

MEMORANDUM

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Re: FSIS Instructing Inspectors to Survey Establishments Making Antibiotic, Hormone, and Soy Claims

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) recently issued a notice instructing inspectors in establishments to collect data on the use of certain raising and other claims as a prelude to developing a field compliance testing program to verify that various approved claims are accurate based on product testing. The survey covers establishments that produce raw ground beef products, raw chicken parts, and ready-to-eat (RTE) products. Inspectors will complete a “Labeling Claims Questionnaire” to collect information on three types of labeling claims: 1) claims on raw ground beef products that hormones were not administered to the cattle; 2) claims for raw chicken parts that antibiotics were not used in the chicken production; and 3) soy-free claims on RTE products. ^{1/} Claims of limited use of antibiotics for raw chicken parts are not included in the survey.

FSIS intends to use the information collected to conduct an exploratory sampling program to verify that such claims are accurate based on actual product testing. This notice also provides some insight on the types of claims FSIS has reviewed and approved for each of the categories of claims it is evaluating under this notice, as discussed further below.

The notice provides the following examples of specific hormone, antibiotic, and soy labeling claims that have been approved by FSIS, which may be of use to companies developing their own claims:

Hormone-free Claims in Raw Ground Beef

- “No antibiotics administered, no growth stimulants or added hormones”
- “No Antibiotics – No Hormones”
- “Raised without antibiotics, pesticides, or added growth hormones”
- “No added antibiotics or added hormones”

^{1/} See FSIS Notice 21-17, Questionnaire for Certain Labeling Claims on Raw Ground Beef, Raw Chicken Parts and Ready-to-Eat Products, available at https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/c59e4892-9e18-4ebd-a8a0-e777264551fe/21-17.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_TO=url&CACHEID=c59e4892-9e18-4ebd-a8a0-e777264551fe.

- “No added hormones”
- “No added growth hormones”
- “No added steroids or hormones”
- “No added antibiotics or added hormones”
- “No growth promoting substances, injected, fed, or consumed in water”
- “Grass fed beef without hormones and antibiotics added”
- “Raised without added hormones”

Antibiotic-free Claims in Raw Chicken Parts

- “No antibiotics”
- “No antibiotics ever”
- “No antibiotics added”
- “No antibiotics administered, no growth stimulants or added hormones”
- “No antibiotics administered”
- “No Antibiotics – Hormones”
- “Raised without antibiotics”
- “Raised without antibiotics, pesticides, or added growth hormones”
- “No added antibiotics or added hormones”

Limited Use of Antibiotics Claims in Raw Chicken Parts

- “No antibiotics administered in the last 150 days” (this number can range from 30-200 days)
- “Raised without sub-therapeutic antibiotics”
- “No growth promoting antibiotics, antibiotics responsibly used only when needed for treatment or prevention of illness”
- “No antibiotics used important to human medicine as defined by World Health Organization”
- “Responsible use of antibiotics. Only ionopheres. No antibiotics used important to human health as defined by the World Health Organization in 2011.”
- “NO ANTIBIOTICS**” “**Antibiotics responsibly used only when needed for treatment or prevention of illness.”
- “No sub-therapeutic antibiotics, antibiotics only given in case of illness”

Note that FSIS has indicated that these claims about the limited use of antibiotics fall outside the scope of the Labeling Claims Questionnaire established by this notice.

Soy-free Claims in RTE Products:

- “Soy free”
- “No soy”

FSIS will use the data collected to direct future surveillance sampling programs to verify the accuracy of these claims.

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The information gathering is the agency’s first step toward developing and executing compliance testing to verify the categories of claims identified. Future planned compliance testing by the agency underscores the importance of companies making hormone-free, raised without antibiotics, or soy-

free claims to maintain internal programs to ensure ongoing compliance with claims approved by FSIS.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.