



Tips for Faster Label Approval Process

Labels are currently taking **about 12-14** business days to evaluate.

TIP: Establishments producing certified-organic meat, poultry, and egg products under the Agricultural Marketing Service’s National Organic Program may add a new claim to their label stating that genetically modified ingredients or animal feed were not used in the products, provided that the organic claim on the label was previously approved by FSIS.

The USDA organic regulations (7 CFR Part 205) prohibit the use of genetically modified organisms in the production and handling of an organic product. Certified-organic products must be derived from animals that did not consume feed or feed supplements that contain genetically modified organisms. In December 2019, FSIS updated the *Labeling Guideline on Statements That Bioengineered or Genetically-Modified Ingredients or Animal Feed Were Not Used in Meat, Poultry or Egg Products*. As discussed in this guideline, establishments with certified-organic label claims sketch approved by FSIS can add claims related to the absence of genetically engineered material, referred to as “negative claims,” without resubmitting the modified label for an additional approval. Such statements are generically approved if they are truthful and not misleading.

Examples of negative claims include: “No GMO Ingredients,” “Fed a Diet Free of Genetically Modified Ingredients,” and “Ingredients Used are Not Bioengineered.”

Establishments adding a negative claim to an organic product label should ensure that the claim is made in accordance with the [FSIS guideline](#) on negative claims. Any negative claims on products labeled as “organic” must be adjacent to or connected by an asterisk or other symbol to the explanatory statement: “Produced in compliance with the USDA Organic Regulations.” This statement must appear on the same panel as the claim.

For additional information about making claims related to the absence of genetically modified material, please see the *FSIS Labeling Guideline on Statements That Bioengineered or Genetically-Modified Ingredients or Animal Feed Were Not Used in Meat, Poultry, or Egg Products* at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/ffsis/topics/regulatory-compliance/labeling/claims-guidance/procedures-nongenetically-engineered-statement>.

FSIS will continue to provide updates regarding label turnaround time, as well as suggestions to assist industry to streamline label submissions in its *Constituent Update*.

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Export Requirements Update

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

- Australia
- Mexico
- Uruguay

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

FSIS to Post Updated Dataset on Import Refusals

On February 18, 2020, FSIS will update the publicly posted dataset on import refusals for products that the agency regulates. Federal law requires every commercial shipment of imported meat, poultry, and egg products to be re-inspected prior to product entering U.S. commerce. FSIS re-inspects each shipment to verify labeling, proper certification, general condition, and any signs of tampering and to identify product adulterated by transportation damage. FSIS also performs additional activities on a random and/or for-cause basis, such as physical product examination and laboratory sampling for pathogens and chemical residues.

Any product that does not meet FSIS requirements is refused entry, and the importer has up to 45 days (30 days for egg products) to have the product destroyed for use as human food, re-exported/returned to the foreign country, converted to animal food, or brought into compliance with FSIS requirements, if applicable (e.g., relabeled, remarked, or issued a replacement certificate).

This dataset is updated around the 15th of each month and contains each shipment with product that was refused entry. To access these datasets or view more information about them, please visit the FSIS Datasets page at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/data-collection-and-reports/data>.

Retail *Lm* Pilot Project Updates

On Jan. 25, 2016, FSIS launched a multi-year nationwide pilot project to assess whether retail delicatessens (delis) are using the recommendations in the document titled [FSIS Best Practices Guidance for Controlling *Lm* in Retail Delicatessens](#). Since January 2016, FSIS has assessed a total of 6,105 retail delis to determine the adoption rate of the recommendations. FSIS continues to track progress for this pilot project in its [Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Plan](#) and the [FSIS Strategic Plan, FY 2017-2021](#).

As of the first quarter in fiscal year (FY) 2020, FSIS achieved its target with 1,314 assessed retail delis following 92% of the 33 recommendations, over the previous 12 months (target 92%).

Under its strategic and annual plans, FSIS is also tracking whether the retail delis assessed are following all of the top eight recommendations identified in the FSIS retail *Lm* guidance. The top eight recommendations can be found on pages 1-2 of the [FSIS Directive 10.310.1- Pilot Project: Control of *Listeria monocytogenes* in Retail Delicatessens](#).

As of the first quarter in FY 2020, FSIS exceeded its target with 70% of the 1,223 assessed retail delis following all eight of the most important recommendations, over the previous 12 months (target 63%). The results are similar to last fiscal year, with FSIS meeting or exceeding its targets for both measures.

Retailers can refer questions regarding the *Lm* pilot project to FSIS through [askFSIS](#) or by telephone at 1-800-233-3935. When submitting a question, retailers should use the "Submit a Question tab" and enter "Retail *Lm*" in the subject field, select "General Inspection Policy" for the product, "Sampling" for the category, and "Domestic (U.S.) Only" for the policy arena.

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Policy Update

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 updates were recently issued:

FSIS Notice 07-20 - Extension of Delayed Implementation of Verification of Revised Appendix A and B

FSIS Notice 08-20 - Concur E-Travel System Update - Expense Receipt Requirements

Docket No. FSIS-2020-0001 - Notice of Request for Renewal of an Approved Information Collection (Nutrition Labeling of Major Cuts of Single-Ingredient Raw Meat or Poultry Products)

Docket No. FSIS-2020-0003 - Notice of Request for Revision of an Approved Information Collection (Advanced Meat Recovery)