

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

# FSIS NOTICE

28-24

8/28/24

## AVAILABILITY OF UPDATED FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE GUIDELINE ON SUBSTANTIATING ANIMAL-RAISING OR ENVIRONMENT-RELATED LABELING CLAIMS

### I. PURPOSE

This notice provides instructions for inspection program personnel (IPP) to notify establishments that an updated *FSIS Guideline on Substantiating Animal-Raising or Environment-Related Labeling Claims* (<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/guidelines/2024-0006>) is now available. The updated guideline is intended to better assist establishments with substantiating animal-raising and environment-related claims, reduce consumer confusion regarding such claims, and level the playing field for producers truthfully using these claims.

### II. BACKGROUND

A. On August 28, 2024, FSIS announced the availability of its updated *FSIS Guideline on Substantiating Animal-Raising or Environment-Related Labeling Claims* (<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/policy/federal-register-rulemaking/federal-register-notices/availability-fsis-guideline>).

B. Official establishments submit this documentation to FSIS when they apply for approval of labels with animal-raising or environment-related claims. The updated guideline includes changes made in response to updated scientific information, FSIS sampling data, askFSIS questions, public comments, petitions, and other meetings with Agency stakeholders.

C. Significant updates to the guideline include:

1. FSIS updated documentation that establishments are strongly encouraged to submit to FSIS to substantiate claims like "Pasture Raised," "Pasture Fed," "Pasture Grown," and "Meadow Raised;"
2. FSIS recommended criteria for third-party organizations that certify animal-raising or environment-related claims;
3. FSIS further emphasized that, to substantiate a third-party certification claim, establishments should provide FSIS with a copy of their current certificate;
4. FSIS further emphasized that if a claim was certified by a third-party organization, the Agency will approve the label bearing the claim only if it includes the certifying entity's name, website address (where the relevant standards can be found), and logo, when the organization has a logo;
5. FSIS added language strongly encouraging establishments to substantiate negative antibiotic use claims by instituting a routine sampling program to test for the use of antibiotics in animals prior to slaughter or by using a third-party certifier who performs routine antibiotic sampling and testing as part of their certification standards;

**DISTRIBUTION:** Electronic

**NOTICE EXPIRES:** 9/1/25

**OPI:** OPPD

6. FSIS added language stating that establishments are strongly encouraged to provide FSIS with relevant data or studies (e.g., soil/land variation or air quality studies and results) to substantiate environment-related claims; and
7. FSIS added language strongly encouraging establishments to use third-party certification to substantiate animal-raising or environment-related claims, given the limits of FSIS jurisdiction.

### III. WEEKLY MEETING AND OUTREACH

A. IPP are to make establishment management aware of the availability of this reference guidance document at the next weekly meeting with establishment management.

B. The guideline is not a regulatory document. Therefore, establishments are not required to use the guideline to comply with FSIS regulations.

### IV. QUESTIONS

Refer questions regarding this notice to your supervisor or as needed to the Office of Policy and Program Development (OPPD) through [askFSIS](#), or by telephone at 1-800-233-3935. When submitting a question, complete the [web form](#) and select Labeling as the Inquiry Type.

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



Assistant Administrator  
Office of Policy and Program Development