

Enforcing Food Safety Standard for Livestock Postmortem

References: FSIS Directive 6420.2, Regulations: 9 CFR 310.17(a), 310.18, and part 417.

FSIS enforces food safety standards for fecal, ingesta, and milk contamination on livestock carcasses and on head meat, cheek meat, and weasand meat from beef through postmortem inspection activities at establishments that slaughter livestock. The establishment must meet the food safety standard for visible fecal, milk, and ingesta contamination on livestock carcasses at or after the **postmortem rail inspection station**, regardless of the location of the CCP. The CCP for pathogen contamination or visible contaminants may be at other locations as supported by the hazard analysis.

- For example, the establishment may locate the critical control point after the postmortem rail inspection station.
- In other cases, the establishment may have a CCP prior to the postmortem rail inspection station.

Note: Regardless of the location of the CCP, FSIS off-line inspectors will verify compliance with the zero tolerance standards at the rail inspection station. When the on-line inspectors at the rail station find feces, ingesta, or milk on livestock carcasses, the establishment reexamines and reconditions the entire carcass (trimming all contamination). **On-line** inspectors are to **stop the slaughter line** for carcass reexamination and reconditioned by the establishment **unless:**

- The establishment has elected to provide a rail-out loop to rail contaminated carcasses off-line for reexamination, trimming, and positioning back on the line for final inspection, **and**
- The IIC has not determined that the establishment's rail-out procedure is inadequate to prevent carcass accumulation or cross-contamination of other carcasses.

Additionally, on-line inspection program personnel are to notify the IIC or, if unavailable, other off-line inspection program personnel when they believe that:

- An establishment's rail-out procedure is inadequate to prevent carcass accumulation or cross-contamination of other carcasses, or
- An establishment's slaughter or dressing processes are not under control (for example, when repeated presentation of carcasses contaminated with fecal material, ingesta, or milk for postmortem inspection at the rail inspection station indicates failure to control dressing processes).

Establishments that slaughter beef must also meet the food safety standard for no visible fecal, milk, or ingesta contamination on head meat, cheek meat, and weasand meat at the end of the harvesting process after all of the establishment controls and interventions have been implemented. This verification may take place at the time of packaging or when product is placed in a container for storage.

When verifying the food safety standard in beef slaughter establishments, inspection personnel should verify that the establishment is meeting all of the requirements, including no fecal, milk, or ingesta contamination on beef carcasses, and the head meat, cheek meat, and weasand meat from beef.

In beef slaughter establishments, if the on-line head inspector finds fecal, milk, or ingesta contamination, the contamination must be removed by the establishment before the head can be passed. Also, if the on-line inspector finds fecal, milk, or ingesta contamination on weasand meat during the harvesting step, the establishment must remove the contamination before the weasand meat can be passed. If fecal, milk, or ingesta contamination is repeatedly found, on-line inspection personnel are to notify the off-line inspection personnel. The off-line inspection personnel will perform verification activities to determine if the establishment's process and sanitary dressing procedures are controlling fecal, milk, and ingesta contamination during the head meat or weasand meat production process.

IICs and other off-line inspection program personnel will verify the adequacy of establishment procedures to ensure compliance with the food safety standard for fecal, ingesta, or milk contamination, **when notified by on-line inspection program personnel of an apparent problem or when scheduled by PBIS.**

Follow these steps when verifying establishment procedures for livestock carcasses:

1. **Off-line** inspection program personnel are to randomly select carcass units at the **postmortem rail inspection station** for examination on-line, at or after the postmortem rail inspection station, **regardless of the location of the CCP.** (This inspection should occur before the final wash. In situations where this is difficult, such as those related to worker safety, the IIC should develop appropriate procedures with plant management in order for this inspection to be properly conducted).
2. Based on the expected slaughter volume for that day (number of animals), determine the number of carcass units to be examined, using the following table. If carcasses are split, each half carcass is $\frac{1}{2}$ of a carcass unit. (Select two times as many half-carcasses.)

Slaughter Volume (# of animals per day)	# of Carcass Units (Unit = whole carcass)
100 or less	2
101 to 250	4
251 to 500	7
More than 500	11

Note: It is not necessary to examine all of these units at the same time.

3. Examine the selected carcass units using the same technique that inspection program personnel use at the postmortem rail inspection station.

Follow these steps in beef slaughter establishments when verifying establishment procedures for beef head meat, cheek meat, and weasand meat:

1. Review the HACCP plan.
2. Examine the same amount of product as the establishment has listed in the HACCP plan for monitoring procedures. (Note: If the establishment does not have documents supporting the monitoring procedures and frequency, there is noncompliance with 9 CFR 417.5(a)(2).)
3. Select product after all of the establishment controls and interventions have been applied. Verification may occur at the time of packaging or when product is placed in a container for storage.

03J01

Off-line inspection program personnel who find feces, ingesta, or milk on carcasses in livestock slaughter establishments, and the head meat, cheek meat, and weasand meat of beef in beef slaughter establishments as part of an **03J01** procedure will:

- a. Notify establishment of the contamination
- b. Verify that the corrective action requirements of 9 CFR 417.3 are met.
- c. Issue an NR using the “monitoring” trend indicator.
- d. Perform procedure 03J02. Focus on the specific production thereafter, in which one or more contaminated carcasses or carcass parts were found.

03J02

Off-line inspection program personnel who find feces, ingesta, or milk on carcasses in livestock slaughter establishments, and the head meat, cheek meat, and weasand meat of beef in beef slaughter establishments as part of an **03J02** procedure will:

- a. Notify establishment of the contamination finding.
- b. Complete the 03J02 procedure for that product, including verification of the corrective action requirement.
- c. Document all noncompliances on an NR using the most appropriate trend indicator. If the only noncompliance was the fecal material, milk or ingesta contamination, the monitoring trend indicator would be documented.

Enforcing the Food Safety Standard for Poultry Postmortem

References: FSIS Directive 6420.2, 381.65(e), and part 417.

FSIS enforces a food safety standard for visible fecal material on poultry carcasses and poultry carcass parts through postmortem inspection and reinspection activities at poultry slaughter establishments. This food safety standard also is reflected in the regulations. FSIS views preventing carcasses with visible fecal contamination from entering the chilling tank as critical to preventing the cross-contamination of other carcasses.

In each establishment slaughtering poultry, in conjunction with other postmortem inspection and reinspection activities, **off-line** inspection personnel are to perform fecal contamination checks.

These checks are performed at either the same location as pre-chill testing in establishments inspected under the finished products standards (FPS), or the inspection station where Acceptable Quality Level (AQL) testing is conducted in a plant under traditional inspection, regardless of the location of the plant's CCP.

To perform a fecal contamination check, inspectors are to select 10 carcasses randomly (using an established FSIS method), and Examine the selected carcasses off line using the following inspection procedure:

- For the outside back – While holding the carcass, with the back of the carcass toward the observer, start at the hock area and observe the hocks, back part of the legs, tail area, back of the carcass and top side of the wings.
- For the outside front – Turn the carcass and observe the bottom side of the wings, breast, and front part of the legs.
- For the inside – Observe the inside surfaces of the carcass and the abdominal flaps and fat.
- For the neck flap area – Observe the neck flap and the thoracic inlet area.

At least two fecal checks will be performed for each line on each shift. Use the procedure code 03J01 or 03J02. If inspection program personnel are only conducting the 10-bird check to verify that the establishment's process is producing carcasses free of visible fecal material, they are performing procedure 03J01. If inspection program personnel are verifying other HACCP regulatory requirements in conjunction with the 10-bird check, inspection program personnel can be performing the 03J01 or 03J02 procedure.

If no visible fecal material is found on a check, the Procedure Schedule will be marked as performed to indicate compliance.

If fecal material is found, the inspector will:

- Notify the establishment of the contamination.
- Verify that the corrective action requirements of 9 CFR 417.3 are met.
- Complete a Noncompliance Record (NR) and mark the monitoring trend indicator.
- If the noncompliance was found when performing an 03J01 procedure, perform 03J02 to ensure the adequacy of the HACCP system for the specific lot of product.

If ingesta is observed during the fecal contamination check, the establishment should be notified of this finding. The ingesta should be removed from the bird. There would be no noncompliance for this finding.