

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

FSIS NOTICE

09-06

3/1/06

CERTIFYING BEEF PRODUCTS UNDER EXPORT VERIFICATION (EV) PROGRAMS

I. PURPOSE

This notice provides the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) personnel with new instructions related to the FSIS certification process for meat products exported under EV programs. This notice announces that when FSIS personnel certify products for export produced under Export Verification (EV) programs, they are to verify, among other requirements, that the applicant provides a signed document from the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) confirming that each EV requirement has been met by the establishment or establishments that produced the product being presented for export.

II. BACKGROUND

The Audit, Review, and Compliance Branch of AMS has been assigned responsibility for reviewing and approving companies as eligible suppliers of meat and meat products under the USDA Export Verification (EV) programs. The EV programs outline the specified product requirements for individual countries. See the web page link below for additional information.

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/arc/EV.htm>

III. APPROVAL OF PLANTS UNDER AN EV PROGRAM AND RELATED FSIS RESPONSIBILITIES

A. When a plant requests to be audited by AMS for EV program approval, the Technical Service Center (TSC) will be notified by AMS.

1. Upon notification, the TSC will acknowledge receipt of the notification.
2. The TSC will immediately notify the District Office (DO) where the establishment is located.

DISTRIBUTION: Inspection Offices;
T/A Inspectors; Plant Mgt; T/A Plant
Mgt; TRA; ABB; TSC; Import Offices

NOTICE EXPIRES: 3/1/07

OPI: OPPED

3. The DO will ensure that any inspection program employee who may be involved with the certification of product for export under the EV program receives the appropriate training within five business days.

B. If the plant passes the initial audit and is approved for an EV program, the TSC will receive an electronically-transmitted copy of the audit. The TSC will notify the DO of the approval. The TSC will receive subsequent audit reports from AMS and maintain them on file by establishment. The TSC will acknowledge receipt of these audit reports.

C. As a requirement for EV program approval from AMS, the plant will maintain a copy of all EV program audit reports in its records, and will need to discuss the audit reports, as part of their AMS approval, with FSIS inspection program personnel during a weekly meeting or before the first EV export.

D. If a plant is delisted, the TSC will be notified of the delisting by AMS and will notify the DO. The DO will immediately notify the affected in-plant personnel. The TSC will receive an electronically-transmitted copy of the notice of delisting, and, if applicable, the audit report. The TSC will acknowledge receipt of the delisting. The TSC will place the delisting and the audit report in its file in the establishment.

IV. VERIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR EV PROGRAMS

A. Off-line FSIS inspection program personnel should ascertain (e.g., by asking the establishment at the weekly PBIS meeting) whether the establishment has an AMS-approved EV program. Inspection program personnel should be aware of the location and contents of the approved establishment EV program in order to verify export requirements relating to proper execution of the program.

B. Inspection program personnel may find a list of products intended for export approved under the EV Program in the establishment's Quality System Assessment (QSA) Quality System Manual as required under the EV program. The list is to contain all beef items, including offal products, that are intended for export. In addition, the list is to include the specific product code numbers and an Institutional Meat Product Specification item number or a detailed item description. Maintaining this information is an AMS requirement as part of an approved EV program. Inspection program personnel may also find the list of products at:

<http://inside.fsis.usda.gov/fsis/public/static/index.jsp>

(From the left-hand navigation area, select "Policy & Guidance" from under Protecting Public Health)

NOTE: In the situations where a supplier and fabricator are separate establishments, the fabricator is to maintain a list of plants that are approved EV suppliers, as required by AMS. In addition, AMS will require the plant to maintain an up-to-date list of products that each EV supplier is approved to provide under its approved EV program. As part of the approved EV program, FSIS will have access to these plant records.

C. If, based on their verification activities, inspection program personnel develop concerns that an AMS-approved EV establishment is not properly executing its EV program (e.g., attempting to ship product that is not eligible for the importing country), they are not to sign export applications for the product in question and are to:

1. notify AMS at ARCBranch@usda.gov, and provide the following information in the message:

- a. establishment name, address, and number;
- b. product type, product code, and quantity of product;
- c. date of production, lot number, and shift;
- d. date and nature of observation;
- e. name of country for which product is intended;
- f. export certificate number (if applicable);
- g. any other information to verify claim; and
- h. their name.

2. send a courtesy copy of the notification to their immediate FSIS supervisor, to the TSC (TSC.BEV@fsis.usda.gov) and maintain a copy of the message in the inspection office export file.

NOTE: If any of the problems with the EV requirements also are regulatory non-compliance, inspection program personnel in official establishments are to take the appropriate enforcement actions and issue a Non-compliance Record (NR).

V. VERIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR EXPORTED PRODUCT UNDER EV PROGRAMS

A. For products under an EV program and upon receiving FSIS Form 9060-6, Application for Export Certificate, an inspection program employee is to verify that (following the procedures in FSIS Directive 9000.1):

1. the establishment is on the AMS EV list as approved to export to the importing country, and that the product was derived from cattle slaughtered after the date the establishment received AMS approval to export that type of product to that country (see link above for the date of approval); and

2. each of the products listed on the application is eligible for export to the country under the EV program (see: Public Folders/All Public Folders/OFO/FAIM).

B. After determining that the establishment itself is eligible to export to the destination country, and that the specific products are eligible to be exported to that country, the inspection program employee will then re-inspect the product as set out in FSIS Directives 9000.1, Revision 1, and 9040.1, Revision 3.

C. If the application or product is not acceptable (e.g., the application is not complete or regulatory requirements have not been met), the inspection program employee is not to sign the application and is to follow the instructions as set out in FSIS Directives 9000.1, Revision 1, and 9040.1, Revision 3.

NOTE: If the application or product is not acceptable because an EV requirement has not been met, the inspection program employee, in addition to returning the application un-signed, is to follow the instructions in paragraph IV. C. 1. and 2. above.

D. If the application and product are acceptable, the inspection program employee is to follow the instructions in FSIS Directive 9000.1, Revision 1, regarding signing the application and issuing FSIS Form 9060-5, Meat and Poultry Products Export Certification of Wholesomeness.

E. As part of its EV-approved program, the establishment, before it can forward the certificate to an FSIS certifying official for signature, must receive a letter from AMS confirming that the EV program requirements have been met and the products are eligible for export as provided in:

1. a copy of the signed application (FSIS Form 9060-6);

2. the unsigned certificate (FSIS Form 9060-5); and

3. any other certificates required by the importing country, including letterhead certificates.

F. When AMS signs the letter, they will forward a copy to the establishment. The TSC will receive an electronic copy. The TSC will acknowledge receipt of the letter.

G. When signing an export certificate, an FSIS certifying official (e.g., Public Health Veterinarian or consumer safety inspector) should receive the following from an establishment:

1. the original FSIS Form 9060-5 and any other certificates required by the importing country, including letterhead certificates, and supporting documents; and

2. a copy of the letter from AMS that confirms:

a. that AMS conducted a review of the required documents, and slaughter and processing plant information, as listed; and

b. that AMS has determined the items listed are eligible items approved for export to the country listed on the certificate and from the facilities listed.

H. When an FSIS certifying official receives the documents in paragraph G. above, he or she is to verify, as set out in FSIS Directive 9000.1, Revision 1, that the documents are complete and accurate and that the AMS letter confirms that EV program requirements were met.

1. If any of the documents are not accurate, he or she is to:

a. notify the establishment and explain the problem;

b. document a memorandum of interview; and

c. maintain copies of the documents in question and the memorandum of interview in the government file.

NOTE: If the application or product is not acceptable because an EV requirement has not been met, the certifying official is to follow the instructions in paragraph IV. C. 1. and 2. above; and

2. If all documents are acceptable, sign all certifications and maintain a copy of the AMS letter in the government file along with the certifications.

Direct questions regarding this notice to the Technical Service Center at 1-800-233-3935.



Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy, Program, and Employee Development