



Announcement that Third-Party Hold-and-Test of Imported Fish of the Order Siluriformes will be Discontinued

FSIS is announcing that the interim Third-Party "Hold-and-Test" sampling and testing protocol for imported Siluriformes fish will be discontinued on Dec. 18, 2017. During the 18-month transitional period, prior to full enforcement of the regulatory requirements for Siluriformes fish, when FSIS testing revealed imported fish products with violative levels of drugs, pesticides, dyes, metals, nitrofurans, or other chemical residues, the Agency required Importers of Record (IORs) importing subsequent shipments from the implicated foreign establishment to have those shipments sampled and tested through an accredited third-party laboratory. FSIS is suspending the interim third-party testing requirement. In response to new violative findings, FSIS will implement an intensified level of reinspection, as it does for other imported meat and poultry, based on the policy outlined in [FSIS Directive 9900.6](#), "Laboratory Sampling Program For Imported Meat, Poultry, and Egg Products."

FSIS will issue instructions to Inspection Program Personnel (IPP) notifying them to discontinue the Third-Party Hold-and-Test sampling and testing protocol. FSIS will also send letters to importers and customs brokers, as well as to the Central Competent Authorities (CCAs) in the foreign countries that are exporting Siluriformes fish and fish products to the U.S., notifying them of this decision. The Agency will also advise the CCAs of the disposition of any shipments currently under the Third-Party Hold-and-Test policy.

FSIS is encouraging importers and brokers to communicate and coordinate closely with business partners, inspection establishments and the FSIS District Office.

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 update was recently issued:

Directive 8010.5 Rev.5 - Case Referral and Disposition

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Export Requirements Updates

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

- Japan
- Oman
- Philippines
- Republic of Korea

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

FSIS Provides a Question and Answer About Shipment of Imported Siluriformes Fish

Question: Who decides where a shipment of imported Siluriformes fish is presented for reinspection by FSIS?

Answer: The importer of record identifies their choice of official import inspection establishment for reinspection by FSIS on the Import Inspection Application, FSIS Form 9540-1. The importer of record also identifies an estimated date of arrival (EDA). The EDA is the date the product is expected to arrive at the specified official import inspection establishment. Any changes or updates to the EDA or official import inspection establishment must be relayed to FSIS. The Meat, Poultry and Egg Product Inspection Directory provides a listing of official import inspection establishments currently eligible for Siluriformes fish.

IFSAC Publishes Paper on New Food Categories

Scientists from the Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration (IFSAC) recently published a paper, "[An Updated Scheme for Categorizing Foods Implicated in Foodborne Disease Outbreaks: A Tri-Agency Collaboration](#)," in the Foodborne Pathogens and Disease journal. The paper updates previous food categories used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and has five levels with subcategories at each level, for a total of 234 food categories.

Highlights of the IFSAC food categorization scheme include:

- Close alignment with the food categories used by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS) for regulatory purposes;
- Separation of Aquatic Animals, Land Animals and Plant foods into increasingly specific animal (for example, Fish, Dairy, Beef) or botanical (for example, Fruits, Fungi, Root/Underground) food categories;
- Separation of foods based on food processing, preparation and consumption type (for example, ready-to-eat meats, canned/containerized produce); and
- New categories for "Other" foods and foods not assigned to a category under the previous scheme (for example, "Multiple-Ingredient Food," "Multiple Foods Reported.")

The IFSAC food categorization scheme allows for more specific description of the foods that cause outbreaks in the United States. The increased specificity of food categories may help improve source attribution analyses, eventually leading to improved foodborne illness source attribution estimates and enhanced food safety and regulatory efforts.

IFSAC is a collaboration among the CDC, USDA-FSIS, and FDA. The collaboration works to improve coordination of federal food safety analytic efforts and address cross-cutting priorities for food safety data collection, analysis and use. Projects and studies aim to identify foods that are important sources of illnesses.

For more information on IFSAC, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/ifsac/index.html> or email IFSAC at IFSAC@fda.hhs.gov.

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