



NATIONAL MEAT ASSOCIATION

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NMA RESPONDS TO OIG AUDIT OF RESIDUE PROGRAM

The meat industry supports USDA/FSIS efforts to prevent and eliminate residues from the meat supply. NMA works with members who harvest cattle to trace livestock that are found to have violative levels back to their source and to work with FSIS to this end.

Both USDA and FDA have taken a more aggressive approach to assure residues are detected and prevented from entering the meat supply, and the industry has cooperated fully with them. Just last month NMA released an **NMA Resource** to its members with new information on how to more quickly identify repeat violators and thereby ensure that their livestock **never** enter commercial food channels.

Using this information, USDA has been able to publish and keep up to date a list of producers who have sold animals with violative levels of residue. This list, the "Same Source Supplier List," is available on the FSIS website and is updated weekly. Firms who slaughter livestock are very familiar with the Same Source Supplier List availability and have prerequisite programs to cross-check with it daily.

Carcasses are screened for residues by FSIS using a KIS test (Kidney Inhibition Swab). Carcasses will be screened if they are showing signs of illness (what are called "pathologies and conditions that warrant retention and testing") or if they come from a repeat residue violator. If a violation is detected, those animals **never** enter the food supply. Repeat violations will lead packers to stop buying from certain producers. This is creating a narrowing window of opportunity for violations.

"It appears that the Inspector General Audit released today may not take account of some of the more recent steps taken by FSIS to work cooperatively with the industry," said NMA CEO Barry Carpenter. "However, NMA welcomes increased cooperative efforts by FSIS with its sister agencies, FDA and EPA, in following up with and requesting corrective actions of producers who have repeat violations."

The FSIS focus on slaughterers helps keep the meat out of the market, but the ability to trace cattle back to the producer is essential to eliminate the problem. NMA will continue to work with regulatory agencies to improve surveillance, traceability and analytical testing to assure that livestock entering the food supply are free of unacceptable veterinary residues.

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