

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

<h1 style="margin: 0;">FSIS NOTICE</h1>	68-05	10/6/05
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**VERIFICATION ACTIVITIES AT ESTABLISHMENTS THAT TRANSPORT OR
RECEIVE CATTLE CARCASSES OR PARTS WITH VERTEBRAL COLUMNS THAT
CONTAIN SPECIFIED RISK MATERIALS (SRMs)**

I. PURPOSE

This notice clarifies the verification activities that inspection program personnel are to conduct at establishments that transport or receive cattle carcasses or parts that contain vertebral columns from cattle that were 30 months of age and older at the time of slaughter, or from cattle whose age at the time of slaughter cannot be determined. Vertebral columns (excluding the vertebrae of the tail, the transverse processes of the thoracic and lumbar vertebrae, and the wings of the sacrum) from cattle that were 30 months of age and older at the time of slaughter are SRMs as set out in 9 CFR 310.22.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Under the regulations, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) permits establishments that slaughter cattle to transport carcasses or parts that contain vertebral columns from cattle that were 30 months of age and older at the time of slaughter to another official establishment for processing if both establishments have controls in place to ensure that the SRMs are removed, and that there is proper disposition of them. FSIS Notice 9-04, "Verification Instructions for the Interim Final Rules Regarding Specified Risk Materials (SRMs) in Cattle," explains that the vertebral columns from cattle 30 months of age and older do not have to be removed during the slaughter operation. The notice, in Part III, also explains that, if the SRMs are not removed in the slaughter operation, procedures should be in place to ensure that the vertebral columns are adequately identified as being from cattle 30 months of age and older, and that the means of identification transfers with the vertebral columns until they are removed and appropriately disposed of as inedible. Vertebral columns (excluding the vertebrae of the tail, the transverse processes of the thoracic and lumbar vertebrae, and the wings of the sacrum) from cattle whose age cannot be determined will be deemed SRMs.

DISTRIBUTION: Inspection Offices; T/A Inspectors; Plant Mgt; TRA; ABB; TSC; Import Offices	NOTICE EXPIRES: 10/1/06	OPI: OPPED
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B. This notice clarifies that FSIS will allow the carcasses or parts of carcasses from cattle that were 30 months of age and older at the time of slaughter that contain the vertebral column to move under company control (e.g., through company seals) or under FSIS control (e.g., under USDA seal or accompanied by FSIS Form 7350-1), rather than as required in 9 CFR 325.10 and 318.2(d), to facilitate the transport of these carcasses or parts to a facility where the SRMs can be removed, and there can be proper disposition. Similarly, FSIS will allow the carcasses or parts of carcasses from cattle whose age at the time of slaughter cannot be determined and that contain the vertebral column to move under company control or under FSIS control, as long as they are handled as though they were from animals 30 months of age or older.

III. VERIFICATION ACTIVITIES AT SLAUGHTER ESTABLISHMENTS THAT TRANSPORT CARCASSES OR PARTS WITH VERTEBRAL COLUMNS THAT CONTAIN SRMs

A. Inspection program personnel at an establishment that transports for further processing carcasses or parts of carcasses that contain vertebral columns with SRM portions are to verify that the establishment:

1. maintains control of the carcasses or parts while they are in transit (e.g., through company seals) or ensures that the carcasses or parts move under FSIS control (e.g., under USDA seal or accompanied by FSIS Form 7350-1);

2. ensures that the carcasses or parts are accompanied by documentation that clearly identifies that the carcasses or parts are from cattle that were 30 months of age and older at the time of slaughter or that clearly states that the vertebral column must be removed and disposed of as an SRM;

3. maintains records that identify the official establishment that received the carcasses or parts;

4. incorporates the above procedures into its HACCP System (i.e, HACCP plan, or Sanitation SOPs or other prerequisite program);

B. If inspection program personnel find that the establishment has failed to develop and implement the procedures in paragraph III A, they are to issue a Non-compliance Record (NR) as set forth in FSIS Directive 5000.1, Revision 1, and verify that the establishment takes the proper action to restore regulatory compliance.

IV. VERIFICATION ACTIVITIES AT ESTABLISHMENTS THAT RECEIVE CARCASSES OR PARTS OF CARCASSES WITH VERTEBRAL COLUMNS THAT CONTAIN SRMs

A. Inspection program personnel at establishments that receive for further processing carcasses or parts of carcasses of cattle that contain vertebral columns with SRM portions are to verify that the establishment:

1. has implemented controls to identify carcasses or parts that contain vertebral columns with SRM portions;

2. has implemented controls to ensure that the SRM portions of the vertebral column are removed, segregated from edible materials, and properly disposed of as inedible;

3. has incorporated these controls into its HACCP System (i.e., HACCP plan, or Sanitation SOPs or other prerequisite program); and

4. maintains records that verify that the SRM portions of the vertebral column were removed and disposed of as inedible.

B. Other specific verification procedures will depend on how establishments that receive carcasses or parts of carcasses from cattle for further processing choose to address removal of the SRM portion of the vertebral column.

1. If an establishment only receives carcasses or parts of carcasses from cattle that were 30 months of age and older at the time of slaughter, or processes all carcasses or parts as if they were from cattle 30 months of age and older, FSIS inspection program personnel are to verify that the establishment:

a. documents the receipt of the carcasses or parts, including the official establishment from which the carcasses or parts were received;

b. ensures that the SRM portion is removed and disposed of as inedible; and

c. ensures that the SRM portion of the vertebral columns is removed in a manner that does not contaminate edible product.

2. If an establishment receives for further processing mixed carcasses or parts (i.e., carcasses or parts from cattle that were both 30 months of age and older, and younger than 30 months, at the time of slaughter), inspection program personnel are to verify that the establishment:

a. identifies, through documentation from the supplier, which carcasses or parts are from cattle that were 30 months of age and older at the time of slaughter, and which carcasses or parts were from cattle that were younger than 30 months at the time of slaughter;

b. ensures that carcasses or parts that are from cattle that were 30 months of age and older at the time of slaughter are segregated from the carcasses or parts of cattle that were younger than 30 months at the time of slaughter; and

c. follows the instructions in paragraph IV. B. b.-c.

REMINDER: If an establishment that receives carcasses or parts from cattle both under and over 30 months of age, or that receives only carcasses or parts from cattle that were younger than 30 months at the time of slaughter, cannot demonstrate through documentation from the supplier, that the carcasses or parts are from cattle that were under 30 months at the time of slaughter, 9 CFR 310.22(e) requires that the

establishment handle all carcasses and parts for which such documentation is not provided as if they were from cattle 30 months of age and older at the time of slaughter.

C. If inspection program personnel find that the establishment has failed to develop and implement the procedures in paragraph IV A and B (where applicable), they are to issue an NR as set forth in FSIS Directive 5000.1, Revision 1, and verify that the establishment takes the proper action to restore regulatory compliance.

Direct any questions to the Technical Service Center at 1-800-233-3935.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy S. Duffin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy, Program, and Employee Development