



United States Department of Agriculture

JUN 9 2014

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

1400 Independence
Avenue, SW,
Washington, D.C.
20250

Ms. Dena M. Jones
Farm Animal Program Manager
Animal Welfare Institute
900 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
Washington DC 20003

Dear Ms. Jones:

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has received the petition submitted by you on behalf of the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) dated May 2014. The petition requests that FSIS amend its labeling regulations to require independent third-party certification for the approval of animal welfare and environmental stewardship claims on the labels of meat and poultry products. The petition specifically requests that FSIS:

- Approve animal welfare and environmental stewardship claims only after certification has been obtained from an independent third party that has audited practices pertaining to the claim;
- Obligate third-party certifiers to publish the standards producers must comply with in order to obtain certification under the program;
- Require that all third-party standards for animal welfare and environmental stewardship claims exceed conventional meat and poultry industry standards related to the claim; and
- Not allow the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to be used as a third-party certification program for animal welfare and environmental stewardship claims unless the standards employed by AMS exceed those of the conventional industry and are published for public review and comment, or the standards employed by AMS mirror those of an established third-party certification for animal welfare or environmental stewardship.

Your request is being considered as a rulemaking petition under the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553(e)), USDA's administrative regulations (7 CFR 1.28), and FSIS's regulations on petitions (9 CFR part 392). Your petition has been referred to the Office of Policy and Program Development for review, and it has been assigned petition number 14-01. As provided in 9 CFR 392.6, your petition will be made available to the public in the FSIS docket room and will be posted on the FSIS Website at:

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulations/petitions>

Ms. Jones

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You may contact Mary Porretta, Petitions Manager, Issuances Staff at (202) 720-5627 if you have any questions regarding the status of your petition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles E. Williams".

Charles E. Williams

Director

Issuances Staff

Office of Policy and Program Development