

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

FSIS NOTICE	41-06	7/12/06
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INSPECTION OF OX TAILS

NOTE: This notice is not to be implemented until: July 26, 2006.

It has come to the Agency's attention that there are inconsistencies in the methodology used by inspection program personnel to inspect ox tails. This notice is being issued to reiterate to inspection program personnel that they are to inspect ox tails at all establishments where ox tails are processed. The notice also provides clarification on how inspection program personnel should perform the inspection of ox tails.

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA)(21 U.S.C. 604) authorizes and directs USDA to conduct "a post mortem examination and inspection of the carcasses and parts thereof of all cattle, sheep, swine, goats, horses, mules, and other equines to be prepared at any slaughtering, meat-canning, salting, packing, rendering, or similar establishment...which are capable of use as human food."

Further, 9 CFR 310.1 mandates that Agency inspectors conduct "...a careful post-mortem examination and inspection...of the carcasses and parts thereof of all livestock slaughtered at official establishments."

In regard to the identification of carcasses with severed parts, 9 CFR 310.2 (a) states that "...the head, tail, tongue, thymus gland, and all viscera of each slaughtered animal, and all blood and other parts of such animal to be used in the preparation of meat food products or medical products, shall be handled in such a manner as to identify them with the rest of the carcass and as being derived from the particular animal involved, until the post-mortem examination of the carcass and parts thereof has been completed. Such handling shall include the retention of ear tags, backtags, implants, and other identifying devices affixed to the animal, in such a way to relate them to the carcass until the post-mortem examination has been completed."

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NOTICE EXPIRES: 8/1/07

OPI: OPPED

Inspection program personnel are to inspect all livestock tails using one of the following methodologies:

1. when attached to the carcass (i.e., either naturally left attached or reattached through other means such as pinned to the carcass for presentation):

a. in an “on-the-rail system” with a drop-rail evisceration station or “bed-dress” operation, by observing the tail when performing the inspection task of observing the back of the skinned carcass; or

b. in a “complete-rail-system,” by observing the tail when performing the task of observing the outside of the carcass.

2. when presented with the viscera in a stationary or moving pan, by performing the task of observing the tail when observing the abdominal viscera, esophagus, or spleen, provided:

a. placement of the tail in the pan does not interfere with inspection of the viscera;

b. the position of the tail for inspection in the pan in relation to the viscera is consistent from pan to pan and day to day; and

c. the tail can be identified with the corresponding carcass.

Refer technical questions to the Technical Service Center at 1-800-233-3935.



Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy, Program, and Employee Development