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Food Safety and Inspection Service

Small Plant News



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Cooperative Interstate Shipment – Providing Opportunities for States and Small Plants

By *Natasha Williams*

The Cooperative Interstate Shipment idea first emerged 6 years ago with the passage of the 2008 Farm Bill. The objective was for the Federal Government to create greater business opportunities for small plants in the meat and poultry business.

Now, the idea has blossomed into the Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) Program, which gives State-inspected establishments the ability to ship products outside of State lines, which was previously prohibited.

The turnkey is that the participating States responsible for inspecting these plants enforce the standards of the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) under the oversight of FSIS. State inspectors assigned to CIS plants must go through mandatory FSIS training.

FSIS will reimburse at least 60 percent of the costs that participating States incur.

According to FSIS Directive 5740.1, “Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program,” meat and poultry products would bear the official USDA mark of inspection, a seal recognized around the world as a symbol of food safety. A small plant entering into a State CIS agreement could open markets that were previously unattainable.

CIS complements the USDA “Know Your Farmer; Know Your Food” initiative, which



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Getting Started in the CIS Program

Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), parts 416.1 through 416.5;

then you are not in compliance with all Federal standards and you will not be selected for the program.

For further information about getting started, contact the Small Plant Help Desk at (877) 374-7435 or contact your respective State Meat and Poultry Inspection Program Director listed in the following table.

- Submit labels to FSIS' Selected Establishment Coordinator (within the Office of Field Operations), who will forward the labels to the FSIS Labeling and Program Delivery Staff for review, unless those labels are eligible for generic approval;

- Obtain the same water source and sewage system approval that FSIS requires for federally regulated establishments;

- Develop a written Standard Operating Procedure for Sanitation that complies with 9 CFR, parts 416.11 through 416.16; and

- Develop a written hazard analysis and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point plan that complies with 9 CFR, Part 417.

These criteria reflect the standards that federally regulated establishments are required to meet to obtain a Federal grant of inspection under 9 CFR, Part 304 and 9 CFR Part 381. Therefore, the same rule applies to State plants that want to be in the CIS Program. If you do not meet all of these requirements,

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Cooperative Interstate Shipment

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25 or fewer employees; be in compliance with all requirements under the State inspection program; and be in compliance with all Federal requirements under the Federal Meat Inspection Act, Poultry Products Inspection Act, and their implementing regulations.

If you're interested in CIS, but your State doesn't have a current CIS agreement, then what should you do?

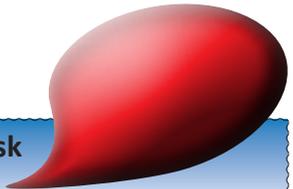
Dr. Michael Hockman, Director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Meat Inspection Division, recommends first contacting your State Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) Agency.

"We conducted a survey of licensed establishments that desired the CIS Program. We received 34 responses, with 15 plants applying for selection," he said. "Currently, we have seven plants operating under the program and will have five additional plants operating this year. This program is great because it gives establishments the option to expand their market."

For more information regarding the CIS Program and how to get your State involved, contact the Small Plant Help Desk at (877) 374-7435 or Infosource@fsis.usda.gov.

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Commonly Asked Questions & Answers

- Q** *Can an establishment that is in full compliance with all requirements of the Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) Program voluntarily leave the program and conduct custom-exempt or retail-exempt activities?*
- A** Yes. An establishment that is in full compliance with all requirements of the CIS may voluntarily leave the CIS Program and conduct custom exempt or retail exempt activities if the establishment conducts operations that qualify for such an exemption under 9 CFR 303.1 or 9 CFR 381.10.