

2023 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES-FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE

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PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Secretary of Agriculture established the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) on June 17, 1981, pursuant to legislative authority contained in 5 U.S.C. 301 that permits the Secretary to issue regulations governing the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The mission of FSIS is to protect the public's health by ensuring the safety of meat, poultry, and processed egg products. FSIS is composed of two major inspection programs: (1) Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) and (2) Egg Products Inspection.

The MPI Program is authorized by the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) as amended and the Poultry Products Inspection Act (PPIA). The purpose of the program is to ensure that meat and poultry products are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled through inspection and regulation of these products so that they are suitable for commercial distribution for human consumption. FSIS also enforces the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (HMSA) through the program, which requires that all livestock at Federally-inspected establishments be handled and slaughtered in a humane way.

FSIS conducts inspection activities at Federally-inspected meat and poultry establishments; and for State programs, the agency ensures that State MPI programs have standards that are at least equivalent to Federal standards. FSIS also ensures that meat and poultry products imported to the United States are produced under standards equivalent to U.S. inspection standards.

The Egg Products Inspection Program is authorized by the Egg Product Inspection Act (EPIA). The program's purpose is to ensure that liquid, frozen and dried egg products are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled through continuous mandatory inspection of egg processing plants that manufacture these products. FSIS also ensures processed egg products imported to the United States are produced under standards equivalent to U.S. inspection.

FSIS' science-based inspection system, known as the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system, places emphasis on the identification, prevention, and control of foodborne hazards. HACCP requirements include meeting sanitation, facility, operational standards, and other prerequisite programs to control pathogen contamination and to produce safe and unadulterated food.

During 2021, the agency maintained headquarters offices in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area; 10 district offices; the Policy Development Division in Omaha, Nebraska; laboratories in Athens, Georgia, St. Louis, Missouri, and Albany, California; the Financial Services Center in Des Moines, Iowa; the Human Resources Field Office in Minneapolis, Minnesota; and a nationwide network of inspection personnel in 6,630 federally regulated establishments in 50 States, N. Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, Samoa and the Virgin Islands. Much of the agency's work is conducted in cooperation with Federal, State, and municipal agencies, as well as private industry.

As of September 30, 2021, the agency employment totaled 8,578 permanent full-time employees, including 571 in the Washington, DC area and 8,007 in the field. FSIS employed 8,408 Full Time Equivalents (FTE's) as of September 30, 2021. This included other-than-permanent employees in addition to permanent full-time ones. FSIS funding is broken out into the following categories:

1. Federal Food Safety and Inspection: Expenses associated with operations at all federally inspected meat, poultry and egg product establishments.
2. State Food Safety and Inspection: Expenses associated with state inspected establishments and state-run programs.
3. International Food Safety and Inspection: Expenses associated with import and export operations and certifications.
4. Public Health Data Communications Infrastructure System (PHDCIS): Expenses associated with providing public health communications and information systems infrastructure and connectivity.

Statutory Authorities

The MPI Program is authorized by the FMIA as amended and the PPIA. The purpose of the program is to ensure that meat and poultry products are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled through inspection and regulation of these products so that they are suitable for commercial distribution for human consumption. FSIS also enforces the HMSA through the program, which requires that all livestock at Federally-inspected establishments be handled and slaughtered in a humane way.

The Egg Products Inspection Program is authorized by the EPIA. The program’s purpose is to ensure that liquid, frozen and dried egg products are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled through inspection of egg processing plants that manufacture these products. FSIS also ensures processed egg products imported to the United States are produced under standards equivalent to U.S. inspection.

OIG and GAO Reports**Table FSIS-1. Completed OIG Reports**

ID	Date	Title	Result
24601-0007-31	3/31/2021	FSIS Waiver of Regulatory Requirements	1 recommendation remains open
21-001-01	6/8/2021	Survey of Food Safety and Inspection Service Inspectors’ Perceptions of COVID-19 Safety in the Work Environment	No open recommendations

Table FSIS-2. In-Progress OIG Reports

ID	Date	Title	Result
24801-0001-23	11/6/2020	COVID-19 – FSIS Pandemic Response at Establishments	OIG is continuing its inspection work
50801-0003-12	3/18/2021	Secure Configuration of USDA’s Virtualization Platforms, (50801-0003-12)	OIG is continuing its audit work
24601-0004-21	12/27/2021	Initiatives to Address Workplace Misconduct	OIG is continuing its audit work
NA	2/2021	Department of Labor (DOL) OIG Audit of COVID-19 OSHA Operations and Efforts to Protect Workers	DOL/OIG is continuing its audit work

Table FSIS-3. Completed GAO Reports

ID	Date	Title	Result
GAO-21-191	11/30/2021	COVID-19: Urgent Actions Needed to Better Ensure an Effective Federal Response	No open recommendations for FSIS
GAO-21-387	3/31/2021	COVID-19: Sustained Federal Action is Crucial as Pandemic Enters Its Second Year	No open recommendations for FSIS

Table FSIS-4. In-Progress GAO Reports

ID	Date	Title	Result
104434	10/6/2020	Chemical Contamination of Food	GAO continues its audit work
105104	5/10/2021	Meat and Poultry Worker Safety	GAO continues its audit work
105088	5/20/2021	Technology Assessments on Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Detection and Removal	GAO continues its audit work
105238	6/24/2021	Audit of Federal Efforts to Address Zoonotic Diseases	GAO continues its audit work

AVAILABLE FUNDS AND FTEs**Table FSIS-5. Available Funds and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)**

	2020 Actual	FTE	2021 Actual	FTE	2022 Estimated	FTE	2023 Estimated	FTE
Salaries and Expenses:								
Discretionary Appropriations	\$1,054,004	8,107	\$1,091,617	8,297	\$1,075,703	8,666	\$1,226,148	8,666
Mandatory Appropriations	-	-	100,000	-	-	-	-	-
Supplemental Appropriations	33,000	288	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Discretionary Appropriations	1,054,004	8,107	1,091,617	8,297	1,075,703	8,666	1,226,148	8,666
Total Mandatory Appropriations	-	-	100,000	-	-	-	-	-
Total Supplemental Appropriations	33,000	288	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Offsetting Collections	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Adjusted Appropriation	1,087,004	8,395	1,191,617	8,297	1,075,703	8,666	1,226,148	8,666
Balance Available, SOY	5,175	-	17,912	-	107,901	-	63,714	-
Recoveries, Other	991	-	5,607	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available	1,093,170	8,395	1,215,136	8,297	1,183,604	8,666	1,289,862	8,666
Lapsing Balances	-85	-	-793	-	-	-	-	-
Balance Available, EOY	-17,912	-	-107,901	-	-63,714	-	-53,714	-
Total Obligations	1,075,173	8,395	1,106,442	8,297	1,119,890	8,666	1,236,148	8,666
Total Obligations, FSIS	1,075,173	8,395	1,106,442	8,297	1,119,890	8,666	1,236,148	8,666
Other USDA:								
ARS, Nutrient Data Laboratory	232	-	163	-	-	-	-	-
APHIS	75	-	193	-	-	-	-	-
OGC	200	-	89	-	-	-	-	-
OSEC	-	-	204	-	-	-	-	-
OCE	504	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
OCIO	223	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
OHRM	1,100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
OASCR	38	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NIFA	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
USDA DA	-	-	1,299	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Other USDA	2,378	-	1,948	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Agriculture Available	1,095,548	8,395	1,217,084	8,297	1,183,604	8,666	1,289,862	8,666
Other Federal Funds:								
FDA, Salmonella, Campylob, E. Coli Enterpococ	825	-	735	-	-	-	-	-
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	56	-	249	-	-	-	-	-
EOP/ONDCP	54	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DHRA	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DWCF	6,519	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DHS	-	-	509	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Other Federal	7,457	-	1,493	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Federal Funds:								
Meat, Poultry and Egg Products Inspection	250,299	26	253,172	21	205,000	21	205,000	21
Accredited Labs	226	-	199	-	232	-	232	-
Trust Funds	16,055	93	17,522	90	16,850	90	16,850	90
Total, Non-Federal	266,580	119	270,893	111	222,082	111	222,082	111
Total Available, FSIS	1,369,585	8,514	1,489,470	8,408	1,405,686	8,777	1,511,944	8,777

PERMANENT POSITIONS BY GRADE AND FTEs*Table FSIS-6. Permanent Positions by Grade and FTEs*

Item	2020 Actual			2021 Actual			2022 Estimated			2023 Estimated		
	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total
SES	24	-	24	24	1	25	24	1	25	24	1	25
SL	4	-	4	4	-	4	4	-	4	4	-	4
GS-15	59	24	83	55	23	78	55	23	78	55	23	78
GS-14	181	83	264	179	91	270	179	91	270	179	91	270
GS-13	167	384	551	158	376	534	158	376	534	158	376	534
GS-12	67	1,029	1,096	75	1,000	1,075	75	1,000	1,075	75	1,000	1,075
GS-11	25	83	108	29	97	126	29	97	126	29	97	126
GS-10	2	483	485	1	478	479	1	478	479	1	478	479
GS-9	20	3,512	3,532	23	3,706	3,729	23	3,706	3,729	23	3,706	3,729
GS-8	3	471	474	3	303	306	3	303	306	3	303	306
GS-7	13	1,625	1,638	14	1,478	1,492	14	1,588	1,602	14	1,588	1,602
GS-6	4	22	26	3	14	17	3	14	17	3	14	17
GS-5	2	350	352	2	437	439	2	467	469	2	467	469
GS-4	1	2	3	1	3	4	1	3	4	1	3	4
GS-2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Graded	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Permanent	573	8,069	8,642	571	8,007	8,578	571	8,147	8,718	571	8,147	8,718
Total Perm. FT EOY	573	8,069	8,642	571	8,007	8,578	571	8,147	8,718	571	8,147	8,718
FTE	575	7,939	8,514	587	7,821	8,408	571	8,206	8,777	571	8,206	8,777

SIZE, COMPOSITION, AND ANNUAL COSTS OF VEHICLE FLEET

FSIS inspects in 6,531 meat, poultry, and egg products plants and import establishments located throughout the United States. A large number of FSIS inspection personnel have responsibilities in multiple plants and work “patrol/relief assignments” traveling from plant to plant on a daily basis. Depending on the inspector’s proximity to given assignments and remote locations, inspectors may be required to travel over larger geographical areas.

All FSIS vehicles are leased from the General Service Administration’s (GSA) fleet.

Table FSIS -7. Size, Composition, and Annual Costs of Motor Vehicle Fleet

	Sedans and Station Wagons	Vans	SUVs	Light Trucks 4X2	Light Trucks 4X4	Medium Duty Vehicles	Buses	Heavy Duty Vehicles	Total Vehicles	Annual Operating Costs
2018 End of Year Operating Inventory	2,180	79	62	-	-	2	-	-	2,323	\$12,426,223
2020 End of Year Operating Inventory	2,177	79	75	-	-	-	-	-	2,331	12,921,748
2021 Planned Acquisitions	-	-	65	18	5	-	-	-	88	743,718
2021 Planned Disposals	-31	-54	-	-	-	-	-	-	-85	-
2021 End of Year Operating Inventory	2,146	25	140	18	5	-	-	-	2,334	13,665,466
2022 Planned Acquisitions	82	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	82	819,926
2022 Planned Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2022 End of Year Operating Inventory	2,228	25	140	18	5	-	-	-	2,416	14,485,392
2023 Planned Acquisitions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	869,123
2023 Planned Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2023 End of Year Operating Inventory	2,228	25	140	18	5	-	-	-	2,416	15,354,515

Note: Number of vehicles by type include vehicles owned by the agency and leased from commercial sources or GSA.

Annual Operating Costs excludes acquisition costs and gains from sale of vehicles as shown in FAST.

SHARED FUNDING PROJECTS**Table FSIS-5. Shared Funding Projects (dollars in thousands)**

Item	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Estimated	2023 Estimated
Working Capital Fund:				
Administrative Services:				
Material Management Service.....	3,169	4,523	3,157	3,162
Mail and Reproduction Services.....	837	794	982	981
Integrated Procurement Systems.....	247	240	279	277
Procurement Operations Services.....	12	12	10	12
Human Resources Enterprise Management Systems.....	99	126	118	121
Subtotal.....	4,365	5,695	4,546	4,553
Communications:				
Creative Media & Broadcast Center.....	250	85	141	205
Finance and Management:				
National Finance Center.....	2,526	2,643	2,441	2,454
Financial Management Systems.....	5,528	5,448	5,320	5,521
Internal Control Support Services.....	78	55	60	46
Subtotal.....	8,132	8,146	7,821	8,021
Information Technology:				
Client Experience Center.....	6,131	13,236	12,858	13,200
Department Administration Information Technology Office.....	45	52	34	34
Digital Infrastructure Services Center.....	6,591	8,084	8,613	8,512
Enterprise Network Services.....	7,047	6,702	6,065	5,055
Subtotal.....	19,815	28,074	27,570	26,801
Office of the Executive Secretariat.....	290	397	501	501
Total, Working Capital Fund.....	32,851	42,397	40,579	40,081
Department-Wide Shared Cost Programs:				
Advisory Committee Liaison Services.....	4	3	5	5
Agency Partnership Outreach.....	707	622	676	676
Honor Awards.....	1	1	1	1
Human Resources Self-Service Dashboard.....	55	-	-	-
Medical Services.....	24	114	115	115
Office of Customer Experience.....	528	871	802	802
Personnel and Document Security Program.....	157	188	187	187
Physical Security.....	539	387	388	396
Security Detail.....	426	415	416	419
Security Operations Program.....	537	584	563	563
TARGET Center.....	104	107	122	122
TARGET Center NCR Interpreting Services.....	-	143	61	76
USDA Enterprise Data Analytics Services.....	746	489	407	407
Total, Department-Wide Reimbursable Programs.....	3,828	3,924	3,743	3,769
E-Gov:				
Budget Formulation and Execution Line of Business.....	7	9	8	8
E-Rulemaking.....	23	31	24	25
Financial Management Line of Business.....	-	7	7	7
Geospatial Line of Business.....	13	13	13	13
Hiring Assessment.....	-	-	21	21
Human Resources Line of Business.....	27	28	26	26
Integrated Acquisition Environment.....	133	-	5	5
Total, E-Gov.....	203	88	104	105
Agency Total.....	36,882	46,409	44,426	43,955

APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE

The appropriations language follows (new language underscored):

1 For necessary expenses to carry out services authorized by the Federal Meat Inspection Act,
 2 the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and the Egg Products Inspection Act, including not to
 3 exceed \$10,000 for representation allowances and for expenses pursuant to section 8 of the
 4 Act approved August 3, 1956 (7 U.S.C. 1766), [~~\$1,075,703,000~~] \$1,226,148,000; and in
 5 addition, \$1,000,000 may be credited to this account from fees collected for the cost of
 6 laboratory accreditation as authorized by section 1327 of the Food, Agriculture,
 7 Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 138f): Provided, That funds provided for
 8 the Public Health Data Communication Infrastructure system shall remain available until
 9 expended: Provided further, That funds provided for the relocation of the Mid-Western
 10 Laboratory shall remain available until expended: Provided further, That no fewer than 148
 11 full-time equivalent positions shall be employed during fiscal year [2022] 2023 for purposes
 12 dedicated solely to inspections and enforcement related to the Humane Methods of
 13 Slaughter Act (7 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.) [: Provided further, That the Food Safety and Inspection Service shall
 14 continue implementation of section 11016 of Public Law 110-246 as further clarified by the amendments made
 15 in section 12106 of Public Law 113-79]: Provided further, That this appropriation shall be available pursuant to
 16 law (7 U.S.C. 2250) for the alteration and repair of buildings and improvements, but the cost of
 17 altering any one building during the fiscal year shall not exceed 10 percent of the current
 18 replacement value of the building.

LEAD-OFF TABULAR STATEMENT

Table FSIS-6. Lead-Off Tabular Statement (In dollars)

Item	Amount
Estimate, 2022	\$1,075,703,000
Change in Appropriation	<u>+ 150,445,000</u>
Budget Estimate, 2023	<u>1,226,148,000</u>
Budget Estimate, Current Law 2023	\$1,226,148,000

PROJECT STATEMENT

Table FSIS-7. Project Statement Appropriated (thousands of dollars, FTE)

Item	2020		2021		2022		2023		Inc. or Dec.	Chg Key
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Estimated	FTE	Estimated	FTE		
Discretionary Appropriations:										
Federal Food Safety & Inspection	\$935,984	7,966	\$957,216	8,156	\$957,348	8,526	\$1,103,562	8,526	+\$146,214	- (1)
State Food Safety and Inspection.....	66,682	20	66,730	20	66,730	20	68,317	20	+1,587	- (2)
International Food Safety & Inspection.....	16,758	121	17,045	121	17,045	120	18,997	120	+1,952	- (3)
Public Health Data Communication Infrastructure System (PHDCIS).....	34,580	-	34,580	-	34,580	-	35,272	-	+692	- (4)
Goodfellows Mid-Western Lab Relocation (General Provision).....	-	-	16,046	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal.....	1,054,004	8,107	1,091,617	8,297	1,075,703	8,666	1,226,148	8,666	+150,445	-
Mandatory Appropriations:										
American Rescue Plan.....	-	-	100,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal.....	-	-	100,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplemental Appropriations:										
Covid 19-Supplemental.....	33,000	288	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal.....	33,000	288	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Adjusted Approp.....	1,087,004	8,395	1,191,617	8,297	1,075,703	8,666	1,226,148	8,666	150,445	-
Add back:.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rescission, Transfers In and Out.....	340	-	-15,914	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriation.....	1,087,344	8,395	1,175,703	8,297	1,075,703	8,666	1,226,148	8,666	150,445	-
Transfers In:										
Mid-Western Laboratory Relocation.....	-	-	16,046	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Federal Food Safety and Inspection.....	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
COVID Emergency Leave.....	-	-	368	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Transfers In.....	60	-	16,414	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers Out:										
Federal Food Safety & Inspection.....	-400	-	-500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Transfers Out.....	-400	-	-500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Recoveries, Other	991	-	5,607	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY.....	5,175	-	17,912	-	107,901	-	63,714	-	-44,187	-
Total Available.....	1,093,170	8,395	1,215,136	8,297	1,183,604	8,666	1,289,862	8,666	106,258	-
Lapsing Balances.....	-85	-	-793	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY.....	-17,912	-	-107,901	-	-63,714	-	-53,714	-	+10,000	-
Total Obligations.....	1,075,173	8,395	1,106,442	8,297	1,119,890	8,666	1,236,148	8,666	116,258	-

PROJECT STATEMENT

Table FSIS-11. Project Statement Obligated (thousands of dollars, FTE)

Item	2020		2021		2022		2023		FTE Inc. or Dec.	
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Estimated	FTE	Estimated	FTE	Inc. or Dec.	Dec.
Discretionary Obligations:										
Federal Food Safety & Inspection.....	\$936,348	7,966	\$956,657	8,156	\$957,348	8,526	\$1,103,562	8,526	+146,214	-
State Food Safety & Inspection.....	65,979	20	66,723	20	66,730	20	68,317	20	+1,587	-
International Food Safety & Inspection.....	17,012	121	16,969	121	17,045	120	18,997	120	+1,952	-
Public Health Data Communication Infrastructure System (PHDCIS)	33,914	-	34,688	-	37,664	-	35,272	-	-2,392	-
Goodfellows Mid-Western Lab Relocation (General Provision).....	-	-	-	-	16,046	-	-	-	-16,046	-
Subtotal Disc oblig.....	1,053,253	8,107	1,075,037	8,297	1,094,833	8,666	1,226,148	8,666	+131,315	-
Mandatory Obligations:										
American Rescue Plan.....	-	-	11,286	-	25,000	-	10,000	-	-15,000	-
Subtotal Mand Oblig.....	-	-	11,286	-	25,000	-	10,000	-	-15,000	-
Supplemental Obligations:										
COVID 19 Supplemental.....	17,253	288	16,839	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PHV Incentives Carryover.....	4,667	-	3,801	-	57	-	-	-	-57	-
Subtotal Supp Oblig.....	21,920	288	20,640	-	57	-	-	-	-57	-
Offsetting Collections:										
COVID Emergency Leave.....	-	-	368	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal Offsetting Collections.....	-	-	368	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations.....	1,075,173	8,395	1,107,331	8,297	1,119,890	8,666	1,236,148	8,666	116,258	-
Add back:										
Lapsing Balances.....	85	-	793	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Balances Available, EOY:										
Covid 19- Supplemental.....	15,748	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mid-Western Lab Relocation.....	-	-	16,046	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PHDCIS.....	936	-	3,084	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PHV.....	1,228	-	57	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
American Rescue Plan.....	-	-	88,714	-	63,714	-	53,714	-	-10,000	-
Total Bal. Available, EOY.....	17,912	-	107,901	-	63,714	-	53,714	-	-10,000	-
Total Available.....	1,093,170	8,395	1,216,025	8,297	1,183,604	8,666	1,289,862	8,666	106,258	-
Less:										
Total Transfers In.....	-60	-	-16,414	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Transfers Out.....	400	-	500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Recoveries, Other	-991	-	-5,607	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY.....	-5,175	-	-17,912	-	-107,901	-	-63,714	-	44,187	-
Total Appropriation.....	1,087,344	8,395	1,176,592	8,297	1,075,703	8,666	1,226,148	8,666	150,445	-

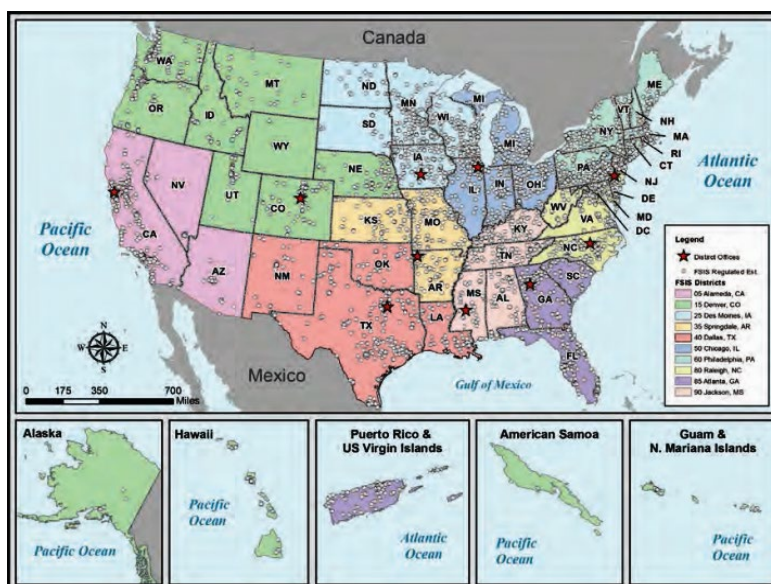
JUSTIFICATIONS OF INCREASES/DECREASES

Food Safety and Inspection Service

FSIS provides in-plant inspection of all domestic processing and slaughter establishments preparing meat, poultry, and processed egg products for sale or distribution into commerce, as well as surveillance and investigation of all meat, poultry, and egg product facilities. FSIS inspection program personnel are present for all domestic slaughter operations, inspect each livestock and poultry carcass, and inspect operations at each processing establishment at least once per shift. In addition to in-plant personnel in Federally inspected establishments, FSIS employs a number of other field personnel, such as laboratory technicians and investigators. Program investigators conduct surveillance, investigations, and other activities at food warehouses, distribution centers, retail stores, and other businesses operating in commerce that store, handle, distribute, transport, or sell meat, poultry, or processed egg products to the consuming public. FSIS ensures the safety of imported products through a three-part equivalence process which includes (1) analysis of an applicant country's legal and regulatory structure, (2) initial and periodic on-site equivalence auditing of the country's food regulatory systems, and (3) continual point-of-entry re-inspection of products received from the exporting country. FSIS also has cooperative agreements with 27 States that operate intrastate meat and poultry inspection programs. FSIS conducts reviews of these State programs to ensure that they are "at least equal to" the Federal program. Additionally, FSIS regulates interstate commerce through cooperative agreements with five States that already have MPI programs that are identical to the Federal program and allows those establishments to ship products across state lines and also, potentially, to export them to foreign countries.

To carry out these Congressional mandates, FSIS:

- Employs 8,408 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs as of September 30, 2021). This includes other-than-permanent employees, in addition to, permanent full-time employees.
- Regulates over 250,000 different meat, poultry, and egg products
- Regulates operations at over 6,600 Federally regulated establishments.
- Ensures public health requirements are met in establishments that each year slaughter or process:
 - 165 million head of livestock
 - 9.6 billion poultry carcasses
 - 2.8 billion pounds of egg products
- Conducts 7.3 million food safety & food defense procedures
- Condemned:
 - Over 14.6 million poultry carcasses
 - More than 254,801 head of livestock during postmortem (post-slaughter) inspection
- In FY 2021, performed 184,447 Humane Handling (HH) verification procedures



This map represents the geographic distribution of FSIS operated/regulated establishments

(1) Federal Food Safety and Inspection: A net increase of 146,214,000 from the FY 2021 Enacted.

- (a) Federal: An increase of \$19,629,000 which includes \$13,345,00 for pay inflation, \$6,284,000 for FERS for 2022.

This increase supports the pay increase which went into effect January 1, 2022, of a 2.7 percent Cost of Living pay increases for civilian employees, and a 1.1 percent increase to cover the expense for the mandated increase of USDA's contribution to FERS.

- (b) Federal: An increase of \$36,620,000 to fund the annualization of the FY 2022 and the FY 2023 pay increase.

FSIS spends 80 percent of its funding on salaries and benefits, predominantly for inspection personnel in establishments, and other frontline employees such as investigators and laboratory technicians. In addition, FSIS spends about 14 percent of its budget on system infrastructure, state inspection programs, and travel for inspectors and investigators. Therefore, FSIS has limited flexibility in its funding.

FSIS has a statutory mandate for carcass-by-carcass slaughter inspection, and a once-per-shift per day presence for processing inspection of meat, poultry, and egg products establishments. The permanent statutes for the inspection of meat, poultry, and processed egg products result in labor-intensive inspection activities, thereby making salary and benefit costs relatively inflexible.

This funding will cover the 4.6 percent FY 2023 pay raise. It also will fund the annualization of the 2.7 percent calendar year 2022 pay raise. This critical increase is needed to support and maintain staffing levels to meet the demands and statutory requirements FSIS is required to enforce for its critical food safety mission. Elimination of the pay cost increase means that FSIS would not be able to fund approximately 395 personnel. Since most FSIS personnel and funding is directly related to our frontline inspections, testing, and investigations, it would be very difficult to absorb this reduction without impacting our mission and the meat and poultry industry. Some of the potential impacts would be: reduced service to industry, reduced FSIS testing, lower criminal and civil investigation capabilities, delays in establishing new rules and standards, negative effect on morale, and increased risk of food safety system failures due to reduced verification tasks performed.

- (c) Federal: An increase of \$3,065,000 to fund inflationary adjustments to non-pay object classes

Costs for items such as travel, utilities and contracts have experienced inflationary increases over time. Many of these items have been held at the same level or only increased with programmatic increases for several years. The increased costs cannot continue to be absorbed by the agency without affecting the agency's mission. This funding will cover the 2% inflation estimate in FY 23 applied to all non-pay object classes.

- (d) Federal: An Increase of \$10,300,000 from the FY 2021 Enacted to Federal Food Safety Inspection for FSIS IT Modernization.

FSIS must have a modern and stable Information Technology (IT) Infrastructure to achieve operational excellence. Mission critical IT assets, such as the Public Health Information System (PHIS), and other FSIS applications that drive transformative solutions for business intelligence and reporting, produce real-time data analysis, promote global commerce, and facilitate the collection and sharing of vital data that allows FSIS to continually improve accomplishment of the food safety mission. An investment of \$10.3 million will help modernize and upgrade FSIS's aging infrastructure, facilitate trade, reduce security issues, increase operational efficiency, and develop a capability to receive lab sample data from external organizations. This request is necessary to implement key Departmental initiatives such as OneUSDA, migration to the Cloud, infrastructure consolidation, and adoption of modern technology platforms.

FSIS is increasingly dependent on IT for all aspects of its mission, especially in making science-based decisions and promoting global commerce. As technology has evolved, IT has become a critical component in FSIS's efforts to link and integrate the various components of FSIS operations. Reliable, scalable and modernized IT is essential to an integrated effort to improve the quality and quantity of data that FSIS captures, improve the usefulness of its information, conduct better analysis to become more proactive in reducing illnesses, increase threat detection, and improve the ability to rapidly adjust to food safety threats that do occur.

Current system limitations already have a direct effect on FSIS's mission, industry operations, and trade and will increasingly hinder or prevent FSIS from adopting new innovations and adapting to change without additional funding. FSIS has expanded PHIS's functionality to allow industry, other governments, other Federal agencies and states direct access to the system. Industry is increasingly relying on access to PHIS to both enter and receive data to the point where system outages have an immediate effect on industry operations, such as delays in receiving laboratory results which prevent establishments from shipping their product. System outages also delay the processing of exports certificates and foreign clearance of product because the importing country cannot verify the export information in PHIS causing additional industry cost. Reliability and accessibility issues will only worsen as industry and other countries expand their use of PHIS. By not modernizing, FSIS risks detrimentally affecting industry and international trade for both imports and exports as well as our food safety mission.

(e) Federal: An increase of \$2,800,000 from the FY 2021 Enacted to Federal Food Safety Inspection for Recruitment and Retention Incentives for Public Health Veterinarians (PHVs).

FSIS continues to experience difficulty in recruiting and retaining PHVs. These field positions are mission-critical, focused on protecting public health by ensuring that the nation's commercial supply of meat, poultry, and processed egg products are safe, wholesome, and properly labeled. PHVs make disposition decisions on carcasses suspected of being unsafe for human consumption, provide technical support to the inspection workforce, generally perform supervisory functions at the establishment and interact with establishment management. These are very demanding positions in a very challenging environment. Vacancies in these positions have potentially large impacts on the food safety system and industry operations. It also creates additional pressure on the remaining personnel, especially other PHVs.

In FY 2020 approximately 18% of the PHV positions were vacant. This has grown from the historic vacancy rate of 10-12%. In the past five years, approximately 40% of the separations were due to resignations. Therefore, it is critical for FSIS to fix this threat to food safety and industry production. FSIS received funding in FY 2018 to offer recruitment and retention incentives. That money should be completely expended by FY 2022 and FSIS needs funding to continue and to improve the incentive programs. This funding will provide recruitment bonuses to entice veterinarians to join FSIS and will then pay them varying retention bonuses over their remaining career with FSIS. The retention incentives program should decrease vacancies, reduce in-plant PHV turnover, improve employee morale and free up supervisors to perform other important functions instead of continually interviewing and training new PHV employees.

(f) Federal: An increase of \$44,100,000 from the FY 2021 Enacted to Federal Food Safety Inspection for reduced User Fees for Small and Very Small Establishments.

The set rate for overtime and holiday inspection services for all establishments has a disproportionate financial impact on small and very small establishments compared to large establishments who can more easily absorb the extra charges due to their production volume.

Additionally, larger establishments often run a second shift, giving them a total 16 hours instead of 8 hours of inspection per day before they would have to pay for overtime. The higher volume and second shift without additional cost for large establishments puts smaller establishments at a significant competitive disadvantage. Small and very small establishments already have smaller profit margins due to lower production volume and have less capability to absorb additional costs. The resulting additional cost per pound of product caused by overtime and holiday rates is much higher for smaller establishments. The full rate charges hamper their ability to continue to operate, be competitive, and expand.

Consolidation of the industry presents a variety of different problems and consequences. This proposal not only helps small establishments stay in business, but it also helps provide smaller farmers with more options for their product and their ability to operate. If smaller establishments didn't have to pay full cost for overtime and holiday inspection, they might be able to expand their working hours thereby also increasing opportunities for smaller farmers. When small establishments have to pay overtime fees for FSIS inspection personnel, the establishment must make up these additional costs by passing the cost onto the farmer or absorbing the costs both of which result in lower profits hurting these smaller businesses. The situation becomes even more dire for

small farmers if the smaller establishment goes out of business. Then the small farmers might not have any remaining viable outlet for their product and they in turn would lose profit or go out of business.

This proposal would fund the reduction of overtime and holiday rate for small and very small establishments. FSIS rates are based on recovery of costs from industry. Furthermore, FSIS appropriated and reimbursable funding requirements are based on collecting the full rate from industry. Reducing the rate for establishments would mean that FSIS would lose revenue that would need to be replaced from another source. FSIS cannot absorb the lost revenue out of its appropriated funds and would not be able to implement this proposal without this additional funding.

- Very Small establishments: Planned reduction to 25% of the published rate. FSIS is requesting \$8.3 million to offset the lost revenue to offer this discounted rate. Very small establishments have fewer than 10 employees or annual sales of less than \$2.5 million per year.
- Small establishments: Planned reduction to 70% of the published rate. FSIS is requesting \$35.8 million to offset the lost revenue to offer this discounted rate. Small establishments have more than 10 employees but fewer than 500.

This proposal helps to address the higher financial burden imposed on small and very small establishments due to current policy and to help level the field for establishments of all sizes. Congress provided funding for temporary relief through lower rates in the American Rescue Plan and this funding would allow reduced rates to continue in FY 2023 and beyond.

USDA is committed to expanding processing capacity and a more resilient supply chain through supporting independent small and very small meat and poultry establishments. FSIS currently has multiple programs in place to provide resources and support for small and very small establishments such as the small plant help desk, plant outreach, and State inspection programs. In addition to the reduced fees requested above, this budget will enable FSIS to conduct a study on how FSIS can impact increasing capacity at small and very small establishments including the assessment of trials on a variety of regularly scheduled shifts.

(g) Federal: A total increase of \$29,700,000 from the FY 2021 Enacted to fully fund the cost of the Mid-Western Lab.

FSIS operates three regional labs in the Eastern, Mid-Western, and Western U.S. which provide the total capacity required for FSIS. The Mid-Western lab is in St. Louis, MO at the GSA Goodfellow facility. Due to environmental issues and deteriorating infrastructure with the facility that was built in 1941, GSA worked with USDA and has determined that they will not continue occupancy beyond the time it takes to find a new location. FSIS has started providing requirements for GSA to identify a suitable new facility. FSIS received \$16 million in FY 2021 and requested \$12.5 million in FY 2022 to start the build out of the new facility to meet the full requirements of the lab and to provide our employees with a safe work environment. In addition to the \$12.5 million from FY 2022 continuing into the base of FY 2023, FSIS is requesting an additional \$17.2 million of funding to cover the final portion of the increased buildout cost at the relocated Midwestern Lab in FY 2023. The total no-year funding required in FY 2023 is \$29.7 million.

(2) State Food Safety and Inspection: A net increase of 1,587,000 from the FY 2021 Enacted.

- (a) State Food Safety and Inspection: An increase of \$126,000, which includes \$107,000 for pay inflation, \$19,000 for FERS for 2022.

This increase supports the pay increase which went into effect January 1, 2022, of a 2.7 percent Cost of Living pay increases for civilian employees, and a 1.1 percent increase to cover the expense for the mandated increase of USDA's contribution to FERS.

- (b) State Food Safety and Inspection: An increase of \$1,461,000, which includes \$256,000 for pay increase and \$1,205,000 for inflation for 2023.

The FMIA and the PPIA provide for FSIS to cooperate with State agencies in developing and administering State Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) programs. The Federal State Cooperative Act further authorizes

the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into cooperative arrangements with State departments of agriculture and other State agencies to assist the Secretary in the administration and enforcement of relevant Federal laws and regulations to the extent and in the manner appropriate to the public interest. This funding supports the FSIS requirement to oversee the state program operations. FSIS employees conduct reviews of State MPI programs and their requirements—including enforcement of those requirements—with respect to slaughter, preparation, processing, storage, handling, and distribution of livestock carcasses and parts, meat and meat food products, and poultry products. This funding will cover rising state inspection costs due to non-salary inflation and state pay increases. It will also cover the 4.6 percent FY 2023 pay raise, and the annualization of the 2.7 percent calendar year 2022 pay raise for FSIS employees supporting the State program.

(3) **International Food Safety and Inspection: A net increase of 1,952,000 from the FY 2021 Enacted.**

- (a) International Food Safety and Inspection: An increase of \$406,000, which includes \$272,000 for pay inflation, \$134,000 for FERS for 2022.

This increase supports the pay increase which went into effect January 1, 2022, of a 2.7 percent Cost of Living pay increases for civilian employees, and a 1.1 percent increase to cover the expense for the mandated increase of USDA's contribution to FERS.

- (b) International Food Safety and Inspection: An increase of \$1,546,000, which includes \$1,533,000 for pay increase and \$13,000 for inflation and for 2023.

FSIS employees ensure that meat, poultry, and egg products imported to the United States are produced under standards equivalent to the U.S. inspection system and conduct re-inspection at U.S. ports of entry as well as facilitate the certification of exported goods. This funding will cover the non-salary inflation, the 4.6 percent FY 2023 pay raise, and the 2.7 percent calendar year 2022 pay raise.

(4) **Public Health Data Communications Infrastructure System (PHDCIS): An increase of \$692,000 from the FY 2021 Enacted level.**

PHDCIS provides the Agency information infrastructure associated with providing public health communications and information systems' infrastructure and connectivity. This funding will cover the 2 percent FY 2023 inflation estimate. PHDCIS has been held at the same funding level for the last several years and needs this increase to account for rising costs.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION
Food Safety and Inspection Service

User Fee Overtime Status

Current legislative authority to be amended:

In FY 2022, FSIS proposed changes to the current Overtime/Holiday billing policy. Current policy prevents FSIS from employing part-time employees or providing flexible schedules to employees while still collecting fees for services provided as requested by the plant.

FSIS will propose changes to provide flexible scheduling for inspectors who prefer to work fewer hours rather than requiring them to work all hours and days of plant operations. FSIS will also review how fees are applied to establishments outside the normal hours of operations to ensure that there is equity between very small, small and large establishments.

There will be no offsets in Fiscal Year 2023. No change in budget authority is anticipated.

To bring about this change, the following U.S. Code citations need to be amended to read as the following:

21 USC 468

The cost of inspection rendered under the requirements of this chapter shall be borne by the United States, except for the costs of inspection services provided outside of an establishment's approved inspection shift(s), and that provided on federal holidays, which shall be borne by the establishment, pursuant to section 2219a of title 7.

21 USC 695

The cost of inspection rendered under the requirements of laws relating to Federal inspection of meat and meat food products shall be borne by the United States, except for the cost of inspection services provided outside of an establishment's approved inspection shift(s), and that provided on federal holidays, which shall be borne by the establishment, pursuant to section 2219a of title 7.

21 USC 1053(a)

The cost of inspection rendered under the requirements of this chapter, and other costs of administration of this chapter, shall be borne by the United States, except the cost of inspection services provided outside of an establishment's approved inspection shift(s), and that provided on federal holidays, at such rates as the Secretary may determine shall be borne by such official plants. Sums received by the Secretary from official plants under this section shall be available without fiscal year limitation to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

7 USC 2219a

(a) In general

The Secretary of Agriculture may-

(1) at rates determined by the Secretary, subject to applicable law relating to minimum wages and maximum hours, pay employees of the Department of Agriculture providing inspection services in an establishment subject to the Federal Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) or the Poultry Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 451 et seq.) for inspection services provided outside of an establishment's approved inspection shift(s), and that provided on federal holidays; and

(2) collect from the establishment reimbursement for any such services provided.

(b) Availability

Sums received by the Secretary under this section shall remain available until expended without further appropriation and without fiscal year limitation, to carry out subsection (a).

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND FTEs – APPROPRIATED
Table FSIS-12. Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and FTE (thousands of dollars, FTE)

State/Territory/Country	2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Estimated	FTE	Estimated	FTE
Alabama.....	\$33,226	312	\$32,008	276	\$31,862	293	\$35,702	293
Alaska.....	875	6	881	7	877	8	983	8
Arizona.....	3,722	30	3,723	36	3,706	36	4,153	36
Arkansas.....	35,821	302	35,070	304	34,911	336	39,117	336
California.....	72,026	549	69,452	515	69,136	561	77,466	561
Colorado.....	28,665	209	28,739	247	28,609	242	32,056	242
Connecticut.....	1,719	15	1,755	14	1,747	16	1,958	16
Delaware.....	12,012	123	11,357	100	11,306	101	12,668	101
Florida.....	11,613	109	12,297	134	12,242	136	13,717	136
Georgia.....	85,526	654	85,848	589	85,458	641	95,754	641
Hawaii.....	2,628	22	2,801	27	2,789	27	3,125	27
Idaho.....	4,462	38	4,675	52	4,654	50	5,215	50
Illinois.....	31,424	204	31,901	229	31,756	231	35,583	231
Indiana.....	14,648	131	14,841	136	14,774	138	16,554	138
Iowa.....	44,911	397	44,152	393	43,951	400	49,247	400
Kansas.....	19,523	201	19,763	220	19,674	220	22,044	220
Kentucky.....	14,005	135	14,141	148	14,077	151	15,773	151
Louisiana.....	10,687	79	10,588	85	10,540	87	11,810	87
Maine.....	1,553	11	1,622	11	1,615	13	1,810	13
Maryland.....	32,484	149	42,636	151	42,442	153	47,557	153
Massachusetts.....	2,823	26	2,793	24	2,780	27	3,115	27
Michigan.....	10,073	96	10,173	103	10,127	105	11,347	105
Minnesota.....	31,218	272	34,514	320	34,357	332	38,497	332
Mississippi.....	32,412	277	31,387	239	31,245	251	35,010	251
Missouri.....	32,296	267	33,164	301	33,013	315	56,264	315
Montana.....	3,335	21	3,492	24	3,476	25	3,895	25
Nebraska.....	29,058	274	30,230	290	30,093	304	33,719	304
Nevada.....	834	7	967	13	962	12	1,078	12
New Hampshire.....	1,013	9	1,020	12	1,015	11	1,138	11
New Jersey.....	11,626	110	11,985	119	11,931	120	13,369	120
New Mexico.....	1,520	15	1,749	16	1,741	17	1,951	17
New York.....	14,268	130	15,073	174	15,005	172	16,813	172
North Carolina.....	44,940	368	44,819	322	44,616	396	49,991	396
North Dakota.....	2,004	10	2,037	14	2,027	14	2,272	14
Ohio.....	18,748	118	18,918	122	18,832	126	21,102	126
Oklahoma.....	9,053	69	9,191	71	9,149	74	10,252	74
Oregon.....	5,333	48	5,235	52	5,211	55	5,839	55
Pennsylvania.....	34,180	292	34,780	303	34,622	312	38,794	312
Rhode Island.....	888	9	1,109	13	1,104	12	1,237	12
South Carolina.....	12,723	100	13,055	113	12,996	117	14,562	117
South Dakota.....	5,872	52	6,052	61	6,025	62	6,751	62
Tennessee.....	17,857	174	17,581	179	17,501	182	19,610	182
Texas.....	67,541	577	70,123	555	69,805	617	78,215	617
Utah.....	6,344	44	6,644	47	6,613	48	7,410	48
Vermont.....	2,674	10	2,676	15	2,664	14	2,985	14
Virginia.....	17,367	162	17,275	166	17,196	164	19,269	164
Washington.....	9,980	95	10,304	112	10,257	110	11,493	110
West Virginia.....	3,723	31	3,726	34	3,709	34	4,156	34
Wisconsin.....	20,402	150	20,880	167	20,785	169	23,289	169
Wyoming.....	912	2	1,009	8	1,004	10	1,125	10
District of Columbia.....	140,630	575	145,597	587	144,936	571	163,956	571
Guam.....	376	4	418	4	416	4	467	4
Puerto Rico.....	4,099	38	4,117	44	4,098	44	4,592	44
American Samoa.....	8	-	7	-	7	-	8	-
N. Mariana Islands.....	134	1	132	1	131	1	147	1
Obligations	1,057,920	8,107	1,080,608	8,297	1,075,703	8,666	1,226,148	8,666
Bal. Available, EOY	2,165	-	19,187	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available	\$1,060,170	8,107	\$1,100,588	8,297	\$1,075,703	8,666	\$1,226,148	8,666

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND FTEs – SUPPLEMENTAL*Table FSIS-13. Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and FTE (thousands of dollars, FTE)*

State/Territory/Country	2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Estimated	FTE	Estimated	FTE
Alabama.....	\$147	3	\$128	-	\$98	-	\$39	-
Alaska.....	16	1	2	-	1	-	-	-
Arizona.....	40	1	25	-	141	-	56	-
Arkansas.....	507	16	1,783	-	1,058	-	423	-
California.....	480	15	2,254	-	211	-	84	-
Colorado.....	559	23	1,792	-	184	-	74	-
Connecticut.....	-	-	128	-	-	-	-	-
Delaware.....	93	4	25	-	346	-	139	-
Florida.....	45	6	250	-	97	-	39	-
Georgia.....	494	8	1,822	-	236	-	94	-
Hawaii.....	20	1	51	-	-	-	-	-
Idaho.....	151	8	179	-	311	-	124	-
Illinois.....	142	10	1,782	-	241	-	96	-
Indiana.....	98	4	235	-	224	-	90	-
Iowa.....	570	19	2,253	-	164	-	66	-
Kansas.....	364	13	216	-	51	-	20	-
Kentucky.....	107	3	121	-	239	-	96	-
Louisiana.....	40	2	113	-	182	-	73	-
Maine.....	28	2	28	-	-	-	-	-
Maryland.....	7,182	4	1,179	-	133	-	53	-
Massachusetts.....	4	1	209	-	375	-	150	-
Michigan.....	150	5	209	-	25	-	10	-
Minnesota.....	267	9	87	-	436	-	174	-
Mississippi.....	203	1	1,808	-	88	-	35	-
Missouri.....	553	15	305	-	12	-	5	-
Montana.....	6	-	16	-	1,279	-	511	-
Nebraska.....	472	14	255	-	1,550	-	620	-
Nevada.....	71	2	63	-	161	-	65	-
New Hampshire.....	23	1	7	-	36	-	14	-
New Jersey.....	74	3	803	-	-	-	-	-
New Mexico.....	14	1	36	-	237	-	95	-
New York.....	220	10	1,052	-	161	-	64	-
North Carolina.....	247	13	2,057	-	1,076	-	430	-
North Dakota.....	56	2	29	-	20	-	8	-
Ohio.....	41	2	317	-	29	-	12	-
Oklahoma.....	43	1	160	-	46	-	18	-
Oregon.....	92	-	96	-	301	-	120	-
Pennsylvania.....	236	12	1,896	-	2,117	-	847	-

2023 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES – FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE

State/Territory/Country	2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Estimated	FTE	Estimated	FTE
Rhode Island.....	13	1	9	-	15	-	6	-
South Carolina.....	71	3	34	-	21	-	8	-
South Dakota.....	88	1	29	-	687	-	275	-
Tennessee.....	240	4	211	-	13	-	5	-
Texas.....	441	11	2,933	-	304	-	122	-
Utah.....	134	3	271	-	40	-	16	-
Vermont.....	65	2	16	-	10,957	-	4,383	-
Virginia.....	258	9	78	-	89	-	36	-
Washington.....	200	9	413	-	-	-	-	-
West Virginia.....	16	1	10	-	-	-	-	-
Wisconsin.....	318	-	227	-	-	-	-	-
Wyoming.....	6	7	25	-	1	-	1	-
District of Columbia.....	1,518	-	-	-	324	-	129	-
Guam.....	-	-	30	-	-	-	-	-
Puerto Rico.....	29	1	67	-	433	-	173	-
Virgin Islands.....	-	-	-	-	55	-	22	-
American Samoa.....	1	1	-	-	47	-	19	-
N. Mariana Islands.....	-	-	-	-	147	-	59	-
Obligations	17,253	288	28,124	-	25,000	-	10,000	-
Bal. Available, EOY	15,747	-	88,714	-	63,714	-	53,714	-
Total, Available	\$33,000	288	\$116,838	-	\$88,714	-	\$63,714	-

CLASSIFICATION BY OBJECTS – APPROPRIATED*Table FSIS-84. Classification by Objects Appropriated (thousands of dollars)*

Item No.	Item	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Estimated	2023 Estimated
Personnel Compensation:					
	Washington D.C.	\$79,280	\$79,357	\$80,185	\$89,187
	Personnel Compensation, Field	512,238	512,736	518,087	576,254
11	Total personnel compensation	591,518	592,093	598,272	665,441
12	Personal benefits	253,371	263,526	259,942	298,242
13.0	Benefits for former personnel	758	886	851	851
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits	845,647	856,505	859,065	964,534
Other Objects:					
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons	33,976	31,924	32,232	33,026
22.0	Transportation of things	4,318	4,111	3,881	3,967
23.1	Rental payments to GSA	7,698	7,920	7,426	7,611
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges	13,872	13,405	13,901	13,905
24.0	Printing and reproduction	955	744	698	715
25.1	Advisory and assistance services	2,917	3,199	2,999	3,074
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources	36,165	41,566	40,294	50,746
25.3	Other goods and services from Federal sources	41,047	46,135	43,844	75,755
25.4	Operation and maintenance of facilities	687	735	690	707
25.7	Operation and maintenance of equipment	374	364	350	360
26.0	Supplies and materials	7,028	7,970	7,522	7,708
31.0	Equipment	5,507	5,984	4,674	4,821
41.0	Grants, subsidies, and contributions	57,568	58,579	58,063	59,156
42.0	Insurance Claims and Indemnities	160	50	48	48
43.0	Interest and Dividends	1	16	15	15
	Total, Other Objects	212,273	222,702	216,638	261,614
99.9	Total, new obligations	1,057,920	1,079,207	1,075,703	1,226,148
	DHS Building Security Payments (included in 25.3).....	\$1,336	\$1,363	\$1,414	\$1,449
Information Technology Investments:.....					
Major Investment 1.....					
Related Mission Area PPA #1.....					
11	External Labor (Contractors).....	5,930	6,632	7,538	7,038
	Total Major Investment 1.....	5,930	6,632	7,538	7,038
	Mission Area Non-Major Investment Totals.....	21,811	16,268	23,398	19,453
	Mission Area Standard Investment Totals.....	53,329	54,699	46,301	46,339
25.3	Mission Area WCF Transfers.....	20,600	29,513	55,911	57,738
	Total Non-Major Investment	95,740	100,480	125,610	123,530
	Total IT Investments.....	101,670	107,112	133,148	130,568
Position Data:					
	Average Salary (dollars), ES Position	\$187,839	\$190,042	\$192,893	\$201,766
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position	\$70,201	\$71,218	\$72,286	\$75,611
	Average Grade, GS Position	9.9	10.3	10.3	10.4

CLASSIFICATION BY OBJECTS – SUPPLEMENTAL**Table FSIS-95. Classification by Objects Supplemental (thousands of dollars)**

Item No.	Item	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Estimated	2023 Estimated
Personnel Compensation:					
	Personnel Compensation, Field	\$5,712	\$25,934	\$17,500	\$7,000
11	Total personnel compensation	5,712	25,934	17,500	7,000
12	Personal benefits	1,455	1,124	7,500	3,000
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits	7,167	27,058	25,000	10,000
Other Objects:					
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons	1,013	36	-	-
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges	19	-	-	-
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources	7	2	-	-
25.3	Other goods and services from Federal sources	1,896	295	-	-
25.7	Operation and maintenance of equipment	-	1	-	-
26.0	Supplies and materials	6,790	753	-	-
31.0	Equipment	65	-21	-	-
41.0	Grants, subsidies, and contributions	294	-	-	-
	Total, Other Objects	10,086	1,066	-	-
99.9	Total, new obligations	17,253	28,124	25,000	10,000
Position Data:					
	Average Salary (dollars), ES Position	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position	\$41,252	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Average Grade, GS Position	7.4	-	-	-

ADVERTISING EXPENDITURES

There are no contracts for advertising expenses to report.

Status of Programs

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is the public health regulatory Agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) responsible for ensuring that domestic and imported meat, poultry, and egg products are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled, as required by the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), the Poultry Products Inspection Act (PPIA), and the Egg Products Inspection Act (EPIA). FSIS also enforces the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (HMSA), which requires that all livestock at federally inspected establishments be handled and slaughtered humanely. To carry out these Congressional mandates, FSIS employed 8,408 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) (8,578 employees). Among these employees are a frontline workforce of 7,376 permanent FTEs (7,728 employees) and 169 other-than-permanent FTEs (140 employees) that work in over 6,600 federally regulated meat, poultry, egg product, import (162 import establishments), and export establishments; three FSIS laboratories; and more than 171,000 in-commerce facilities nationwide. In addition, there are 863 FTEs (850 employees) who support them.

FSIS provides in-plant inspection of all domestic processing and slaughter establishments preparing meat, poultry, and egg products for sale or distribution into commerce, as well as surveillance and investigation of meat, poultry, and egg products in in-commerce facilities. FSIS Inspection Program Personnel (IPP) are present for all domestic slaughter operations and inspect each processing establishment once per shift. In addition to in-plant personnel in federally inspected establishments, FSIS employs several other field personnel, such as laboratory technicians, and investigators, as well as field support, such as epidemiologists, scientists, data scientists, policy analysts, consumer food safety educators, communicators, trainers, information technology analysts, and resource management analysts. Investigators conduct surveillance, investigations, and other activities at businesses operating in commerce that store, handle, distribute, transport, or sell meat, poultry, or egg products to the consuming public.

FSIS ensures the safety of imported products through a three-part equivalence process, which includes analysis of an applicant country's legal and regulatory structure, initial and periodic onsite equivalence auditing of the country's food regulatory system, and continual point-of-entry reinspection of products received from the exporting country.

FSIS also has cooperative agreements with 27 States that operate intrastate meat and poultry inspection programs. FSIS conducts reviews of these State programs to ensure that they are "at least equal to" the Federal program. Additionally, FSIS promotes the expansion of business opportunities for state-inspected meat and poultry establishments through the Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) program. Under CIS, specific State-inspected establishments that follow the same requirements as federal establishments can ship products in interstate commerce. As of 2021, FSIS had CIS agreements with nine States.

FY 2021 Highlights

FSIS is dedicated to recruiting and retaining excellent talent while ensuring they can safely and effectively carry out the Agency's mission to protect public health by reducing foodborne illnesses. In FY 2021, as the Agency continued to adapt to challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on worker safety, FSIS made strides in its efforts to foster an inclusive workplace where individuals are respected, trusted, valued, and work together collaboratively to achieve agency goals. FSIS takes pride in its diverse workforce and is deeply committed to upholding and promoting the values of equity, inclusion, and equal opportunity among the workforce and those the Agency serves.

Frontline Inspection

During FY 2021, FSIS IPP ensured public health requirements were met in establishments that slaughtered or processed 165 million head of livestock and 9.59 billion poultry carcasses. Additionally, FSIS inspected 2.8 billion pounds of liquid, frozen, and dried egg products. IPP also conducted 7.5 million food safety procedures to verify that systems at all federally inspected facilities continued to maintain food safety and wholesomeness requirements. IPP condemned 10,835,407 poultry carcasses and 254,801 head of livestock during post-mortem (post-slaughter) inspection.

Build Back Better in Response to COVID-19**Employee Safety**

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to present challenges in FY 2021 and the Agency continued to act in the interest of its employees' safety and well-being. In September 2021, the White House announced its plan to advance the fight against COVID-19 including an executive order stating that Federal employees need to be vaccinated against COVID-19 by November 22, 2021. As a Federal Agency, FSIS actions and policies support this larger

national strategy to protect public health and it has been working with its employees to navigate and meet this requirement.

Leave Flexibility

In FY 2021, FSIS granted leave flexibility for employees to receive COVID-19 vaccinations and recover, if needed. In July 2021, FSIS expanded this flexibility to support employees' families, granting administrative leave for employees to escort a family member to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Protective Equipment

FSIS protected its employees by supplying and requiring the use of protective equipment and adapting its policies as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and USDA guidance evolved. In FY 2021, FSIS continued to acquire protective equipment for its inspection workforce stationed in more than 6,600 establishments and for its other employees located across 62 facilities inside and outside of the National Capital Region. Meanwhile, amid global supply shortages, FSIS continuously kept its supply of protective equipment sufficiently stocked, replenishing as necessary.

Internal Communication

The pandemic emphasized the importance of communication with employees to keep them safe and informed, especially those in the field. The Agency continued to hold monthly employee town hall calls at three times during the day to proactively provide guidance for employees. FSIS executive leadership continued to hold biweekly calls with District Managers and directors of offices in other parts of the country to share updates and gather feedback directly from these leaders. FSIS also worked with its U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and CDC counterparts to facilitate a webinar for employees, titled, "COVID-19 Vaccines: What Federal Partners are Doing to Ensure Safety and Equity" and followed up on employee questions with CDC/FDA responses after the webinar. FSIS continued to use its dedicated employee feedback email account to respond to 357 emails from FSIS employees about the pandemic. FSIS responded to 52 inquiries from other stakeholders, three requests sent per the Freedom of Information Act, and 379 inquiries on the Agency's Meat and Poultry Hotline about food safety and COVID-19. FSIS responded to 24 letters from State governments and members of Congress.

FSIS Assists with Federal COVID-19 Vaccination Effort

In support of the Federal COVID-19 vaccination campaign led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), FSIS deployed 33 employees to assist in vaccinating communities across the country as part of Emergency Response Function #11. These volunteers served at six clinics located in Maryland, Nevada, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin vaccinating almost 400,000 people.

Pandemic Awards

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to present unprecedented challenges this fiscal year. Since the early days of the pandemic, FSIS employees have risen to meet challenges with dedication and commitment to carrying out FSIS' food safety mission. In recognition, FSIS presented pandemic achievement awards to frontline personnel for their exceptional performance of duty during the initial peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. In May 2021, FSIS presented approximately \$14.3 million in achievement awards to 6,773 frontline employees and other FSIS employees who volunteered to perform in-plant inspections during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the third quarter of FY 2021, FSIS awarded 7,432 "Essential Worker" recognition coins, also called "pandemic coins," to thank Agency frontline personnel for their service early in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supporting Resilience Among Small and Very Small Establishments

Recognizing how critical small and very small plants are to the Nation's food supply, USDA worked to strengthen and build fairer markets for these producers through critical infrastructure and business investments in FY 2021. In the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP), enacted on March 11, 2021, Congress provided FSIS with \$100 million to reduce the costs of overtime inspection for small and very small federally inspected meat, poultry, and egg products establishments. These investments are intended to assist establishments in weathering the effects of the pandemic, thereby enabling them to stay in the market and reach more customers. FSIS quickly and effectively implemented the program 4 months from passage of the ARP. On July 9, 2021, FSIS announced that it implemented this provision by reducing overtime and holiday inspection fees for small establishments by 30 percent and very small establishments by 75 percent. At the end of FY 2021, 1,917 establishments (1,063 small, 854 very small) were receiving reduced rates with approximately \$11.5 million in fee reductions.

Fostering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace

FSIS is committed to the values of equity and inclusion rooted in justice and equal opportunity for our employees and those we serve. In addition to issuing two Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)/Civil Rights mandatory employee trainings, FSIS hosted a three-day Diversity and Inclusion Conference, The Agency's first-ever Virtual Diversity and Inclusion Week, open to all employees, offered training on diversity and inclusion, conflict management, health and wellness and other topics. Three of the Agency's 21 Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committees (EEOACs) were recognized with Model EEOAC Awards at the conference. The agency's efforts in timely processing of complaints resulted in resolution of 63% of informal EEO complaints, a resolution rate higher than the Department and federal government. With the assistance of the Agency's special emphasis program (SEP) managers, four FSIS SEP observance programs were held (American Asian Pacific Islander Month; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, + Pride Month; Women's History Month; and Hispanic Heritage Month), supporting the diversity and inclusion goals of the Administration and the new executive orders promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Agency published several articles in various EEOAC newsletters that were geared toward educating the workforce on EEO, civil rights, and diversity.

Hiring and Recruitment

In FY 2021, FSIS posted 1,558 job announcements for 54 different occupational series, hired 1,675 candidates, with 334 selectees pending start dates or undergoing background checks.

Shorter Time-to-Hire

In FY 2021, FSIS implemented and standardized business process improvements in its personnel security program, including the establishment of electronic fingerprinting for tentative selectees in the pre-employment process and electronic adjudication of new hires' background investigations. The combined improvements simplified the pre-employment process, reducing the time-to-hire by an average of 21 days. The process improvements enabled FSIS to issue job offers more quickly, securing quality candidates in the competition for talent. In FY 2021, FSIS ranked third best among agencies in USDA on time-to-hire.

Direct Hire Authority for Food Inspectors and Consumer Safety Inspectors

FSIS continued to leverage the use of the Direct Hire Authority (DHA) approved by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to hire Food Inspectors (FIs) and Consumer Safety Inspectors (CSIs) throughout FY 2021. In FY 2021, FSIS hired 482 inspectors, with an additional 251 inspectors in the pre-employment stages of hiring. OPM approved FSIS' request for an extension of DHA into FY 2022.

Recruitment Outreach

In the last half of FY 2021, FSIS implemented a 2-year talent management tool pilot to improve the quality and diversity of applicant pools, leverage the opportunity to be competitive with private industry through virtual career fairs and recruiting events, and raise awareness of the Agency as an employer of choice to hundreds of universities and colleges. FSIS created an internal workgroup consisting of representatives from relevant areas within the Agency that worked to develop new recruitment materials, including tailored "Insider View" stories that provide first-person accounts of different employees' roles in the Agency and how they help protect public health. Through these tools, the Agency expanded its outreach to over 1,000 schools, universities, and alumni associations with a reach of nearly 12 million students and graduates and covering nearly 36 percent of all minority-serving institutions. FSIS also participated in over 10 STEM events to help fill positions in data science fields, as well as support those interested in veterinary medicine, microbiology, and information technology. Based on initial data, hundreds of applicants used the tools to apply with a notable increase in interest from those in under-represented groups. FSIS continues to participate in virtual and in-person career fairs, course lectures, and national veterinary conferences promoting Public Health Veterinarians (PHV), FI and CSI career opportunities.

New Hiring and Retention Incentives for Food Inspectors and Consumer Safety Inspectors

During FY 2021, FSIS developed recruitment incentives that will be effective in FY 2022 for FIs and CSIs. Starting in FY 2022, FSIS will be offering a \$5,000 recruitment incentive to the first 500 newly hired FIs and CSIs. The incentive will require a signed two-year service agreement, and satisfactory performance and conduct. FSIS will also be providing a \$2,500 retention incentive to FIs and CSIs that came on board between July 2020 and November 2021. This retention incentive requires a signed one-year service agreement, satisfactory performance and conduct, and will be paid to the employee at the end of the service agreement.

Hiring Initiatives for Public Health Veterinarians

PHVs continue to be a vital part of the FSIS food safety system. During FY 2021, FSIS continued to offer previously established incentives such as the multi-year recruitment incentive. This incentive offers \$20,000 to participating PHVs divided over 4 years, continuation of a paid move to their first duty station, continuation of the Adel A. Malak Scholarship, a Student Loan Repayment Program, and other retention incentive programs that provide biweekly or annual bonus payments based on an employee's years of service. In FY 2021, nine previous Malak Scholars were converted to full-time employment and FSIS offered 11 new Malak Pathways scholarships. By the end of FY 2021, there were 60 PHVs participating in the Student Loan Repayment Program, 282 PHVs receiving a biweekly or annual retention incentive, and 507 PHVs receiving a recruitment incentive. Additionally, FSIS hired 84 veterinarians eligible for incentives in FY 2021.

Pre-Apprenticeship Program

In FY 2021, FSIS launched a new Pre-Apprenticeship Program in collaboration with the Department of Defense's Joint Base Lewis-McChord – a first-of-its kind program across the Federal Government. One apprentice has graduated and an additional four are scheduled to graduate by end of the 2021 calendar year. During their transition from the military, service members may apply to a four-week FI/CSI training program that serves as a pathway into the 1-year FSIS Apprenticeship Program for veterans that was launched in FY 2020. In FY 2021, FSIS converted its first apprentice to full-time employment and secured approval from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for veterans to use their GI Bill benefits during the 1-year apprenticeship as an incentive for applying to the program.

Employee Engagement

FSIS recognizes that two-way communication is important and values feedback from its employees. In June 2021, the Agency retired a 30-year-old monthly print publication and launched a weekly digital newsletter for its employees. The weekly *Food for Thought* digital newsletter improved the timeliness and agility of the Agency's ability to share critical information with its diverse and decentralized workforce. The newsletter combines employee stories and career milestones with operational information and vital news. The newsletter had an immediate readership of 61 percent of employees, which held steady and increased slightly to 62 percent by September 2021. The Agency also developed a new electronic exit survey process, which was implemented to receive feedback from employees separating from the Agency for all reasons. The data collected will help FSIS identify methods to improve employee retention, engagement, and morale.

Moreover, FSIS implemented a recognition coin program to reward employees who demonstrated FSIS' values of accountable, collaborative, empowered, solution-oriented, and operational excellence. The Agency awarded 266 coins in the first 6 months.

Federal Food Safety & Inspection Program

Small and Very Small Plant Initiatives

Small and Very Small Plant Assistance and Outreach

FSIS is committed to assisting small and very small plants in understanding Federal inspection requirements, thereby increasing compliance with Federal regulations. In FY 2021, FSIS continued to improve outreach and communications to small and very small plants to assist them, as needed, in obtaining Federal grants of inspection. FSIS prioritized outreach to establishments to communicate policies and regulations and provided the necessary tools and resources to improve compliance and ensure the safety of the food supply. FSIS holds interactive town hall calls for establishments every month where small and very small plants can ask questions and receive answers from FSIS leadership. Designed to share crucial policy updates, guidance, and information, the calls also provide a direct line of communication and opportunity for discussion between the Agency and those it regulates. To improve participation, the Agency conducted a survey of all establishments to get feedback. At the suggestion of establishments, FSIS moved the monthly conference call to a later timeslot to allow more Midwest and West Coast operations to participate.

Other direct outreach comes from Enforcement, Investigations, and Analysis Officers (EIAOs), who dedicate up to 25 percent of their allotted work time to small and very small plant outreach, as well as District Veterinary Medical Specialists (DVMS), who are available to provide voluntary specialized support by visiting establishments to share information and give expert advice on how to improve humane handling and/or good commercial practice programs. In FY 2021, FSIS also provided additional specialized outreach to small and very small establishments eligible for the overtime reduction benefit. Additional forms of outreach in FY 2021 included roundtable discussions and technical support through agency tools such as the Small Plant Help Desk, askFSIS, and industry guidelines.

FSIS published a report completed by Oregon State University, about small and very small establishment outreach to meet a 2018 Farm Bill requirement and developed an action plan in response to the report, including updating industry guidance materials and strengthening on-going small plant roundtables. The report and action plan addressed Congressional concerns and received positive response from industry.

Small and Very Small Plant Roundtables

During FY 2021, FSIS facilitated four roundtable listening sessions for establishment owners and operators in California, North Carolina, Georgia, and Wisconsin to discuss issues faced by small and very small plants. The roundtables provided important policy updates and requirements to participants and gives them the ability to ask questions of FSIS senior leadership. Based on stakeholder feedback, the format became more interactive and included case studies highlighting actual scenarios faced by small plants. The Agency's outreach activities showed the continued commitment to small and very small plants and created an environment that valued open communication by listening to the feedback of owners and management.

Industry Guidance and Resources

Small and very small plants can access numerous guidelines, educational materials, and training resources on the FSIS website. This includes information on how to develop a recall plan, a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan, a robust systematic approach to humane handling, and other topics. In FY 2021, FSIS revised and issued eight guidelines that provided information on pathogen reduction, product donation, kit labeling, and customer complaints. FSIS also published 12 HACCP models to assist small and very small establishments with the development of effective food safety plans. These models cover various processes for poultry, pork, and beef.

Funding Opportunities for Small and Very Small Plants

FSIS has provided technical assistance to the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) during the creation and publication of the request for applications for the Meat and Poultry Inspection Readiness Grant Program administered by AMS. This program is for \$60 million in funding to assist currently operating meat and/or poultry slaughter and/or processing facilities under a State grant of inspection or an exemption from Federal inspection obtain a grant of inspection for interstate shipment. Technical assistance included guidance on the regulatory requirements for obtaining a Federal grant of inspection and those for participation in the Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) Program if that was an available option for the applicant. FSIS provided this assistance to AMS through participation in multiple webinars, as well as behind the scenes support in the development of communications plans and the application process. Additionally, from July 15 to July 17, 2021, FSIS assisted AMS at the American Association of Meat Processors Conference in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, handing out information on AMS funding opportunities.

askFSIS System (including Small Plant Help Desk)

The askFSIS database provides online answers to technical, inspection-related questions that help to maintain effective policy understanding and implementation. In March 2021, askFSIS was successfully migrated to a new data management platform that seamlessly connects to the Small Plant Help Desk and AskUSDA, allowing customers to easily submit questions. In FY 2021, askFSIS responded to 39,238 questions from customers and its publicly posted Q&As were viewed 512,906 times.

Pathogen Reduction

On October 29, 2020, FSIS amended the egg products inspection regulation to require that official egg products plants develop and implement HACCP Systems, Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (Sanitation SOPs), and other sanitation requirements consistent with FSIS' meat and poultry regulations. These changes not only make meat, poultry, and egg regulations more consistent, providing for flexibility in allocating inspection resources, but also allow egg products plants to develop sanitation and process control systems customized to their needs.

Additionally, in FY2021, eight establishments converted to the New Poultry Inspection System and two establishments converted to the New Swine Slaughter Inspection System (NSIS). Under NSIS, plant employees conduct sorting and trimming prior to FSIS inspection and are required to perform additional microbial sampling to control for pathogens. On March 31, 2021, the U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota ordered a partial vacatur of FSIS' final rule establishing a voluntary NSIS. The Court ordered the vacatur only insofar as the final rule eliminated maximum line speeds for NSIS establishments. The other provisions of the final rule were not affected. The court order went into effect on June 30, 2021. The Agency is committed to worker safety and ensuring a safe,

reliable food supply. FSIS worked with the establishments to comply with the Court’s ruling and minimize disruptions to the supply chain.

Invasive Wild-Caught Catfish

As directed through the 2008 and 2014 Farm Bills, FSIS inspects fish of the order Siluriformes, including catfish, under the Federal Meat Inspection Act. The 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act allocated funding to FSIS to cover industry costs for inspection outside of regularly scheduled hours of operation for establishments processing invasive wild-caught catfish species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service identified the species of invasive wild catfish in the U.S. and FSIS identified States with Federal establishments that may process the species. IPP conducted awareness meetings with these establishments and reviewed available documentation to determine if establishment management, in the list of States identified, attested to processing wild-caught invasive species. FSIS implemented the funding through an FSIS Notice on March 22, 2021. Additionally, establishments were retroactively reimbursed for overtime/holiday hours billed on or after October 1, 2020, and were not billed for future overtime or holiday hours.

Labeling

FSIS develops and provides labeling guidance, policies, and inspection methods, and administers programs to ensure that all labels are truthful and not misleading in order to protect consumers from misbranded and economically adulterated meat, poultry, and egg products. FSIS presented four webinars on labeling, two webinars on mandatory labeling features and generic labeling and two on animal raising and non-bioengineered label claims. FSIS continues to provide biweekly updates on tips to streamline the label approval process and label turnaround time in the Agency’s weekly *Constituent Update*, which is disseminated to industry and consumer stakeholders. This regular outreach has resulted in more accurate submissions with faster turnarounds of five to seven days—the fastest the Agency has noted in decades.

The FSIS Guideline on Kit Product Labeling was published in September 2021. This guideline was developed to help establishments and other food handling facilities producing a multi-component food kit determine whether the kit product needs to be prepared under FSIS inspection and how to label a kit product that contains fully labeled meat or poultry components.

Product of USA Labeling

On July 1, 2021, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) announced a final rule to strengthen its enforcement around the “Made in USA” claim. FTC will be deferring to USDA to regulate voluntary origin labels for products under FSIS jurisdiction, including beef. The Department began its comprehensive review of the “Product of USA” label near the end of FY 2021.

Labeling of Meat or Poultry Products Comprised of or Containing Cultured Animal Cells

On September 3, 2021, FSIS published an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) to request comments pertaining to the labeling of meat and poultry products comprised of or containing cultured cells derived from animals subject to the FMIA or the PPIA. Issues raised in the comments submitted in response to this ANPR will inform future rulemaking to establish labeling requirements for these products. FSIS also discussed how FSIS will generally evaluate labels for these products if they are submitted before the Agency completes rulemaking.

Labs and Sampling

Sampling

In FY 2021, FSIS analyzed 132,281 samples and generated 2,438,890 individual test results on these samples. Additionally, using Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS), FSIS conducted microbiological characterization of 15,106 bacterial isolates reporting 466,947 separate test results.

The antimicrobial resistance (AMR) profile of isolates is also now being determined using WGS, which has significantly improved efficiency. In addition to these output achievements, FSIS utilized the genetic information to determine the scope of several outbreak investigations and to focus product traceback. The Agency is also using WGS-derived *Listeria monocytogenes* (*Lm*) characterization to document long-term harborage or reintroduction into the plant environment. Finally, WGS information assists with in-plant discussions at establishments that do not meet *Salmonella* performance standards.

National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System (NARMS)

NARMS is a national public health surveillance system, in partnership with state and local public health departments, FDA, CDC, and USDA, that tracks changes in antimicrobial susceptibility of select foodborne enteric bacteria found in ill people, retail meats, and food animals. FSIS collected and analyzed 6,428 cecal, 302 lymph node and 1,192 Siluriformes fish samples for several microbial targets as part of the NARMS interagency collaboration. The microorganisms isolated were characterized to determine their antibiotic resistance in *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, and indicator bacteria. NARMS supports One-Health focused environmental surveillance of potential sources of AMR.

COVID-19 Lab Response

The Agency maintained a Laboratory Surge Cadre that involves non-laboratory analytical personnel, who assist trained FSIS laboratory personnel in the analyses of samples received in the Field Service Laboratories. Members of this group would become activated if primary analysts at the laboratories were quarantined off-site due to COVID-19.

Changes to Accreditation of Non-Federal Analytical Testing Laboratories

On December 14, 2020, FSIS proposed to revise the regulations prescribing the statistical methods used in measuring the performance of chemistry laboratories in its voluntary Accredited Laboratory Program (ALP). Additionally, in response to industry interest, FSIS proposed to expand the scope of the program by accrediting non-Federal laboratories for microbiological indicator organisms and pathogen testing. FSIS also proposed to expand the ALP to more chemical analytes. New proficiency testing options have begun in the laboratory following stakeholder feedback and agency input. Responses to public comments were finalized, and the final rule is expected to be published in FY 2022. ALP staff conducted 10 onsite audits and four desk audits of participating laboratories to ensure management and quality systems are in place that meet ALP requirements.

Laboratory Method Updates

FSIS completed the following comprehensive method updates in FY 2021:

- To support testing of FSIS-regulated food samples for per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) domestically and at import, FSIS expanded the PFAS surveillance testing to include chicken, pork, and Siluriformes, in addition to ongoing beef surveillance testing.
- As part of its continuing effort to modernize food testing, FSIS updated the Chemistry Laboratory Guidebook (CLG) methods for PFAS and the multi-residue screening method (MRM) to improve quality control processes.
- FSIS evaluated and drafted a new CLG method for allergens testing, expanding capabilities to screen food samples for soy, gluten, peanut, egg, and milk.
- FSIS modernized its pathogen identification technology by adopting a new method to perform bacterial isolate identification leading to confirmed positive results. This resulted in updates to the Microbiology Laboratory Guidebook (MLG) protocols for all FSIS-tested pathogens.
- FSIS completed an evaluation of rapid screening technologies for *Campylobacter* testing and updated the MLG to reflect the adoption of a new method for initial *Campylobacter* screening.
- To ensure global applicability of the FSIS Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) analytical method, FSIS updated the laboratory testing definitions of *E. coli* O157 and non-O157 STEC to harmonize STEC testing criteria.

Food Emergency Response Network (FERN)

FSIS continued targeted food defense surveillance of regulated commodities for food defense select/threat agents at retail via the FERN Cooperative Agreement Program (CAP) partner labs. In FY 2021, the CAP labs tested 5,058 samples from retail: 2,073 microbiology samples, 2,521 chemistry samples, and 464 radiochemistry samples. Additionally, 14 proficiency and challenge testing events were conducted. A total of 306 labs nationwide participated and analyzed retail samples. These events ensured CAP labs' capability to detect food defense analytes in FSIS-regulated commodities.

Laboratory Open House

FSIS laboratories successfully hosted three virtual open house events in FY 2021, each with over 130 registrants. The individual open house events offered unique agendas featuring recent and upcoming updates to laboratory methods and technologies, and demonstrations of various microbial pathogen, chemical residue, and pathology analyses. The web-based, virtual format allowed the three laboratories to collaborate in a way that was not

previously possible with in-person open house events, including a joint-hosted open house presented by the midwestern and western laboratories. All events resulted in active engagement among attendees, presenters, and FSIS Leadership.

Foodborne illness outbreaks and investigations

Consumer Complaints

FSIS uses the Consumer Complaint Management System (CCMS), media reports, CDC PulseNet, and other data sources to conduct surveillance and investigate potential foodborne hazards associated with FSIS-regulated products. In FY 2021, FSIS received and evaluated 1,025 consumer complaints, 159 of which required additional investigations. Fifty of the investigations resulted in actions: 39 voluntary (i.e., establishment re-training employees, updating their HACCP plans), five enforcement, and six product control (recalls, detention, or seizure of product). In FY 2021, consumer complaints reported through CCMS led to one Class I Recall and one Public Health Alert (PHA). Seventeen complaints reported after product recalls helped to enhance recall effectiveness activities.

Foodborne Illness Outbreak Investigation

In FY 2021, FSIS monitored 67 illness clusters with potential association to FSIS regulated products. Evidence obtained in nine clusters suggested involvement of FSIS-regulated products, which were subsequently investigated as foodborne illness outbreaks. There were two foodborne illness investigations carried over from FY 2020 to FY 2021. FSIS coordinated with the CDC and other public health partners to investigate the 11 total foodborne illness outbreaks representing 210 illnesses, 75 hospitalizations, four Hemolytic-Uremic Syndrome cases, and three deaths. Of the 11 investigations, three were investigations for STEC, four for *Salmonella*, three for *Lm*, and one for suspected *Clostridium botulinum*. Two of the outbreaks led to recalls, one led to a PHA, and one led to both a PHA and recall. FSIS posted an after-action review for one illness outbreak on the Agency website.

Table FSIS-16. Foodborne Illness Investigations for FY 2021¹

	Investigations	Ill	Hospitalized	Deceased	Resulted in Product Recall
Shiga toxin-producing <i>E. coli</i>	3	59	20	1	0
<i>Salmonella</i>	4	132	36	0	2
<i>Listeria</i>	3	18	18	2	1
<i>Clostridium Botulinum (suspect)</i>	1	1	1	0	0
TOTAL	11	210	75	3	3

¹ Data is obtained from CDC and the States.

Recalls

There were 42 recalls in FY 2021: 12 beef, 8 poultry, 6 pork, 2 Siluriformes, and 14 combination products. A total of 12,035,832 pounds of meat, poultry, egg products, and Siluriformes were recalled. Out of the 42 total recalls, 34 were considered Class I (reasonable probability that eating the food will cause health problems or death), 8 were Class II (remote probability of adverse health consequences from eating the food), and there were no Class III (use of the product will not cause adverse health consequences). Three of the recalls were directly related to possible microbiological contamination caused by the presence of *Lm*. Two of the recalls were in response to possible microbiological contamination caused by the presence of STEC. Seven of the recalls were due to extraneous material contamination. Three recalls were due to possible contamination of product by *Salmonella*. Ten recalls were due to undeclared allergens in the product. The remaining 17 recalls were in response to undeclared or unapproved substances, processing deviations, produced without benefit of inspection, or imported without receiving FSIS reinspection.

FSIS also issued 21 PHAs in FY 2021. PHAs are typically issued in lieu of a recall in situations where FSIS determines that a specific product may present a risk to human health, but the product is no longer available to consumers in commerce but may still remain in consumers' freezers.

Compliance and Enforcement

Humane Handling

In FY 2021, the Agency devoted 154 FTEs (the requirement set under the law is 148 FTEs) to the verification and enforcement of humane handling requirements in FSIS inspected slaughter establishments, spending more than 321,242 hours completing these tasks. In total, FSIS personnel performed 184,447 humane handling verification procedures.

District Veterinary Medical Specialists (DVMS) conduct assessment visits at each slaughter establishment at least once every 12-18 months. These visits assess the slaughter establishment's comprehensive humane handling program to ensure it meets the HMSA. In FY 2021, DVMSs visited 622 livestock establishments out of the 944 total livestock slaughter establishments. Additionally, DVMSs completed 229 good commercial practice visits at 223 different poultry establishments.

In-Commerce Activities

FSIS Compliance Investigators (CIs) conduct surveillance activities, product control actions, investigations, and enforcement activities at warehouses, distributors, retail stores, and other businesses that store, handle, distribute, transport, and sell meat, poultry, and egg products in commerce. In FY 2021, FSIS conducted 963 investigations in response to alleged violations of the FMIA, PPIA, or EPIA, the vast majority relating to food safety concerns. The Agency removed a total of 1,766,406 pounds of meat, poultry, and egg products from commerce to prevent possible illness or injury to consumers. Of that amount, 1,643,769 pounds were detained, and FSIS reported no seizures. Additionally, 13,254 surveillance activities were conducted in FY 2021, 79 percent of which was focused on the high/medium risk firms. These surveillance activities focused on examination of food safety and food defense activities in accordance with agency policy. FSIS CIs conducted 2,002 shell egg surveillances in FY 2021, with a 99percent compliance rate for ambient refrigeration requirements and labeling for shell eggs packed, distributed, and sold to consumers.

FSIS CIs also conducted observations at retailers to assess if the retailers were using the recommendations in the "FSIS Best Practices Guideline for Controlling *Listeria monocytogenes* (*Lm*) in Retail Delicatessens." This involved 627 retail deli surveys. Of the retailers surveyed during FY 2021, approximately 93percent of the 33 FSIS recommendations in the guidelines for retail deli *Lm* controls were followed. This is calculated as the average of the four question categories: product handling, cleaning and sanitizing, facility/equipment controls, and employee practices.

In FY 2021, FSIS CIs continued verifying grinding logs at retail facilities. FSIS CIs conducted 2,509 grinding log verifications, educated 1,055 non-compliant firms, issued 134 Notices of Warning (NOWs), and 224 Letters of Information to retail firms, resulting in a 58 percent compliance rate with the Grinding Log Final Rule.

Administrative Enforcement

In FY 2021, FSIS filed six administrative complaints to refuse and/or withdraw Federal inspection services from establishments and grant holders. FSIS filed one complaint to continue indefinitely the suspension of inspection services based on incidents involving threats, harassment, intimidation, and/or interference against in-plant and non-in-plant personnel responsible for inspection at the establishment. FSIS also filed five consent decision and orders to resolve administrative actions to refuse and/or withdraw inspection services. Two orders involved humane handling violations; one involved assault, intimidation, and interference against FSIS personnel; one involved criminal conviction of the applicant or recipient of inspection services; and one involved violations of sanitation requirements. The orders obtained for these cases contained, as appropriate, terms that improved food safety, sanitation, humane handling, and/or other compliance and deterrence objectives.

Civil Enforcement

In FY 2021, FSIS led action to obtain civil injunctions, civil judgments, and enforce civil decrees in three cases to stop ongoing and/or recurring violations of FSIS laws. In total, FSIS obtained court orders and/or other outcomes to include \$284,436.26 in fines, penalties, costs, or other assessments in these civil enforcement cases. One of the cases involved a non-federally inspected and unlicensed retail facility that was found in contempt for violating previous orders entered by the Federal District Court. That case included a sanction penalty of \$250,000 and payment to the U.S. of more than \$14,000 of associated FSIS costs.

Prosecutions and Other Legal Actions

In FY 2021, FSIS worked directly with the USDA Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Attorneys, and other Federal and State partners to obtain criminal convictions, fines, and other results to address food safety and other violations of FSIS statutes. Specifically, FSIS obtained convictions under Title 18 of the U.S. Code of two individuals responsibly connected to a federally inspected establishment for knowingly and willfully making and using false documents, namely laboratory sample reports, relating to carcass swabs and ground beef samples for *E. coli* testing required under the FMIA, bearing the laboratory's letterhead and authorized signature, knowing the laboratory sample reports contained materially false, fictitious, and fraudulent statements and entries. Additionally, FSIS issued 884 NOWs (94 from headquarters, 790 from field offices) to individuals and firms for violations of FSIS laws. These actions serve to protect the public, send a strong message that food safety and other violations of FSIS laws will not be tolerated, and deter future violations by others.

Civil Seizure Action

In FY 2021, FSIS filed one Complaint *in rem* in Federal District Court for judicial seizure and condemnation of 3,100 pounds of non-federally inspected livestock and poultry carcasses and parts detained in-place at a non-federally inspected and unlicensed retail facility.

Food Defense

FSIS continued to promote food defense through preparation of guidance documents and tools, outreach, and education to industry to facilitate adoption of effective risk mitigation strategies, and collaboration with industry. This includes monitoring to ensure establishments have adopted food defense practices and to ensure the Agency integrated food defense principles, concepts, and practices into its daily activities. In FY 2021, 88 percent of FSIS regulated establishments voluntarily implemented food defense practices.

Promoted Food Defense Practices

FSIS IPP and compliance investigators performed 117,606 food defense surveillance activities in establishments and in-commerce facilities. These activities look to identify potential vulnerabilities that increase the risk of intentional adulteration and inform potential FSIS actions that could reduce these risks. FSIS participated in National Special Security Events, including the Presidential Inauguration, the Super Bowl LV in Tampa, Florida, and the Indianapolis 500. At these events, FSIS coordinated with respective Federal, State, and local Agencies, and developed surveillance sampling plans for each of these events. These activities provide a deterrent effect on possible threats, serving as opportunities for FSIS to conduct outreach with partners on food defense practices and concerns.

Food Defense Vulnerability Assessments (VAs)

FSIS conducts VAs to identify food defense countermeasures and mitigation strategies aimed to prevent or reduce the impact of an intentional attack on the food supply. They also help identify research gaps and strengthen communication and collaboration between government and industry partners. At the start of FY 2021, FSIS held a workshop with representatives from industry, academia, and Federal partners to discuss current concerns and vulnerabilities in these areas. In addition, FSIS updated the VAs on ground beef processing and cyber security, which will be finalized in FY 2022.

Training

FSIS converted all classroom training to virtual training courses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the FSIS workforce is a cornerstone of public health protection, the workforce training strategy includes entry-level training on mission-critical inspection skills to new employees followed by additional training as policy is updated and/or to reinforce knowledge on performing complex public health protection duties. In FY 2021, FSIS conducted 74 training sessions to a total of 6,285 mission critical employees. Of these, 5,658 employees completed required training and 627 completed refresher training. FSIS also delivered 12 Gateway Supervisory virtual trainings to 1008 participants, delivered 58 Learning Trove open enrollment training sessions, and 47 customized webinars. Two hundred twenty FSIS supervisors completed the New Supervisor Training Program, an increase of 98 graduates over FY 2020.

Acquisition Training

FSIS provided over 20 virtual training courses to its acquisitions staff in FY 2021, including contracting officer representatives, contracting specialists, contracting officers, and relevant budget staff. The trainings reinforced a solid foundation on acquisition planning and best value contracting.

Monthly PHV Seminars

FSIS offered monthly seminars to provide PHV participants with continuing education credits. All seminars were conducted virtually, offering interactive and non-interactive module options to accommodate all schedules.

Surveillance, Investigation, and Enforcement Methods (SIEM) Training Initiative

In FY 2021, FSIS hosted a virtual SIEM training course for 12 CIs, 22 State meat and poultry inspection (MPI) program CIs, and five employees from other FSIS program areas. This training provided CIs and other FSIS program employees with the necessary knowledge to carry out their responsibilities under the Federal regulations, including in-commerce surveillance, product control, investigations, custom exempt reviews, evidence collection, and case disposition.

In September 2021, FSIS developed and coordinated a webinar for approximately 140 attendees, providing investigators, senior investigators, supervisory investigators, and deputy and regional directors “briefing tips” on briefing headquarters and management officials on high-profile issues and cases.

State Food Safety & Inspection Program

Establishments have the option to apply for Federal or State inspection. In FY 2021, there were 27 state inspection systems operating under a cooperative agreement with FSIS under which states must enforce requirements "at least equal to" those imposed under the MPIA, PPIA, and HMSA. Products produced under these State inspection systems are limited to intrastate commerce unless a State participates in the CIS Program. In FY 2021, FSIS continued to fund 50 percent of State MPI programs to maintain cost-effective State inspection, supporting 1,522 State-inspected establishments.

State Inspection Reviews

In FY 2021, FSIS completed annual reviews of each of the 27 State MPI programs. The comprehensive State review process consists of two parts: annual self-assessments and triennial onsite reviews, which are used to determine whether the State MPI program enforces requirements “at least equal to” the Federal requirements. In FY 2021, FSIS completed routine onsite audits of 12 State MPI programs (Delaware, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia) and targeted onsite audits of two State MPI programs (Montana and Wyoming).

The Agency continued to oversee the civil rights portion of the State MPI programs to ensure compliance with civil rights laws and agency policies and practices. In doing so, the 27 States’ annual self-assessments were received and reviewed. Similarly, the Agency conducted nine comprehensive reviews of the States’ civil rights programs. Overall, all participating States were found to be in compliance with civil rights laws and the Agency’s “at least equal to” requirements.

Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) Program

State-inspected establishments that participate in the CIS program are permitted to ship and sell their meat and poultry products in interstate commerce and, if they have a supplemental agreement, internationally. At this time, no such establishments have a supplemental agreement. FSIS performs onsite and record reviews of State CIS programs to verify participating States meet Federal inspection equivalence requirements and that establishments are operating in a manner that is consistent with the FMIA and/or PPIA.

In FY 2021, FSIS finalized a CIS agreement with South Dakota. In addition to South Dakota, FSIS has signed agreements with Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Missouri, North Dakota, Ohio, Vermont, and Wisconsin. By the end of FY 2021, there were a total of 96 establishments among these States selected to participate in the CIS program.

State MPI Program Support

In FY 2021, FSIS continued to work with State MPI program directors to coordinate enhancements of the State PHIS functionality that mirrors the Federal PHIS. Currently, five State MPI programs (Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Wyoming) use State-specific data systems instead of State PHIS to track the results of inspection and food safety verification activities. In FY 2021, FSIS also implemented a new web-based data system, the State Review and Communication Tool (SRCT), to streamline the comprehensive review process for making “at least equal to” determinations concerning State MPI programs and create an alternate pathway for collecting and cataloging data received from non-PHIS users. Ongoing communications between FSIS and State officials resulted in increased investments to support the refinement of FSIS data warehousing capabilities for State MPI programs.

In-Commerce State Activities

In FY 2021, FSIS continued to provide support to the AssuranceNet/In-Commerce System (ANet/ICS) State program users. FSIS worked with State compliance programs to ensure compliance and accuracy within the system. The joint system usage maintained increased communication and information sharing across programs, also providing opportunities for joint investigations with State partners to become more efficient and responsive to foodborne illness outbreaks. This integration of the State MPI programs in ANet/ICS also resulted in an enhanced execution of mission critical public health functions across FSIS and State programs.

International Food Safety & Inspection Program

Equivalence

Equivalence is the process of determining whether a foreign country's food safety inspection system achieves an equivalent level of public health protection as applied domestically in the U.S. During FY 2021, FSIS conducted equivalence determinations for France's eligibility to export fully cooked pork products to the U.S. and to allow some Canadian establishments to export ready-to-eat meat and poultry products to the U.S. under eligible HACCP processing categories. FSIS also provided equivalence-related feedback to 34 eligible countries, and to about seven countries seeking initial equivalence, four countries seeking reinstatement of equivalence, and five countries seeking expansions of their equivalence determinations. Additionally, in FY 2021, FSIS developed and distributed policy notification letters regarding the "Egg Products Inspection Regulations" final rule to 14 countries seeking initial equivalence determinations and two countries currently eligible to export egg products to the U.S.

Foreign Equivalence Verification Audits

In FY 2021, FSIS completed ongoing equivalence verification audits to ensure compliance with equivalence requirements of the FMIA, PPIA, EPIA, and HMSA. Due to pandemic travel restrictions, FSIS developed a remote audit process for audits of foreign countries' food safety systems, leveraging virtual platforms and data-sharing. Using lessons learned, the Agency identified ways to streamline onsite audits by using virtual platforms to limit onsite activities to those requiring direct observation, which will be standard practice moving forward, gaining work efficiencies. FSIS completed 12 ongoing equivalence verification audits, including the countries of Honduras, Italy, Vietnam, France, San Marino, Mexico, Thailand, Poland, Nicaragua, China, Argentina, and Finland. FSIS also completed audits of two countries, the Dominican Republic and Romania, to determine if they could be reinstated as equivalent. The audits verify the implementation of food safety requirements for products imported into the U.S.

Equivalent Foreign Countries List

In FY 2021, FSIS continued to maintain and update the import library and the status chart for pending equivalence determinations as foreign countries become equivalent or seek initial, reinstatement or expansion of equivalence determinations. The maintenance of the import library and the status chart for pending equivalence determinations provide real-time updates to stakeholders on the status of a foreign country's eligibility and initial, reinstatement, and expansion of equivalence requests with FSIS. Along with updating the import library, FSIS updates the Public Health Information System (PHIS) to reflect the changes in the import library, enabling FSIS inspectors to be aware of new countries becoming eligible to ship product to the United States and to conduct necessary import inspection accordingly.

Audits by Foreign Countries

In FY 2021, FSIS coordinated three virtual audits conducted by foreign governments—Taiwan (pork), Ecuador (bovine), and the Republic of Korea (beef and pork)—to verify that FSIS' inspection system provides an equivalent level of food safety as those countries' systems. The audits were conducted virtually, rather than in-person, due to pandemic-related travel restrictions.

International Coordination and Outreach

In FY 2021, FSIS highlighted the strength of the U.S. meat, poultry, and egg products food safety regulatory system among foreign governments through bilateral engagements and support of foreign government audits. Additionally, FSIS actively worked to ensure USDA food safety perspectives are reflected in international food safety forums by actively participating in international food safety work groups such as Codex, the World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Trade Organization, and the Asian Pacific Economic Council.

Coordinating Electronic Export Application and Certification in PHIS

As described in the "Cross-Cutting Accomplishments" section below, FY 2021 saw a number of updates to FSIS' PHIS. In FY 2021, FSIS coordinated the government-to-government aspects related to the expansion of the PHIS export module to 42 additional countries and territories, for a total of 80 countries and territories in PHIS. Through

the PHIS export module, FSIS can track and access export data for product under its jurisdiction. FY 2021 also saw the implementation of the export module statements functionality for 14 countries. This functionality saves time for FSIS and industry by reducing paperwork.

Foreign Outreach

Despite the continued challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, FSIS hosted or participated in over 100 outreach/technical engagements, including outreach activities targeted to U.S. industry focused on exports, foreign countries focused on equivalence requirements for imports into the U.S., other U.S. food safety agencies focused on FSIS regulations and policies, and/or highlighting the FSIS's food safety inspection system to provide confidence in FSIS-regulated foods abroad.

Those outreach activities included the following seminars or webinars hosted by FSIS:

- a webinar for Foreign Agricultural Service foreign service officers and Department of State economic officers at posts around the world to provide training on egg products inspection and FSIS' new egg products inspection final rule;
- a webinar on the policy changes and implications on importing and exporting egg products to or from the U.S. with the egg products inspection final rule for any countries interested in or currently importing or exporting FSIS-regulated egg products;
- a webinar for foreign countries on the NSIS; and
- a webinar for industry providing information on policy changes and implications on importing and exporting egg products to or from the U.S. with the egg products inspection final rule.

FSIS also participated in workshops/webinars organized by other government agencies or organizations on the following topics:

- a workshop hosted by the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) and U.S. Poultry and Egg Export Council (USAPEEC) providing importers and exporters in China with information on the process to export product to China;
- three webinars hosted by the Mexican Meat Council on FSIS' domestic programs and export certification process;
- a presentation to the Association of Food and Drug Officials on the role of the U.S. and the impact of Codex on imports and exports; and
- a presentation on FSIS' role in import and export food safety at the Asian Pacific Economic Council's Food Safety Shared Responsibility Workshop.

FSIS held bilateral technical meetings with Brazil, Canada, Chile, Dominican Republic, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Paraguay, Taiwan, Thailand, and Uruguay. These meetings resulted in removing barriers to and resolving questions related to importing and exporting FSIS-regulated products, ensuring the safety of products entering the U.S., and facilitating the on-boarding of countries and territories into FSIS' PHIS Export Module.

Import Reinspection Activities

FSIS re-inspects all commercial shipments of meat, poultry, and egg products imported to the U.S. from eligible foreign countries at import inspection establishments. During FY 2021, importers presented approximately 4.5 billion pounds of meat and poultry products to FSIS for reinspection and approximately 8 million pounds of egg products from Canada and The Netherlands. The tables below provide the 2021 import statistics for meat, poultry, and egg products:

Table FSIS-17. Imported Meat and Poultry Product

	Total Product Presented for Routine reinspection (Pounds) ¹	Product Subjected to Additional TOIs (Pounds) ²	Total Product Refused Entry (Pounds)	Refused Product Rectified (Pounds) ³	Total Accepted (Pounds) ⁴
FY 2021					
TOTAL⁵	4,509,685,849	450,647,335	39,611,430	35,942,340	4,506,016,759

Table FSIS-18. Imported Egg Product

	Total Product Presented for Routine reinspection (Pounds) ¹	Product Subjected to Additional TOIs (Pounds) ²	Total Product Refused Entry (Pounds)	Refused Product Rectified (Pounds) ³	Total Accepted (Pounds) ⁴
FY 2021					
TOTAL ⁵	8,026,934	3,519,642	100,896	100,783	8,026,821

Abbreviation: TOI, Type of Inspection.

¹ Routine reinspection includes the Certification and Label Verification TOIs, as well as verification of product condition and identification of shipping damage.

² This column is a subset of the total product presented and identifies the amount of product subjected to more in depth physical or laboratory TOIs, in addition to the routine reinspection TOIs (Certification and Label Verification).

³ Refused Product Rectified is the pounds of product that were initially refused entry but were subsequently brought into compliance and accepted. Issues amenable to rectification include labeling and certification.

⁴ Total Accepted includes all products that were initially inspected and passed plus product that was initially refused entry but later rectified.

⁵ Data include Siluriformes fish.

Returned Export Reinspection Activities

FSIS also reviews and processes requests to return U.S. exported products to the U.S. These shipments leave the country and travel to destinations all over the world, therefore, FSIS extensively reviews each request to identify food defense and food safety concerns to determine whether these shipments are safe to return to U.S. commerce. FSIS coordinates reinspection of shipments when necessary to ensure returning products are safe, wholesome, and unadulterated. In FY 2021, FSIS reviewed applications to return over 500 shipments of exported meat, poultry, and egg products, preventing over 1.4 million pounds of potentially adulterated product from returning to U.S. commerce.

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Coordination

In FY 2021, FSIS continued automated data exchange capabilities with CBP with over 227 customs brokers participating in the FSIS data exchange and 82 percent of all import applications received by FSIS filed electronically. FSIS continued outbound message capabilities in the Automated Commercial Environment that provides messages back to importers concerning the status of the shipments re-inspected by FSIS.

US Codex Office Coordination

In FY 2021, FSIS participated as delegates or alternate delegates on six Codex Alimentarius committees (committees on food hygiene, food import and export certification and inspection systems, contaminants in food, food labelling, pesticide residues, and residues of veterinary drugs in foods), and as the chair on the Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH). FSIS actively participated in several Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)-hosted Expert Consultations that will provide materials for the next CCFH meeting, including consultations on allergens in food, pathogens in fruits and vegetables, and safe water use in agricultural environment. In addition, FSIS contributed to the Ad hoc Codex Intergovernmental Task Force to progress the work on AMR of a code of practice and a guide for surveillance of AMR for adoption at the next Codex Commission meeting. FSIS contributions also helped progress the guideline on front-of-pack nutrition labeling as well as the standard on non-retail container labeling. FSIS participation in workgroups under the various committees led to progress on numerous draft discussion papers, guidelines, and reports, including e-commerce, labeling technologies, allergen labeling, food fraud, equivalence of national food control systems, paperless certification, lead contamination in food, quantifying pesticide residues in food and feed, and maximum residue limits for a number of veterinary drugs and pesticides.

Public Health Data Communication Infrastructure System

FSIS uses existing information technology (IT) and non-IT governance bodies to make infrastructure change decisions. These management-led decisions drive a reliable budget planning and execution cycle that has consistently supported the internal operations necessary to maintain and secure the Agency's IT infrastructure system. The Agency continues to investigate and leverage the most advanced commercial network technologies and data services to provide connectivity to our inspection personnel.

Website Redesign

In FY 2021, FSIS focused on improving the Agency’s digital communications, including a redesign of its public website. FSIS updated and migrated its public website from the legacy proprietary platform to an open-source content management system. This redesign and migration made it possible to use the shared hosting and operations and maintenance services under USDA’s Office of the Chief Information Officer, bringing FSIS into compliance with the U.S. Web Design Standards and the USDA Digital Strategy Playbook while improving access to food safety information.

The redesign simultaneously reduced costs and improved the user experience for site visitors. Consumer research heavily informed its design, creating easy-to-use food safety recall pages, increasing plain language usage throughout the site, and organizing information based on user models versus organizational charts and reporting structures. The website also reflects an updated content strategy that responds to user needs, such as newer content to connect establishments with financial resources (i.e., grants, loans, and other USDA funding), and consolidating humane handling guidance and resources. Media, special interest groups, industry, consumer groups, and academics often seek information provided in these types of records.

The site leverages a cloud-based content management system, laying the foundation for future innovation and site improvements. It also significantly improved accessibility by using updated code and templates that are 508 compliant. This more reliable and scalable platform also has enhanced interoperability and compatibility with social media platforms and all web browsers. The website’s successful redesign and emphasis on customer experience was recognized by the National Association of Government Web Professionals, which awarded FSIS with the 2021 Pinnacle Award for Federal or State websites.

eDevice Initiative

FSIS provided an additional 895 computers (eDevices) to in-plant personnel in FY 2021. Distributing the additional computers allowed the Agency to provide one device to each employee, per shift, saving Agency costs on printing, mailing, and the manual data entry of paper time sheets. Prior to this initiative, up to three employees, per shift, shared one device. FSIS completed this initiative in FY 2021.

Lab IT Upgrades

FSIS undertook numerous efforts to improve the information technology systems within its three field service laboratories in FY 2021. These efforts included upgrades to applications used by laboratories and updating the physical infrastructure at their facilities. FSIS replaced or upgraded more than 30 scientific instruments to become compliant with the Agency’s Windows 10 requirement and replace outdated network technology. To improve performance, FSIS moved three major applications, the primary Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) application (LabWare), LIMS Direct, and the laboratory reporting server, to a cloud environment. Additionally, FSIS updated both LIMS Direct and the laboratory reporting server applications before deploying to the new cloud-based environment.

Cross-Cutting Accomplishments***Public Health Information System (PHIS)***

FSIS deployed 10 high impact PHIS releases, completed 28 patches, conducted 6 data changes releases, and completed a total of 2,400 user stories, 778 of which with business value enhancements.

Electronic Export Application and Certification/PHIS Updates

FSIS expanded the PHIS Export Module to 42 additional countries and territories in FY 2021, for a total of 80 countries and territories in PHIS. Through this process, FSIS notified all countries of the change, which included the adoption of digital signatures for the countries added in FY 2021, and the implementation of the statements module for 14 countries and acceptance of that updated certificate model by those 14 countries. In addition, laying the groundwork to expand FSIS adoption of eCertification (“eCert”), FSIS successfully worked with foreign countries to have an Interconnection Security Agreement signed for Canada and for Chile; led U.S. Sanitary and Phytosanitary eCert interagency monthly meetings, providing FSIS updates and facilitating discussion among other participating agencies; and developed a draft import eCert roadmap and reference document for countries interested in import eCert exchange with FSIS. The transition to a completely electronic export certificate process will improve tracking of shipments, the security of the Nation and the world’s food supply, and the efficiency of FSIS’ inspection process.

PHIS Reports

FSIS monitors, analyzes, and reports on the data collected in PHIS. In FY 2021, FSIS ran a total of 164,139 reports. This information is shared with IPP so they can use the best possible food safety information, and with Agency managers at headquarters and district offices so they can monitor performance. Reports are also made available to State and industry users of PHIS.

PHIS Help Resources

PHIS Help is an on-demand site that contains webinars, training videos, interactive tutorials, and job aids that supports FSIS employees with performance and training needs. The site received an average of over 277,000 monthly visits, an increase of 46 percent over the previous year. FSIS also created an Employee Help resource site in FY 2021 that offers learning resources and training materials for all FSIS employees.

Data Sharing

Data Postings

In FY 2021, FSIS released a new dataset on import volume and three new quarterly summary reports on AMR, *Salmonella* serotypes, and pulsed-field gel electrophoresis.

During FY 2021, FSIS also began updating the Meat, Poultry, and Egg Product Inspection Directory, a listing of establishments that produce meat, poultry, and/or egg products regulated by FSIS, on a weekly instead of monthly basis. This change ensured that the directory is responsive to industry updates and provides increased flexibility for international trade by providing updated import inspection facility information. With the dataset updated more frequently, the Agency is also able to meet its transparency goals by providing consumers access to timely information.

FSIS also modified its public dashboard on federally inspected establishments and production activities by adding information on establishment HACCP size and developed four brief informational dashboards (“Tabmats”) to provide clarification of key points of FSIS directives and bring related information together in a user-friendly format. The Tabmats covered the following topics: verifying an establishment’s food safety system, managing the establishment profile in PHIS, presence of foreign material in meat or poultry products, and sampling verification activities for STEC in raw beef products.

Data Governance and Stewardship Committee

In FY 2021, FSIS formed the Data Governance and Stewardship Committee (DGSC), which serves as FSIS’ primary data governance organization. The DGSC contains representatives from each FSIS program area and supports the Agency’s mission by promoting high-quality management of FSIS data as a strategic asset through standardization, accountability, and transparency. In FY 2021, the DGSC responded to several requests from the Department such as compiling an inventory of equity-related data assets, assessing FSIS’ data and analytics workforce skills, and developing a dashboard governance strategy. Representatives from DGSC engaged with other mission areas in initiatives such as drafting the USDA Open Data Directive and sharing best practices for data governance and stewardship. The formation of the DGSC represented a fundamental step in aligning FSIS practices with Federal initiatives such as the Federal Data Strategy and the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act.

FSIS Analytics Conference

The fifth annual FSIS analytics conference, “Data-Driven: Food Safety Led by Science” spanned two half-days in August 2021 and was open to all FSIS employees. The newly virtual conference showcased how data informs FSIS’ food safety and public health mission and featured presentations from district, field, and headquarters personnel. The conference featured 26 presentations and two round table discussions before an audience of more than 230 individuals from across FSIS—a nearly 318 percent increase from the previous year.

Collaboration with Public Health Partners

FSIS and FDA Collaboration

FSIS holds monthly executive level meetings with FDA, facilitating information exchange, identifying opportunities to collaborate and building a stronger federal partnership on food safety.

On July 28, 2021, USDA and FDA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to permit more efficient use of resources and contribute to improved public health protection. FSIS expects the MOU to enhance the exchange of

information between USDA and the FDA related to dual jurisdiction establishments (DJE) and operations. DJEs are subject to the jurisdiction of both agencies.

FSIS and FDA also continued their collaboration on cellular agriculture through FY 2021. In FY 2019, FDA and FSIS announced a formal agreement to jointly oversee the production of human food products derived from the cells of livestock and poultry. In FY 2021, FSIS published an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) to solicit public comments pertaining to the labeling of meat and poultry products comprised of or containing cultured cells derived from animals subject to the FMIA or the PPIA. FSIS will use the comments and information submitted through this ANPR to develop proposed regulations for the labeling of meat and poultry products made using animal cell culture technology.

Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration (IFSAC)

IFSAC is a collaboration of CDC, FDA, and FSIS analysts. In FY 2021, IFSAC released its annual attribution report “Foodborne Illness Source Attribution Estimates for *Salmonella*, *E. coli* O157, *Lm*, and *Campylobacter*. Using Multi-Year Outbreak Surveillance Data, United States,” which includes data through 2019. FSIS uses attribution estimates produced by IFSAC in a variety of ways, including in the development of risk assessments and cost benefit analyses to support pathogen reduction performance standards.

Interagency Risk Assessment Consortium (IRAC)

IRAC is a network of Federal Agencies with responsibilities and interests in the conduct and use of food safety risk assessment. IRAC provides a forum to support cross-agency information exchange and sharing of data, tools, and models to facilitate efficient use of Federal resources and drive innovation in food safety risk assessment. In FY 2021, IRAC hosted 17 information sharing sessions to share work on PFAS, generate in-depth discussions (both scientific and regulatory in nature), improve interagency coordination, and form connections among researchers at other agencies. Additionally, IRAC conducted an interagency technical/scientific review—with 10 reviewers from four agencies—of a new risk metric tool developed by FSIS.

Interagency Foodborne Outbreak Response Collaboration (IFORC)

IFORC is a collaboration with the CDC and the FDA to improve Federal foodborne outbreak response coordination. In 2021, the IFORC steering committee met to discuss workgroup charters and to plan the 2021 virtual meeting. Only one meeting was held in FY 2021 due to conflicts from the ongoing COVID-19 response.

Genomics for Food and Feed Safety (“Gen-FS”)

Gen-FS is an interagency group with agency leaders from FDA, CDC, FSIS, USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS), USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, and the National Center for Biotechnology Information at the National Institutes of Health. The collaboration’s primary objective is to coordinate, strengthen, and lead WGS efforts among Federal and State partners. As FSIS chaired the Gen-FS steering committee during FY 2021, Agency scientists also led or actively participated in subgroups including metadata, data standards, harmonization, and genomic biomarkers. FY 2021 highlights included standardized metadata requirements for the public-facing repository to allow more accurate data mining as well as the provision of a cross-agency proficiency test for WGS.

FSIS/ARS Annual Meeting

In May 2021, FSIS and ARS held a joint virtual conference on food safety and public health, bringing together food safety scientists from FSIS, ARS, FDA, and CDC to share information, discuss emerging food safety concerns, and propose future research to protect public health. Several research collaborations have developed between FSIS and ARS due to networking at this annual meeting, which will strengthen the scientific basis of FSIS policymaking.

Research Priorities

This fiscal year, FSIS updated its research priorities and studies list, creating separate lists for specific data gaps and laboratory methods. These data gaps may affect small and very small establishments who do not have access to necessary production methods or data and do not have the resources to conduct their own studies. The Agency identified and shared one new priority and eight new research studies that, if conducted, would advance science-based and data-driven decisions to inform policy and ensure consumers have access to safe meat, poultry, and egg products. FSIS worked closely with partners in ARS and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture to promote these topics at relevant events and among research circles. While the Agency cannot provide funding for these projects, it encouraged research funding agencies to consider FSIS’ priorities when developing research funding opportunities. When available, the Agency shares these funding opportunities with constituents on its website and in its weekly *Constituent Update* publication.

Fellowships

Graduate Student Food Safety Fellowship

FSIS, in collaboration with USDA's Office of Food Safety and through an agreement with the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE), established a new food safety fellowship program and selected four students in FY 2021 to be food safety fellows. The program aimed to improve recruitment through outreach to colleges and universities, to accomplish agency research goals through strengthened partnerships with academia, and to help educate the next generation of food safety scientists. One of the four FY 2021 fellows was hired by the Agency.

Reports and Studies

Scientific Papers

FSIS published a peer reviewed manuscript in the *Journal of Food Protection* titled "Effects of Antimicrobial Interventions on Indicator Organisms during Beef Slaughter and Dressing" in April 2021 based on results from the Beef-veal Carcass Baseline Survey conducted by FSIS in 2014 to 2015. FSIS observed associations between pathogen-positive rate and levels of indicator organisms, suggesting similar effectiveness of interventions on pathogens and indicator organisms. This study may be used by slaughter establishments to help identify effective intervention options for pathogen reduction.

FSIS also published a peer-reviewed manuscript in the *International Journal of Food Microbiology* titled "A Comparative History of *Campylobacter* Contamination on Chicken and Campylobacteriosis Cases in the United States: 1994-2018," which found substantial reductions in contamination during this period and that a downward trend in campylobacteriosis during the late 1990s and early 2000s mirrored a decline in contaminated chicken around the same time period. Data used in the study came from FSIS sampling at slaughter establishments and sampling at retail stores by FDA NARMS.

Additionally, FSIS published two peer-reviewed manuscripts with NARMS partners in which new data analytic tools were used to communicate novel findings based on WGS data: one in *Genes*, "Carriage and Gene Content Variability of the pESI-Like Plasmid Associated with *Salmonella* Infantis Recently Established in U.S. Poultry Production," and one in *Frontiers in Microbiology*, "Core Genome MLST for Source Attribution of *Campylobacter coli*."

Ready-to-Eat (RTE) Product Study for Clostridium perfringens

In FY 2021, FSIS collaborated with Food Emergency Response Network Cooperative Agreement Program (FERN CAP) laboratories to complete a study testing a large volume of deli products for the presence and possible outgrowth of *Clostridium perfringens*. In total, 499 products were analyzed. Results will help the Agency update its cooling models for RTE products.

Exploratory Study Cloth vs N60 Sampling Method for Beef Trim

In FY 2021, FSIS initiated an in-field study to determine if a non-destructive cloth surface sampling method, developed by ARS partners, could be used to replace the current N60 excision sampling method for beef manufacturing trimmings. The cloth method creates an opportunity to improve inspector safety by removing the need for knives to collect these samples, increases efficiency in reducing the time needed to perform sampling tasks that can then be applied to other food safety inspection activities, and brings FSIS in alignment with current sampling methods used by industry. FSIS sampled product from the same production lot of beef manufactured trimmings using both the cloth and N60 methods from January through September 2021 in 492 establishments. Over 2,600 samples were collected, and the performance of both sampling methods in recovering total aerobic bacterial counts and *Salmonella* was compared. It was observed that the cloth method may be optimized with the addition of a transport media at the time of sample collection. This work will continue into FY 2022.

Conference for Food Protection (CFP)

The CFP is the advisory organization that develops food safety guidance that can then be incorporated into the FDA Food Code—the model for food safety at retail and in food service. FSIS serves on the executive board for the CFP and as advisors on its committees. FSIS also served as a co-chair on the committee to develop guidance on the safe handling and cooking for roaster pigs. This year, FSIS submitted two issues for the CFP: one on rotisserie chicken products and one on grinding record keeping and intended use for beef products. Of these, the conference accepted the issue on grinding record keeping and intended use for beef products. The FY 2022 conference will form the committee for the evaluation of intended use hazards during retail meat grinding to update the related CFP guidance documents. Additionally, FSIS collaborated with FDA at the FY 2021 conference to harmonize the language used

between the two Agencies to ensure the FDA Food Code now accurately reflects FSIS labeling requirements for raw or partially cooked mechanically tenderized beef products.

National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection (NACMPI)

The NACMPI provides advice to the Secretary of Agriculture concerning State and Federal programs with respect to meat and poultry products inspection, food safety, and other matters that fall within the scope of the FMIA and the PPIA. The Committee serves as a forum for sharing ideas and insight about how the regulatory system can best serve both consumers and industry. In September 2021, FSIS held a virtual public meeting with the NACMPI. The Committee members prepared recommendations on how FSIS should clarify the Agency's positions on the custom and retail exemptions from inspection to ensure that meat and poultry produced under the exemptions are safe, wholesome, and correctly labeled and packaged. The members also advised on actions FSIS should take to prevent and reduce illnesses associated with the handling or consumption of frozen, raw, stuffed, not ready-to-eat (NRTE) poultry products, which may be breaded and par-fried and may appear ready-to-eat (RTE) to consumers.

National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF)

The NACMCF provides impartial scientific advice to Federal Agencies to use in developing integrated food safety systems from farm to table and to ensure food safety in domestic and imported foods and is managed in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). NACMCF is chaired by the USDA Deputy Under Secretary of Food Safety and managed by the FSIS Executive Secretariat. One individual affiliated with a consumer group is included in the membership of the committee to serve in a representational capacity. The activities of the NACMCF are carried out, in part, by subcommittees that are focused on specific areas of food safety concern, and include members from government, academia and private industry and are chosen based on their expertise in microbiology, risk assessment, epidemiology, public health, food science, and other relevant disciplines.

The NACMCF plenary meeting was held April 22, 2021, during which the Committee adopted two reports:

- “The Use of Water in Animal Production, Slaughter, and Processing,” and
- “Microbiological Testing by Industry of Ready-to-Eat foods Under FDA’s Jurisdiction for Pathogens (or Appropriate Indicator Organisms): Verification of Preventive Controls.”

Member terms expired on April 22, 2021, and the Secretary of Agriculture appointed 13 new members and reappointed 17 members for the next term on September 16, 2021.

Consumer Education, Communication, and Outreach Accomplishments

Consumer Education Public Meeting

On October 6, 2020, FSIS hosted a virtual public meeting with participation from the FDA, CDC, and the Partnership for Food Safety Education. The event reinforced FSIS’ reputation as a 21st century public health organization that uses data to drive outreach and collaboration with partners in government, industry, and consumer advocacy. More than 1,000 industry, consumer representatives, non-profits, and food safety advocates registered for the event. The 5-hour meeting hosted a total of 400 online visitors, including advocates, academia, government, and private sector representatives who shared their innovations and research and agreed to continue future collaboration for the shared goal of improved food safety.

Safe Food Handling Behavior Research

FY 2021 marked the fourth year of FSIS’ efforts to gain in-depth understanding of food safety behaviors by observing consumers preparing food in a test kitchen. In the observational study, FSIS examined consumers grilling bratwurst and hamburgers and preparing a ready-to-eat (bagged) salad. FSIS provided recipes with food safety instructions to participants in the experimental group and observed the impact this had on their food safety practices versus the control group. The results offered unique insights into consumer behavior and the data gleaned from the research is incorporated into consumer food safety messages.

FSIS made three key observations:

- Use of thermometers to determine both hamburgers and bratwurst were sufficiently cooked was significantly higher in the experimental groups compared to the control group.
- Handwashing attempts before meal preparation were significantly higher in the two experimental groups when compared with the control group, whereas there was no significant difference between groups looking at handwashing attempts during the meal prep.
- Most participants in all groups did not wash the bagged lettuce as recommended.

USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline

The USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline responds to consumer food safety inquiries through a toll-free phone number, live chat, email, and self-service frequently asked questions database. During FY 2021, FSIS responded to 14,965 inquiries (via call, chat, email, and webforms) through the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline with an overall customer service rating of 4 out of 5 for inquiries related to food safety. FSIS answered 8,531 calls, 3,815 chats and 2,619 emails/webforms. Nearly 5 million customers viewed answers to their questions via self-service. These self-service options streamline functionality across all platforms by allowing consumers to find answers to common questions at their own pace. They also conserve resources by allowing hotline staffers more time to focus on newer and/or more intricate questions in a timely manner.

Consumer Education and Outreach Publications

To keep the public safer, FSIS conducts outreach and educational awareness efforts to the millions of Americans that consume federally regulated products each day. FSIS saw major success in raising awareness of safe food handling guidance, recalls, and information about foodborne illness. Successful messaging during periods of seasonal food interest and policy issuances resulted in a greater number of consumer inquiries, app downloads, and food thermometer requests this year. FSIS proactively used media outlets to reach consumers with vital food safety information, securing more than 168 proactive media placements. Total impressions of consumers reached with these efforts were more than 16 million. High profile outlets that covered FSIS efforts include television news feeder services for CBS News, NBC News, Telemundo, and Univision.

In FY 2021, FSIS distributed a total of 129,080 food safety publications to food safety educators, outreach events, consumers, and constituents. Additionally, FSIS continued to disseminate its weekly *Constituent Update* featuring key policy, programmatic, and consumer education updates relevant to the 47,000 industry and consumer subscribers. FSIS also publishes news releases on its website that offer food safety tips to assist consumers that may be preparing FSIS-regulated food items on holidays, other seasonal occasions, and emergency situations such as power outages and natural disasters.

Social Media

During FY 2021, FSIS used a variety of social media networks to broaden engagement with key stakeholders and to amplify the Agency's messages to the public on food recalls, foodborne illness, and safe food handling practices. In FY 2021, FSIS saw an increase in impressions and engagements following information on FSIS recalls, poultry washing, food safety during holidays and national emergencies, and pandemic-response messaging. The @USDAFoodSafety Twitter account and the FoodSafety.gov Facebook account continue to see audience growth due to the ongoing strategy of using engaging topics, tips, and guidance to communicate food safety messages. The FSIS Twitter account is the largest of all USDA Twitter accounts, with over 1 million followers. Across Twitter and Facebook, FSIS generated 294,500 engagements and 12,360,651 impressions. Despite a decrease in impressions and engagements this year, FSIS saw an increase of engagements per impressions of 2.4 percent, meaning those who saw FSIS content engaged with it more than in previous years. This fiscal year, the @USDAFoodSafety Twitter account saw an increase of "other engagements" by 386 percent, including Twitter poll responses. The strategy of implementing polls on Twitter led to an increase in follower interactions. Additionally, the FSIS Spanish language Twitter account achieved a total of 174 new followers in FY 2021, representing an audience growth of 2.6 percent.

FoodSafety.gov

In FY 2021, FSIS continued to work closely with its Federal partners at FoodSafety.gov to promote content on the cross-federal, consumer-focused website. More than 6 million web pages were viewed on the website. Each of the top five pages on the website are directly related to FSIS and its food safe families campaign messaging. This continued high traffic to FoodSafety.gov can be attributed to a variety of factors, including robust media outreach FSIS conducted during FY 2021 which used FoodSafety.gov as its primary call-to-action.

FoodKeeper Mobile App

FSIS' FoodKeeper mobile app remains a relevant, useful, and effective tool to educate consumers on proper food storage and its relationship to safe food handling behaviors. Currently, the app offers storage and food safety guidance on more than 650 foods and beverages. FY 2021 saw over 31,000 downloads of the application, bringing the cumulative download totals of the application to 337,000 since its launch in April 2015.

Labor Management Agreement

FSIS and the National Joint Council of Food Inspection Locals engaged in mediation-arbitration with the Federal Service Impasse Panel to resolve all outstanding provisions for the new national labor contract in FY 2021. The Federal Service Impasse Panel rendered its decision on the new national contract. FSIS is currently working toward implementing the requirements outlined in Executive Order 14003. It is anticipated that FSIS and the National Joint Council will engage in additional contract negotiations in FY 2022, with a goal of implementing the new national labor contract in the latter half of the fiscal year.

New Performance Management System and Award Processing and Employee Recognition

In FY 2021, USDA successfully implemented a new two-tier performance management rating system, award recognition program, and an enterprise-wide information technology system to provide consistency across USDA Mission Areas/Agencies. FSIS contributed significantly to the development of the USDA Enterprise Performance Management Application (EPMA), derived from the design of the previous FSIS Performance and Awards Management system. FSIS was frequently consulted by HR practitioners throughout USDA regarding best practices and lessons learned. FSIS continues to serve on the Department's EPMA workgroup.

FSIS launched the new achievement award program in FY 2021 following the elimination of end-of-year performance-based awards. FSIS planned and developed a streamlined methodology for award nominations and processing, experiencing a significant increase in the number of achievement awards issued to employees, successfully maximizing the award budget. The Agency processed over 15,000 achievement awards—five times as many as the previous year. The new program also expedited award processing by an average of 3 weeks. These enhancements were achieved by streamlining and automating the review process and developing nomination and review tools to allow for batch review and processing. FSIS also created multiple achievement award reports and dashboards that enabled program executives and program resource managers to track the status and distribution of their award nominations on a monthly or bi-monthly basis.

Surveys

FSIS completed several surveys during FY 2021 that assisted management with internal and external customer service, program enhancement and accountability, support of evaluations, and strategic plan measures, including:

- FSIS' sixth annual customer satisfaction survey on a range of topics including training, communications, human resources and benefits, and information technology, which inform strategic plan measures.
- Surveys to inform other current strategic plan measures, including coordination with State partners on foodborne outbreaks and a survey for PHV seminar series participants to measure their knowledge gained through the training series.
- Opinion and satisfaction surveys gathering information on the pre-apprenticeship program, the worker's compensation and benefits program, the civil rights staff customer experience, the alternative dispute resolution program, and enterprise risk management.

SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION

Introduction

The Office of Planning, Analysis and Risk Management (OPARM) leads FSIS in data analysis, science and performance management, including strategic planning, evaluation, internal controls, evidence, and enterprise risk management (ERM) activities. OPARM actively engages with internal and external stakeholders and works directly with Mission Area and Agency leadership as well as OBPA to ensure performance and evidence activities support the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 and the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010. OPARM participates in both the USDA/Performance, Evaluation, and Evidence Committee (PEEC) and USDA/ERM committees, which are comprised of individuals from different Mission Areas and backgrounds throughout USDA. OPARM works closely with the Chief Operating Officer, Chief Evaluation Officer, Chief Statistician, Chief Risk Officer, and Chief Data Scientist to ensure evaluation, evidence, and risk activities align. All evaluation, evidence, and risk management activities are approved through FSIS' Enterprise Governance process.

Alignment to USDA 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan

FSIS activities contribute to the success of USDA's overall mission to provide leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues using sound public policy, the best available science, and effective management, to the benefit of all Americans. FSIS is responsible for achieving and measuring results with respect to the following FY 2022 – 2026 Strategic Goal and Objective:

Strategic Goal 4: Provide All Americans Safe, Nutritious Food

Objective 4.3: Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health

SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

The following table summarizes the targets for the Departmental Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for which FSIS is responsible.

Table FSIS-19. Key Performance Indicator Targets and Results by Fiscal Year

Strategic Objective 4.3		FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26
Salmonella Reduction						
4.3.1 Percent reduction in the proportion of poultry samples with <i>Salmonella</i> serotypes commonly associated with human illness*	Target	2	4	6	8	10

* Targets are a cumulative reduction from a baseline established in 2021.

Expected Performance Progress Towards the Achievement of Strategic Objectives:

Strategic Objective 4.3: Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health

- In FY 2023, the Office of Food Safety (OFS) and the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) will take action to develop a stronger and more comprehensive framework to drive down *Salmonella* illnesses attributable to poultry and thereby have a positive impact on public health. They are focused on several key activities to gather the data and information necessary to support future action. FSIS will also continue to drive higher compliance rates with FSIS regulations through the issuance of new policies to the field to further enforce food safety hazards and revision of guidance documents for industry.
- Additionally, through partnerships with the Research, Education and Economics (REE) mission area agencies, FSIS will work to address *Salmonella* research gaps by leveraging the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) expertise to address key research needs, including *Salmonella* research and other research that will address other scientific data gaps to assist small and very small establishments.
- *Salmonella* Reduction: FSIS intends to show progress on reducing *Salmonella* serotypes commonly associated with human illness by collaborating with both internal and external stakeholders, including regulated establishments, industry organizations, consumer advocacy organizations, and academics. FSIS will host roundtables to obtain feedback from stakeholders on addressing *Salmonella* in poultry, as well as solicit and approve pilot projects for establishments to test different control strategies for *Salmonella* contamination in poultry products. The data will be analyzed by FSIS to determine whether it supports changes to FSIS' existing

Salmonella control strategies. In addition, the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF) will be developing recommendations as requested by FSIS to enhance *Salmonella* control in poultry products.