

Proposed Rule: Modernization of Poultry Slaughter Inspection

NACMPI Public Meeting

March 21, 2012

General

- “Modernization of Poultry Slaughter Inspection” proposed rule published January 27, 2012
- Purpose of the proposed rule is to:
 - Improve food safety and the effectiveness of poultry slaughter inspection systems;
 - Remove unnecessary regulatory obstacles to innovation; and
 - Make better use of the Agency’s resources

Overview of Proposed Rule

- Proposed new inspection system for young chickens and turkeys that would replace all existing inspection systems except for Traditional
- Proposed changes that would apply to all establishments that slaughter poultry other than ratites

Poultry Slaughter under Existing Inspection Systems

- Four inspection systems for poultry: Streamlined Inspection System (SIS); New Line Speed Inspection System (NELS); the New Turkey Inspection System (NTIS); and Traditional Inspection
- Plant personnel conduct no sorting activities
 - FSIS inspectors check each carcass for defects and diseases and direct plant employees to take corrective actions .
 - FSIS inspectors do not typically look for trim and processing defects. Carcasses with defects that do not require condemnation of the carcass, e.g., bruises, scabs, are passed subject to trimming down the line by plant employees and are re-inspected under the Finished Product Standards.
 - FSIS inspectors identify and condemn carcasses with animal diseases and plant employees dispose of condemned carcasses
 - Most sorting activities do not enhance food safety because many defects, e.g., scabs, sores, or bruises, are related more to the marketability of the product.

Limitation of Existing Inspection Systems

- Inspectors required to spend more time conducting sorting activities for quality-related defects than verifying food-safety-related process controls and effectiveness of HACCP systems
- Limits establishment incentive to improve their processing methods
- Limits line speeds

Key Elements of Proposed New Inspection System –Plant Responsible for Sorting

- Reduce number of FSIS on-line carcass inspectors to one
- Establishment personnel would be responsible for sorting carcasses, disposing of carcasses that must be condemned, and conducting any trimming or reprocessing before they are presented to the FSIS carcass inspector
- Establishments would be required to develop, implement, and maintain procedures to ensure that septicemic/toxemic carcasses do not enter the chiller. Must incorporate procedures into their HACCP systems.

Key Elements of Proposed New Poultry Inspection System—On-line Carcass Inspection

- FSIS on-line carcass inspector (CI) will conduct a carcass-by carcass inspection before carcasses enter the chiller
- CI is authorized to stop the line to prevent contaminated carcasses from entering the chiller
- The IIC is authorized to required that establishment slow the line speed if the CI observes the presence of excessive food safety-related conditions or other defects, poor presentation of carcasses, or other indications that there is a lack of process control

Key Elements of New Poultry Inspection System—Offline Verification Inspection

- An offline verification inspector (VI) will be assigned for each evisceration line
- The VI inspector will conduct inspection and enforcement activities that are more important to food safety, such as :
 - Verifying compliance with HACCP and Sanitation SOP requirements;
 - Performing verification checks for septicemia/toxemia and visible fecal contamination
 - Verifying sanitary dressing requirements
 - Collecting samples

Key Elements of New Poultry Inspection System—Remove Finished Product Standards (FPS)

Replace FPS with requirement that establishments maintain records to document that the products resulting from their slaughter operations comply with the definition of “ready-to-cook” poultry

- All poultry slaughter establishments are required to prepare all eviscerated carcasses as ready-to-cook poultry
- Ready-to-cook poultry is any slaughtered poultry “...which is suitable for cooking without the need for further processing.”
- Carcasses that contain a large number of trim/dressing defects and removable animal diseases are not suitable for cooking without the need for further processing

Key Elements of New Poultry Inspection System—Remove FPS

- Establishments would have flexibility to choose how they will document that their products are ready-to-cook poultry, e.g., statistical process control charts or documentation related to prerequisite program
- FSIS verification: If FSIS personnel observe the presence of persistent, unattended removable animal diseases or trim/dressing defects, would check establishment records, and would be authorized to require that the establishment slow the line speed to remedy the defects

Key Elements of New Poultry Inspection System—Faster Line Speeds

- Establishments permitted to operate at faster line speeds
 - Up to 175 bpm for young chickens (maximum line speed under existing systems is 140 bpm—requires 4 online inspectors per line)
 - Up to 55 bpm for turkeys (maximum line speed is 51 bpm— requires 2 online inspectors)
- IIC authorized to slow or stop the line if establishment does not maintain process control

Proposed Changes to Traditional Inspection System

- Limit the number of on-line inspectors to two
- Existing plants other than young chickens and turkeys currently operating with more than two on-line inspectors may continue to do so

Proposed Changes for All Poultry Establishments—Fecal Contamination

- FSIS has a zero tolerance for visible fecal contamination
- Existing regulations require that establishment prevent poultry carcasses contaminated with visible fecal material from entering the chiller
- Proposed regulation will make clear that establishments must develop, implement, and maintain written procedures to prevent poultry carcasses contaminated with visible fecal material from entering the chiller
- Establishments must incorporate these procedures into their HACCP systems

Proposed Changes for All Poultry Establishments—Enteric Pathogens

- Establishments would be required to develop, implement, and maintain written procedures to prevent contamination of carcasses and parts by enteric pathogens and fecal contamination throughout the entire slaughter and dressing process
- Establishments would be required to incorporate these procedures into HACCP systems

Proposed Changes for All Poultry Establishments—Microbial Testing

- Procedures to prevent carcass contamination must include, at a minimum, sampling and analysis of carcasses for microbial organisms at pre- and post-chill to monitor process control for enteric pathogens
- Establishments would be responsible for determining which microbial organisms will best help them to monitor the effectiveness of their process control procedures and for developing and implementing their own microbiological sampling plans.

Proposed Changes for All Poultry Establishments—Microbial Testing

- Establishments could develop sampling plans to test for enteric pathogens, such as *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*, at pre-chill and post-chill, or they could test for an appropriate indicator organism
- Establishments would need to provide scientific or technical documentation to support the design of the sampling plan
- Proposed rule would rescind regulations that require post-chill testing for generic *E. coli*

Proposed Changes for All Poultry Establishments—Time and Temperature

- Remove prescriptive time and temperature requirements
- Establishments would be required to develop, implement, and maintain procedures that control the levels and prevent the multiplication of spoilage organisms and pathogenic bacteria in the product after evisceration
- Establishments must incorporate procedures into their HACCP systems

Proposed Changes for All Poultry Establishments—On-line Reprocessing

- Permit the use of on-line re-processing of poultry carcasses and the use of anti-microbial agents in addition to chlorine for off-line re-processing
- Establishments must incorporate re-processing procedures into HACCP systems
- Establishments would be permitted to use any approved safe and suitable antimicrobial agents under the specific conditions for which they have been approved.

Questions??