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FSIS Docket Clerk  
Food Safety and Inspection Service  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Room 102 Cotton Annex Building  
300 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington D.C. 20250-3700

**RE: FSIS Docket No. 99-962N Draft Report- The Future of FSIS Veterinarians:  
Public Health Professionals for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

To whom it may concern,

As an aspiring veterinarian student, I have an interest in the proposed rule discussed in the draft report shown above. This report defines and explains the role that veterinarians will have in implementing the new HACCP plan. This is a potential area of practice for future veterinarians.

The draft report stated that with the new HACCP plan the in-house veterinarians would have a more active role in the slaughter and processing plants. Before they were there only to perform sight, smell, and touch diagnosis. With the proposed plan that is now being implemented the in-house veterinarians will be responsible not only for the care of the animals and the inspection of the meat, but will also be part of the managerial team.

Since veterinarians are capable of performing lab tests, collecting samples, offering a potential explanation, and help in controlling an outbreak of disease, they will need less training than if a non-veterinarian was given this job. They have been taught the skills and knowledge needed to perform all the necessary tasks for a HACCP plant. As quoted in the draft report "FSIS should expand the field/in-plant veterinarians' role for these food safety activities as facilitators, creators, and/or managers of teams and partnerships to address industry and consumer needs from farm to table." They should make sure that there is plenty of time for the veterinarians to inspect the live animals as well as make sure that the HACCP plan is being implemented.

By using a certified veterinarian instead of a manager/producer to perform these tasks the FSIS is making sure that HACCP is working. There is less training involved for a veterinarian and they are better equipped to run tests, take samples, make a diagnosis, and confirm suspicions if there is a disease outbreak. With an in-house veterinarian the disease outbreak can be detected and controlled a lot sooner and less people will be affected.

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I am in support of the plan discussed in detail in the draft report mentioned above. I feel that having an in-house veterinarian will allow plants to be more productive and safer for the consumer. The HACCP will help to also make the food safer for consumers. This will also give veterinarians a new way to utilize their skills in a place other than clinical work. They will be able to utilize their pathological and managerial skills better.