inspection system for market hog establishments called the New Swine Slaughter Inspection System (NSIS).

In the final rule, FSIS amends the regulations to require all swine slaughter establishments to develop written sanitary dressing plans and implement microbial sampling to monitor process control for enteric pathogens that can cause foodborne illness. The final rule also allows market hog establishments to choose if they will operate under NSIS or continue to operate under traditional inspection.

FSIS will continue to conduct 100% inspection of animals before slaughter and 100% carcass-by-carcass inspection, as mandated by Congress. FSIS inspectors will also retain the authority to stop or slow the evisceration line as necessary to ensure that food safety and inspection are achieved. Under the NSIS, FSIS offline inspectors will conduct more food safety and humane handling verification tasks to protect the food supply and animal welfare.

To view the final rule, visit the FSIS website at [go.usa.gov/xVPVK](https://www.usda.gov/xVPVK).

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Export Requirements Updates

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

- China, People's Republic of
- Japan
- Korea, Republic of
- Malaysia
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- Taiwan

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

Tips for Faster Label Approval Process

Labels are currently taking about 12-14 business days to evaluate.

TIP: Providing the correct response to the voluntary review question during the label application process ensures that the Label Submission and Approval System (LSAS) assigns the label to the appropriate evaluation queue.

Every application submitted through the LSAS must include a response to the following question in the “Products” section: “Are you requesting a Voluntary Review of a Submission which can be generically approved?” Responding “yes” to this question places the label application in a queue with other labels that do not require an approval by FSIS. If “no” is the selected response, the LSAS will automatically assign the application, in the order in which it was received, to a queue for applications that require FSIS approval prior to use. The review time is longer for labels submitted for voluntary evaluation (“yes” responses) because the agency dedicates more resources to labels that require approval prior to use (“no” response) rather than to labels that may be approved generically. Note that if the submitter incorrectly identifies a generic-eligible label as one that requires approval, FSIS will return the label to the submitter with an explanation of why the label does not require evaluation. If the submitter elects to resubmit the label through the LSAS again for a voluntary review by FSIS, it will be placed at the bottom of the lower priority queue.

For assistance in determining which labels to submit to FSIS for approval, including what types of statements are considered “special statements or claims,” please see the FSIS Compliance Guidance for Label Approval at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/bf170761-33e3-4a2d-8f86-940c2698e2c5/Label-Approval-Guide.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>. Additional guidance is available through the Generic Labeling Advisor, a useful tool accessed through the LSAS that asks the submitter a series of questions to help determine if, based upon the answers provided, a label can be generically approved. Labels may also be submitted through askFSIS for a determination from FSIS as to whether the label requires agency approval.

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*.

Policy Update

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

Docket No. FSIS-2016-0017-Modernization of Swine Slaughter Inspection

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

Assistant Administrator
Carol Blake

Deputy Assistant
Administrator
Aaron Lavallee

Director
Roxanne Smith

Editor
Buck McKay

Business Continuity Planning Resources Available from Ready.gov

Continuity planning is most frequently thought of as a government activity. However, during a critical security incident or natural disaster, the same challenges that impact governmental operations can impact the meat and poultry industry. As part of National Preparedness Month, FSIS is reminding establishments that resources are available to help safeguard their businesses.

Business continuity planning is the process of ensuring that your critical business functions are prepared to react to and recover from a business disruption with minimal amount of impact to your business. [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) offers the “Ready Business” program designed to assist businesses of all sizes prepare for the most likely hazards. It provides a series of hazard-specific toolkits for earthquakes, hurricanes, inland flooding, power outages, and severe winds/tornados. The toolkits offer businesses a step-by-step guide to build preparedness and can be found by visiting <https://www.ready.gov/business>.

Additionally, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has software available to assist businesses in getting prepared. The Business Continuity Planning Suite software was created for any business with the need to create, improve, or update its business continuity plan. The software can be downloaded at <https://www.ready.gov/business-continuity-planning-suite>.