

**National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection
October 12-13, 2006**

Update on State Reviews

Purpose

The purpose of this update is to provide an overall status and highlight the changes to the FY2006 manual. FSIS continues to strengthen State MPI program oversight through the implementation of a risk-based on-site review program to ensure reviews are conducted at least every three years.

Manual

During FY 2006, Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) continued the comprehensive reviews of State meat and poultry inspection (MPI) programs. In August, FSIS issued the annual *FSIS Manual for State Meat and Poultry Inspection Program Reviews*. The revised manual updates and clarifies the methodology, criteria, and process used to determine whether each State program meets, and can maintain for a period of 12 months, the mandated “at least equal to” standard on all nine State review components.

FSIS has completed the reviews and data analysis for the 28 states and will complete the final state determination reports in January 2007.

The manual consists of a two-part approach: (1) Self-assessment: Submission, Review, and Determination, and (2) On-site: Review and Determination. The first part of the manual, dealing with the self-assessment submission, review, and determination process, provides instructions to State MPI programs for completing their self-assessments and instructions for FSIS review teams for verifying the State program self-assessments and making annual self-assessment determinations. The second part of the manual, dealing with the on-site review, provides instructions and instruments for FSIS reviewers for conducting on-site reviews and making on-site determinations. The manual divides the program into 9 components: Statutory Authority and Food Safety Regulations, Inspection, Product Sampling, Staffing and Training, Humane Handling, Other Consumer Protection, Enforcement, Civil Rights, and Funding and Financial Accountability.

The manual has been reviewed by FSIS and representatives of the National Association of State Meat and Food Inspection Directors and updated annually to reflect changes in FSIS policy and procedures and lessons learned. Each State has received a copy of the updated manual for guidance in completing their required annual self-assessment, understanding the current on-site review policy and procedures, and understanding determination procedures. State Programs are required to submit completed self-assessment checklists with all supporting documentation to the FSIS Federal State Audit Branch by November 30th.

Changes to the 2006 State Review Manual

- Elimination of an initial and final determination of a State’s “at least equal to” status. FSIS is eliminating the “two-stage” determination process. Instead, there will now be a single annual determination for each State’s self-assessment and a single determination for each State’s on-site review.
- Changes regarding the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (HMSA). Compliance with the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act, previously an element of Component 2 – Inspection, is now an element of Component 1 – Statutory Authority and Food Safety Regulations. In order to demonstrate compliance with the HMSA, each State must show that they have either adopted the Act itself, or have adopted the HMSA regulations (found in 9 CFR 313) into their code and demonstrate that they have the legal authority to enforce the Act or the regulations.
- Changes in Component 3 – Sampling. Component 3 has been reworded to provide clarity and asks that each State provide more specific information on the details of their overall sampling program. This revision also addresses chain of custody information for samples at the laboratory.
- Emphasizing the importance of Component 9 – Funding and Financial Accountability. FSIS has placed increased emphasis on funding and financial accountability, and is asking that each State provide assurance that they have the funding to operate their inspection program throughout the ensuing 12-month period. The revision to this component also provides clarification related to the annual submission of financial documents.
- New Regulations and Directives. The 2006 State Review Manual has been updated to include FSIS regulations and directives issued and implemented subsequent to the publication of the previous State review manual.
- Additional requirements for supporting documentation. The 2006 State Review Manual requires specific supporting documentation to show that each State is operating in an “at least equal to” manner and can maintain the program for the next 12 months.

NACMPI Input

The NACMPI addressed the issue of State reviews on June 23, 2003. The committee defined “at least equal to” and provided advice on the criteria FSIS should use to evaluate each of the review components. FSIS incorporated the committee’s definition of “at least equal to” in the new review manual and procedures. FSIS also incorporated the committee’s suggestion that evaluation criteria focus on program outcomes. State cooperative programs receive up to 50% re-imbusement for operating cost.

Next Steps

FSIS is preparing a summary report and final review and determination reports for each State. All 28 State programs received an initial determination of “at least equal to”. We expected to complete the final determination for the on-site reviews in January 2007.

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