

Small Plant NEWS

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Small Plant NEWS

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How to Access Directives on FSIS' Web Site

By Jane Johnson

As a small plant operator, you probably already know that FSIS issues directives to provide official communications and instruction to Agency personnel in carrying out their functions. These directives are usually issued for an indefinite duration and are identified by a series number and title. It's important for you to familiarize yourself with them and what they cover.

The directives are categorized into 12 series. When you're searching for a particular directive, start by looking under the series number that matches the broad subject matter category the directive covers:

1,000-4,000 Series:

These are administrative regulations for FSIS employees in support of workplace policies and procedures.

5,000 Series: Program Services

- FSIS Federal grants of inspection
- Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP)
- Inspection procedures
- In-depth verification (IDV) reviews
- Federal-State issues
- Cooperative programs
- Custom exemptions

6,000 Series: Slaughter Inspection

- Finished product standards
- Zero-tolerance for fecal material
- Anti-microbials
- Carcass spraying
- Humane handling

7,000 Series: Processed Products

- Processing performance standards
- Labeling

8,000 Series: Compliance Evaluation and Enforcement

- Recalls
- Detentions
- Seizures
- Condemnations

9,000 Series: Exports and Imports

- Exports
- Imports

10,000 Series: Laboratory Services

- *E. coli*
- *Salmonella*

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- Sample seals
- Residues
- Sampling programs

11,000 Series: Facilities, Equipment & Sanitation

- Sanitation standard operating procedures
- Sanitation performance standards

12,000 Series: Voluntary Inspection

- Voluntary reimbursable inspection services

Now that you have a broad overview of what directives each series covers, let's learn how to find them on FSIS' Web site. Go to www.fsis.usda.gov.

Option 1

On the left side of this home page, you'll see **Browse by Subject** in a blue box. Click on **Regulations & Policies**. This will take you to the Web page titled **Regulations & Policies** located at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/index.asp.



Scroll down and click on **Regulations, Directives & Notices**. Below you will see **FSIS Directives Index**. Click on it, and it will take you to the **Directives** introductory page, www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/Directives/index.asp.

One of the first things you will see is a link that says "Receive automatic update alerts by email." If you click on it and provide your email address, you will be sent

alerts whenever there is a change to any of the Agency's existing directives or when new directives are issued. If you prefer, there is a similar link on each directive series page that allows you to sign up to receive email alerts for that particular series only.

Here you'll see the series numbers mentioned above. Click on the series number title and you'll be taken to a page with a listing of all available directives in that series. The directives' series numbers are listed on the left and the titles are on the right. Scroll through the directives' series numbers and titles until you find the one you want. Then click on the directive number to read or print the directive.

Don't forget, there might be additional documents that accompany the directive—these are listed below the directive's title. You'll also need to click on these to open, read, or print them. These documents provide valuable information and are meant to be used with the directive.

At the top of each directive series page, you'll see **View Directives by Series No.** followed by a drop-down menu. If you want to go to a different series, just click on the drop-down menu and click on the series number. You will be immediately redirected to the new series page.



If you don't see "directives" listed in blue under **Regulations, Directives & Notices** on the **Regulations & Policies** page located at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/index.asp, click on the title **Regulations, Directives & Notices**. Click on the title **FSIS Directives Index**, and you should be directed to the **Directives** introductory page at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/Directives/index.asp.

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Option 3

You can also find FSIS directives by using the **Search FSIS** feature on the FSIS homepage at www.fsis.usda.gov. You'll find this feature at the top of the blue box on the left side. Just type the word "directive" into the search box and click "Go." The first result listed should be "FSIS Directives." Click on "FSIS Directives" and you'll be taken to the **Directives** introductory page.

You could also type the directive series number into the **Search FSIS** box and click "Go." One of the first links you will see is a link to that series. Click on that link and you'll find all the directives in that series.

Directly under the **Search FSIS** box, there is a drop-down menu that allows you to narrow your search. The default setting is "All FSIS," meaning the search will be conducted across the entire FSIS Web site. To narrow the search, click on the arrow of the drop-down menu and click "Directive & Notices," then click "Go."

Remember, when conducting any search, be careful what search term you use. If your term is too specific, the result you're looking for may not be found. If too broad, you will get too many results. You can also click on **Search Tips**, located just under this drop-down menu, for useful advice about conducting a search on FSIS' Web site.



Just under the title **Search Tips** is the title **A to Z Index**. Click on it, and you'll be taken to a Web page with an alphabetical listing of terms. Click on the letter "D" and you'll be taken to the section of terms beginning with the letter "D." Look through the list and you will see two titles for directives: **Directives, administrative**; and, **Directives, inspection related**. Clicking **Directives, administrative** takes you to the **Administrative Regulations Index** Web page at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/

Option 2

Another way to find FSIS directives is to choose the **Browse by Audience** feature in the blue box on the left side of the FSIS homepage at www.fsis.usda.gov. Click on the arrow in the drop-down menu and click on **Small/Very Small Plants**. You'll be taken to the **Small & Very Small Plants** Web page at www.fsis.usda.gov/Small_Very_Small_Plants/index.asp. Scroll down toward the bottom and you'll see the title **FSIS Directives Index**. Click on it, and you'll be directed to the Web page for the 5,000 series of directives (www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/5000_Series-Program_Services/index.asp). To access another series, use the "View Directives by Series No." drop-down menu as previously described.



Commonly Asked Questions & Answers

Q. *Are antimicrobial agents, other than organic acids, permitted to be used on a continuous basis on conveyor belts if they are approved as an antimicrobial agent in the production of meat and poultry products? What are the conditions for their use? When do the antimicrobial agents have to be included on a product label?*

A. Yes, antimicrobial agents approved for use in the production of meat and poultry products may be used on conveyor belts provided they are followed by a potable water rinse. Substances listed in 21 *Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 178.1010* may be used in sanitizing solutions on food-contact surfaces with only adequate draining (no water rinse) before contact with food.

Q. *What are the requirements when a plant that slaughters or processes more than one species switches from one to the other and for which the labeling is intended to address only one of the species?*

A. While the regulations do not explicitly require complete clean-up before the switch, failure

to conduct a clean-up sufficient to remove all visible debris would likely result in regulatory concerns for FSIS. These concerns include the following:

- Finished product could be considered adulterated because of the creation of an insanitary condition during processing due to the presence of visible debris from another species;
- Finished product could be considered adulterated because of the incorporation of a food safety hazard present in one species might not be adequately addressed in the hazard analysis; and
- Finished product could be considered both adulterated and misbranded because of species substitution.

Depending on the extent of species cross contamination, there are several regulations that could be affected, including labeling [Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 317.8 (for meat) and 381.129 (for poultry), 417 (for HACCP) and 416 (for SSOPs)].

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Administrative_Regulations_Index/index.asp. Clicking **Directives, inspection related** takes you to the **Directives** introductory page at *www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/Directives/index.asp*.

FSIS Notices

FSIS inspection-related notices are temporary instructions issued in support of food safety regulations and are scheduled to expire no later than 1 year from the issuance date. They do not have series numbers. They are numbered sequentially throughout the year. All FSIS notices are listed on the same page, **FSIS Notices Index**, located

on the FSIS Web site at *www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/FSIS_Notices_Index/index.asp*.

You may use the same methods as described above to navigate to this page. Just click on the titles containing the word “notices” instead of “directives.” There’s also a link on the **FSIS Notices Index** page to sign up for email alerts when new notices are issued.

As a suggestion, bookmark the pages so you can access them quickly in the future. Just go to the toolbar at the top and click on “Favorites” and then click on “Add to Favorites.”

If you have problems accessing a computer or prefer to speak to someone on our staff, call the Small Plant Help Desk at 1-877-FSISHelp (877-374-7435). The Help Desk is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday. You may also email *InfoSource@fsis.usda.gov*.