

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

FSIS NOTICE

7-04

1/14/04

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR FSIS NOTICE 4-04 REGARDING FSIS's BSE REGULATIONS

I. PURPOSE

FSIS is issuing this notice as a supplement to FSIS 4-04, Awareness Meeting Regarding New Regulations That Prohibit Non-Ambulatory Disabled Cattle and The Use Of Certain Materials From Cattle For Human Food. This notice provides questions and answers regarding the instructions in FSIS Notice 4-04. No information in FSIS Notice 4-04 has change and these questions and answers serve as an attachment to that notice. However, under its administrative procedures, FSIS does not amend attachments to FSIS Notices; therefore, it is necessary to issue the questions and answers in this separate notice.

II. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question: FSIS Notice 4-04 explains that that the heads from cattle 30 months of age and older are to be condemned unless the establishment can ensure that the stunning does not result in brain leakage onto the head. Can the plant have written procedures in place to control or prevent contamination of edible portions with SRMs prior to washing?

Answer: Yes

Question: Does this written procedure apply to carcasses as well?

Answer: Yes

Question: If there is a control program in place and incidental contamination with SRMs (e.g. brain or spinal cord) occurs, can the product be reconditioned?

Answer: Yes, incidental contamination with readily identifiable SRMs can be removed by knife trimming.

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

NOTICE EXPIRES: 2/01/05

OPI: OPPD

Question: What is readily identifiable SRM contamination?

Answer: Contamination with material grossly identifiable as brain material, spinal cord, or fluid from punctured eyes.

NOTE: Cerebral fluid and spinal fluid are not SRMs.

Question: Can measures other than knife trimming be used to remove incidental SRM contamination?

Answer: There may be other acceptable methods. The establishment must have a supported and validated method of SRM removal that meets the requirements of 9 CFR Part 417.

Question: Who is responsible for the verification of these procedures?

Answer: The offline inspection personnel will verify the implementation of the procedures. If online inspection personnel observe visible (readily identifiable) SRMs, they should stop the line or have the head or carcass railed out for reconditioning and call for verification of process control by the offline inspection personnel.

NOTE: An establishment can choose to condemn heads that are contaminated with SRMs.

/s/ Philip S. Derfler

Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy and Program Development