



## FSIS Issues Updated Labeling Guideline on Animal Raising Claims

FSIS has updated its guideline on documentation needed to support animal raising claims made on meat or poultry product labels. The Labeling Guideline on Documentation Needed to Substantiate Animal Raising Claims for Label Submissions includes changes made based on comments received on the guideline posted in October 2016.

FSIS regulations (9 CFR 412.1(c)(3)) require establishments to submit labels with special statements and claims, including animal raising claims, to FSIS for approval prior to use. The purpose of this guideline is to assist establishments by outlining the documentation needed to support the use of specific animal raising claims on meat and poultry product labels. The updated guideline also outlines steps establishments should take to add additional suppliers for a label with an animal raising claim that has been previously approved.

Changes in the guideline include added information about labeling needed for products bearing claims certified by third-party organizations, added information about carrying claims forward to other products, added examples of acceptable language, and additional information to provide further clarifications on rules. The guideline also emphasizes that FSIS only approves these claims when the necessary qualifying information is prominently and clearly displayed on the label.

Although the comment period on regulations.gov has closed, FSIS will update this document, as necessary, when new information becomes available. The *Federal Register* notice announcing the availability of the guidance will be on display on December 26, 2019, and will publish on December 27, 2019. After publication, the guideline will be available at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulatory-compliance/compliance-guides-index>.

### In This Issue

- 1 FSIS Issues Updated Labeling Guideline on Animal Raising Claims
- 1 Export Requirements Update
- 2 FSIS Issues Updated Labeling Guideline on Negative Claims
- 2 FSIS To Post Quarterly Sampling Reports on Percent Positives for Ready-to-Eat Products and Egg Products
- 3 FSIS Posts Individual Category Status and Aggregate Results for Poultry Carcasses, Chicken Parts, and Comminuted Poultry Tested for *Salmonella*
- 4 FSIS to Host Open House at Eastern Lab
- 4 Policy Updates

### Export Requirements Update

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

Barbados  
Congo, Republic of  
Mexico Plant List  
Morocco  
South Africa

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

# FSIS Issues Updated Labeling Guideline on Negative Claims

FSIS has updated its guideline on how establishments can make label claims that an ingredient is not used in the production of meat, poultry, or egg products. The Labeling Guideline on Statements That Bioengineered or Genetically Modified Ingredients or Animal Feed Were Not Used in Meat, Poultry, or Egg Products includes changes made based on comments received on the guideline after it was posted in August 2016.

Establishments are required to submit labels with special statements and claims, including negative claims, to FSIS for approval prior to use for compliance with 9 CFR 412.1(c)(3).

FSIS updated the guideline to clarify that FSIS approves negative claims verified under a third-party certifying organization the same way it approves other special statements or claims. FSIS also added information confirming that certified organic products may be labeled with negative claims without additional third-party certification or documentation when the negative claim is connected with an asterisk or other symbol to the explanatory statement “Produced in compliance with the USDA Organic Regulations” and that the website of the certifying entity does not always need to appear on the label.

Although the comment period on regulations.gov has closed, FSIS will update this document, as necessary, when new information becomes available. FSIS expects the guideline to publish in the *Federal Register* soon. After publication, the guideline will be available at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulatory-compliance/compliance-guides-index>.

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

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# FSIS To Post Quarterly Sampling Reports on Percent Positives for Ready-to-Eat Products and Egg Products

On December 31, 2019, FSIS will post quarterly reports on the percent positives from the ready-to-eat products and egg products sampling projects that test for *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Salmonella*. Percent positives information were last posted for calendar year 2017 and this release reports the percent positives from the first quarter of fiscal year (FY) 2018 through the fourth quarter of FY 2019.

The reports include the total sample counts and positive sample counts by sampling project and establishment Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) size. This report will next be updated by February 2020.

FSIS also plans to release other quarterly sampling reports, the next of which is planned to be the percent positives for Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) sampling projects in late February 2020.

The reports can be found at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/data-collection-and-reports/microbiology>.

## 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 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>.

## FSIS to Host Open House at Eastern Lab

In response to stakeholders' requests, FSIS is planning to host open houses at the agency's three regulatory laboratories. The open houses are designed to offer an inside look at the sample analysis process from beginning to end. The events will provide an overview of what happens to a sample from the time it is delivered to an FSIS laboratory to the time the sample result is reported. Attendees will receive an introductory presentation about the laboratory system followed by a visit to sample receiving and other stations within the laboratory to learn how samples are processed and analyzed for microbial pathogens, chemical residues, and tissue pathology (pathology is at the Eastern Lab only).

The first open house will be at the FSIS Eastern Laboratory in Athens, Georgia on January 31, 2020, from 8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Participants must pre-register and registration is limited to 30 people on a first-come, first-served basis. Please go to <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/newsroom/meetings/meetings-archive/upcoming-meetings/meeting-registration-ophs-open-house> to register. A confirmation email with additional logistics will be provided to attendees prior to the open house session.

Dates for the Midwestern Laboratory and Western Laboratory open houses will be announced in a future *Constituent Update*.

# Policy Updates

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 updates were recently issued:

**FSIS Notice 51-19** - Federal Holidays in Calendar Year 2020

**FSIS Notice 52-19** - Federal Government Closure on Tuesday December 24 2019

**FSIS Notice 53-19** - Revisions Made to Public Health Information System Sample Questionnaires

**FSIS Directive 4791.16** - Annual Attestation on Work-Related Conditions for Establishments Operating Under the New Poultry or the New Swine Slaughter Inspection System

**FSIS Directive 6410.4** - Verifying Swine Slaughter Establishments Maintain Adequate Procedures for Preventing Contamination of Carcasses and Parts by Enteric Pathogens

**FSIS Directive 6420.2** - Verification of Procedures for Controlling Fecal Material, Ingesta, and Milk in Livestock Slaughter Operations

**FSIS Directive 6600.1** - New Swine Slaughter Inspection System: Ante-Mortem and Post-Mortem Inspection and Verification of Food Safety and Ready-to-Cook Requirements