



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

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

DEC 3 2014

Mr. Jim Watson
Board President
International Yak Association (IYAK)
191 Foys Canyon Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

Dear Mr. Watson:

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has received the petition you submitted on behalf of the International Yak Association (IYAK) dated September 3, 2014. The petition requests that FSIS amend its voluntary inspection regulations to include yak in the definition of "exotic animal" under 9 CFR 352.1(k). According to the petition, IYAK members reported that FSIS had been inspecting yak meat for at least 28 years but that the Agency stopped these inspections in 2014 because the regulations do not include yak as an exotic species. The petition asserts that FSIS's history of inspecting yak created an expectation among breeders and buyers that yak meat for human consumption would be inspected. The petition states that discontinuing yak inspection will compromise these business models.

We have requested that IYAK submit additional data on the economic effects of amending the regulations to include yak under the definition of exotic animals. We are aware that you are in the process of collecting these data. In the interim, we have decided to retract our letters rescinding all labels for yak product and will allow establishments that slaughter or process yak under the voluntary inspection program to continue to do so.

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 14-05. 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>

Mr. Watson

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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