



FSIS Labeling Update Part II – Labeling Claims

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Voluntary Labeling Claims (Animal Raising, Breed, Natural)

FSIS and USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) held a public meeting on October 14, 2008, to discuss and review its policies on the use of animal raising claims in the labeling of meat and poultry products.

FSIS and AMS encouraged public input to evaluate its policies on claims related to the use of antibiotics in poultry and on animal raising claims.

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Voluntary Animal Raising Claims

- Policy Review: FSIS decided to initiate a review of its policies for evaluating and approving animal raising claims.
- To facilitate this review, the Agency published a Federal Register notice on October 10, 2008, to solicit public input.
- Objective: to ensure that FSIS policies for evaluation and approval of animal raising claims will create a level playing field for companies that want to use such claims in marketing their products and allow consumers to use animal raising claims information to assist in their purchase decisions.

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Voluntary Animal Raising Claims

- FSIS and AMS requested comments from the Notice. The original comment closing was November 14, 2008. FSIS reopened the comment period until December 15.
- To view a transcript from the public meeting, visit FSIS website at [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Animal Raising 101408.pdf](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Animal_Raising_101408.pdf)

FSIS is currently evaluating the comments.

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Voluntary Animal Raising Claims

- Background: As part of its prior label approval process FSIS evaluates and approves label claims that highlight certain aspects about the way animals used as the source for meat and poultry products are raised.
- FSIS evaluates labels with animal raising claims by reviewing testimonials, affidavits, animal production protocols, and other relevant documentation provided by producers.
- If a company submits information that demonstrates that an animal raising claim is truthful and not misleading, FSIS allows products derived from animals raised according to the protocol to bear the claim on their labels.

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Voluntary Animal Raising Claims

- In addition to producer testimonials & affidavits, animal producers or establishments also submit certifications from 3rd party certifying entities to support the claims.
- FSIS accepts these certifications if the Agency has evaluated the certifying entity's animal raising standards and has determined that they are truthful and not misleading.
- FSIS allows the label of a meat or poultry product to bear a certified claim if the claim clearly identifies the certifier, e.g. "certified pasture-raised by... (name of certifier)," and the Agency determines, based on its review of the certifier's standards, that the standards accurately reflect the claim.

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Voluntary Animal Raising Claims

- Companies seeking label approval must also meet the requirements of Policy Memo 114A for Point of Purchase Materials.
- Labels bearing animal production claims must be approved prior to use in commerce. Labels are approved with the understanding that inspectors can be assured as to the source of the product. Inspectors monitor labels being applied to meat, poultry and egg food products at the establishment.

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Voluntary Animal Raising Claims

Labels bearing animal production claims are submitted with specific documentation to support all animal production claims on the label as well as any other claims on that label. For most animal production claims, the documentation needed includes:

- A detailed written protocol explaining controls for assuring the production claim;
- A signed affidavit declaring the specifics of the animal production claim(s) and that the claims are not false or misleading;
- Product tracing and segregation mechanism from time of slaughter and/ or further processing through packaging and wholesale or retail distribution;
- A protocol for the identification, control, and segregation of non-conforming animals/product;
- (Optional) A current copy of the certification/verification, if a third-party certifies/verifies a claim.

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Natural

- FSIS Policy Memo 55 was rescinded in 2005. Current definition for “natural” can be found in the Foods Standards and Labeling Policy Book under “natural claims.”
- The proposal under consideration is now with our Under Secretary for FSIS.

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Product Labeled “Natural”

Processing-related meaning
(FSIS Policy Memo 055):

- Contains no artificial ingredients and is only minimally processed and no chemical preservatives
- Fresh meat and poultry automatically qualify

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Animal Raising/Production/ Processing Technology Claims

- No Hormones Added
- No Antibiotics Administered
- Free-Range/Free Roaming/Meadow Raised
- Natural
- Naturally Raised
- Humanely Raised (e.g., cage-free)/Humanely Slaughtered
- Breed (e.g., Certified Angus)
- Process Verified

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Process Verified



- This seal is your assurance that the fresh pork in this package has met these stringent criteria
 - Every order is traceable to quality verified farms.
 - Product is selected based on carcass weight and muscle percent.
 - Product is continuously evaluated and selected for meat quality characteristics.

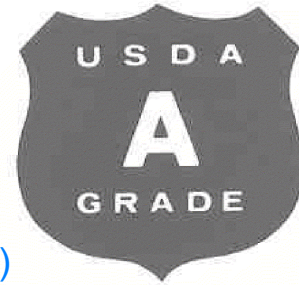
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Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Regulations

AMS serves, in part, to promote the marketing of meat and poultry products

Market-driven rules/programs:

- National Organic Program (organic certification)
- Commodity Quality Grading (Meat, Poultry, Eggs, Dairy and other products)
- Certification/Verified Production Controls
- Country of Origin Labeling at Retail (2002 Farm Bill)



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Web Sites

LABELING AND CONSUMER PROTECTION STAFF (will be updated to reflect the new division name)

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/about/labeling_&_consumer_protection/index.asp

A GUIDE TO FEDERAL FOOD LABELING REQUIREMENTS FOR MEAT AND POULTRY PRODUCTS (will be updated to reflect the new division name)

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Labeling_Requirements_Guide.pdf

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Web Sites (continued)

LABELING PROCEDURES

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Labeling_Procedures/index.asp

- Responses to questions regarding the label approval process and label evaluation procedures;
- Checklist for the preparation and submission of label applications;
- Guidance on requests for accelerated label evaluations for temporary approvals only;
- Listing of ten common mistakes made on a label submission

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Web Sites (continued)

ASK FSIS

- <http://askfsis.custhelp.com>
- Find answers to questions on inspection-related policies, programs, systems, and procedures. Search the knowledge base, submit a new question, or sign up to be notified when answers are updated

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Important Update

- LPDD office is ***moving*** to the George Washington Carver Center in Beltsville Maryland (mid-July 2009)
- FSIS will soon provide new contact information (i.e., address, phone numbers, and fax lines) for submitting labels