



# Meat Messenger

North Dakota State Meat and Poultry Inspection Program

2019 Issue 2

## A Message from the Commissioner

Greetings,

Since 2000, North Dakota has been one of 27 states that operates a state meat inspection program and starting in 2013, one of six that operates a Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) program under cooperative agreements with FSIS. The North Dakota Meat and Poultry Inspection Program (NDMPIP) is an integral part in providing meat inspection service to small and very small meat processing establishments.

I've recently reached out to USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue regarding two issues that need attention relating to federal and state meat inspection regulations. The first is regarding once daily inspection coverage during meat processing operations and the second is an outdated regulation pertaining to retail quantity limitations.

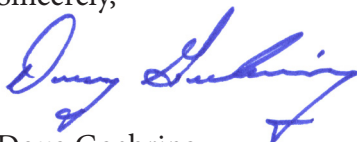


One component FSIS checks to make sure our state program is “at least equal” to federal is ensuring we have adequate staffing to provide at least once daily coverage of official processing establishments. This makes sense when high-risk products, such as raw ground product, are processed. However, for lower risk products, such as pizzas where inspected frozen meat is added as a topping, once daily coverage is excessive and unnecessary. It makes more sense to allocate inspection resources to those processing plants that need it the most and allow for less than once daily inspections at low-risk plants.

The second issue is a regulation that is outdated and in great need of being updated to today's standards. Title 9, CFR 303.1(d)(2)(e)(ii) sets retail exempt limits for normal quantity according to what is considered the average weight of one-half livestock carcass for those species amenable to the Federal Meat Inspection Act. Those amounts listed are based on typical livestock weights from many years ago. Today's livestock weights have increased significantly. It would be beneficial to processors and producers for USDA to conduct research to determine current average livestock weights and then set these limits at a more reasonable and accurate level.

I will continue to work with USDA on these issues and update you on the progress made.

Sincerely,



Doug Goehring

## Meat Messenger

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North Dakota  
Department of Agriculture

**Agriculture Commissioner**  
Doug Goehring

**Livestock Industries  
Division Director**  
Andrea Grondahl, DVM

**Administrative Assistant**  
Becky Gietzen

**Senior Meat Inspectors**  
Cody Kreft  
Heather Andersen

**Compliance Officer/Meat Inspector**  
Dave Slack

**Scientific Information Coordinator**  
Nathan Kroh

**Meat Inspectors**  
Shawn Steffen  
Cami Metzger \*Certified Grader  
Joshua Epperly  
Whitney Vogel  
Sherlynn Olson  
Takara Simmons

**Assistant/Relief Inspector**  
Julie Nilges \*Certified Grader



Please address all correspondence to:

**State Meat Inspection  
North Dakota Dept. of Agriculture**  
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 602  
Bismarck, ND 58505-0020  
(701) 328-2231  
(800) 242-7535  
FAX: (701) 328-4567

www.nd.gov/ndda  
ndda@nd.gov

# Inspecting Animals: Ante Mortem

Official inspection at a slaughter establishment begins before slaughter, when live animals arrive at



the establishment. Inspection personnel have the authority to inspect trucks offloading animals, and the pens or other areas in which they are kept prior to slaughter.

Livestock slaughter establishments are required to comply with the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act, which requires that all livestock be humanely handled and slaughtered. All incidents of inhumane handling trigger enforcement actions. A non-egregious noncompliance for humane handling such as not having water available for the animals in their pens would trigger a noncompliance record or other regulatory enforcement action. Egregious violations of humane handling requirements lead to more severe enforcement actions, such as suspension or withdrawal of official inspection, which prevents a plant from operating.

During antemortem inspection, animals are viewed at rest and in motion for abnormalities

as well as indications of disease or health conditions that would prohibit the animal from entering the food supply or require

additional inspection.

If cattle become non-ambulatory disabled at any time prior to slaughter, they must be condemned, promptly and humanely euthanized, and disposed of. Official meat inspection prohibits non-ambulatory disabled cattle from use in human food because non-ambulatory behavior in cattle is a possible symptom of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE). Regulations strictly prohibit the dragging of a conscious animal that is unable to walk. Inspection enforces safeguards designed to protect consumers from variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, which has been linked to the consumption of beef products contaminated with BSE.

<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/production-and-inspection/inspection-for-food-safety-the-basics/inspection-for-food-safety-basics>

# Irradiation and Food Safety FAQs

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is the public health agency in the U.S. Department of Agriculture responsible for ensuring that the nation's commercial supply of meat, poultry, and egg products is safe, wholesome, and correctly labeled and packaged.

## What is food irradiation?

Food irradiation is a technology for controlling spoilage and eliminating foodborne pathogens. The result is like pasteurization. The fundamental difference between food irradiation and pasteurization is the source of the energy used to destroy the microbes. While conventional pasteurization relies on heat, irradiation relies on the energy of ionizing radiation.

Food irradiation is a process in which approved foods are exposed to radiant energy, including gamma rays, electron beams, and x-rays. In 1963, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) found the irradiation of food to be safe. Irradiation of meat and poultry is done in a government-approved irradiation facility. Irradiation is not a substitute for good sanitation and process control in meat and poultry plants. It is an added layer of safety.

## Are irradiated foods safe?

Yes, irradiated foods are safe. Irradiation makes meat and poultry safer by reducing the numbers of harmful bacteria and parasites.

Food irradiation does not make foods radioactive. The radiant energy passes through the food. The food itself never contacts the source of the radiant energy. Irradiated foods are wholesome and nutritious. Nutrient losses caused by irradiation are less than or about the same as losses caused by cooking and freezing.

Public health agencies worldwide have evaluated the safety of food irradiation over the last fifty years and found it to be safe. In 37 countries more than 40 food products are irradiated. In some European countries, irradiation has been in use for decades.

In the United States, the Food and Drug Administration regulates food irradiation. In addition, food irradiation has received official endorsement from the American Medical Association, the World Health Organization, and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

**What foods are irradiated?** The FDA first approved the use of irradiation in 1963 to kill pests in wheat and flour. To date, the FDA and the USDA have approved food irradiation for use on fruits, vegetables, spices, raw poultry, and red meats.

## How will I know if meat and poultry products are irradiated?

Consumers cannot recognize irradiated food by sight, smell, taste, or feel. Irradiated foods can be recognized by the presence of

the international symbol for irradiation on the packaging along with the words "Treated with Radiation," or "Treated by Irradiation."



*The radura is an international symbol used to show a food has been irradiated.*

If irradiated meat is used in another product, such as pork sausage, then the ingredients statement must list irradiated pork, but the radura does not have to appear on the package.

Restaurants are not required to disclose the use of irradiated products to their customers; however, some restaurants voluntarily provide irradiation information on menus.

## How should I handle irradiated meat and poultry?

Food irradiation is not a substitute for good sanitation and does not replace safe cooking and handling. Consumers should handle irradiated foods just like any other food and always follow safe food handling practices. Check your steps at [FoodSafety.gov](https://www.foodsafety.gov).

- **CLEAN.** Wash hands and surfaces often.
- **SEPARATE.** Separate raw meats from other foods.
- **COOK.** Cook food to the right temperature.
- **CHILL.** Refrigerate food promptly.

For more information on food irradiation and other food safety issues, contact USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) or visit [www.fsis.usda.gov](https://www.fsis.usda.gov).

# Age and Source Verification



Across North Dakota, livestock producers are taking advantage of marketing their product directly to the consumer. Good recordkeeping is key to this process. Being astute and accurate from the beginning of your program will benefit the availability of meat product you have to offer. Since the early 2000s, new policies to protect the food supply against Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) put emphases on removing specific risk material, of which includes removal of the spinal cord and vertebral column from cattle deemed 30 months of age or older. Cattle birth records are one way to verify age of cattle. Without accurate birthing records, age of cattle is determined by teeth dentation of permanent adult teeth, and will determine the outcome of cuts of meat a producer can offer to their direct marketing consumers.

North Dakota Verified Livestock (NDVL) is a voluntary marketing program created to add value to North Dakota livestock through age and source verification. This verification is currently required by some cattle marketers, feed yards and beef packing plants.

As local farm to table, domestic and export opportunities become more available, age and source verification is a priority for local, foreign and some domestic markets. North Dakota Verified Livestock will assist by

qualifying livestock producers to utilize these opportunities and gain access to all markets.

Age and source verification begins with the cow/calf producer. Participating producers are required to have verifiable birth records and individually identify cattle with a program compliant tag prior to leaving the ranch of origin.

North Dakota Verified Livestock is a unique and flexible program available to livestock producers. Cattle can be age verified as individuals (individual calving dates) or by a group (first born birth date is applied to the whole herd). Using the management practices already established by the producers in the state, the phrase “*Made in North Dakota*” will have value to the consumer.

## **Adding Value with North Dakota Verified Livestock**

- Adds value to North Dakota livestock through age and source verification
- Allows for cattle to be eligible for export markets

- Provides production systems to gain access to opportunities in certain domestic markets
- At the request of the producer, North Dakota Verified Livestock will be advertised to livestock marketers and feed yards

## **How to Qualify**

- Maintain calving records for age and source verification
- Contact the North Dakota Department of Agriculture to schedule an on-site enrollment process
- Tag animals identified as North Dakota Verified Livestock
- Submit documents and data for verification

## **Enrollment Requirements**

- All North Dakota cattle producers are eligible

## **Program Costs**

- On-site verification costs are covered by the North Dakota Department of Agriculture
- EID tag only: \$3.00 and available at approved NDVL retail suppliers
- Visual and EID tag: \$4.05 per head enrollment
- Feed yard enrollment: \$275.00

*\*Age & Source Verification provided through AgInfoLink's USDA Approved Process Verified Program*

<https://www.nd.gov/ndda/livestock-development-division/age-and-source-verification>

# FSIS Proposes to Remove Dual Labeling Requirements

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced that it is proposing to amend labeling regulations to remove duplicative net weight and net content requirements for packages that contain certain amounts of meat or poultry products. The proposed regulation would apply to products that are at least one pound or one pint, but less than four pounds or one gallon.

FSIS is proposing this action after receiving a petition submitted by a small meat processor in response to USDA's request for ideas to better serve its customers.

"It's simply good government to review old regulations to see if they are outdated and burdensome," said FSIS Administrator Carmen Rottenberg. "FSIS doesn't believe that a duplicative labeling requirement helps consumers

and sees it as an unnecessary requirement for industry."

Under proposed rule, establishments that produce meat and poultry products in packages containing one pound or one pint and less than four pounds or one gallon will be allowed to express the weight or contents in one unit of measurement on the product label, instead of using both measures [e.g., "Net Wt. 24 oz." or "Net Wt. 1.5 lbs." rather than "Net Wt. 24 oz. (1.5 lbs.)].

Establishments would be allowed to use their current labels until they run out or may elect to use them indefinitely.

To view the proposed rule and for information on how to comment on the proposed rule, visit <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulations/federal-register/proposed-rules>.

# NDSU Animal Science Student Internship Programs

All North Dakota State University (NDSU) students going to school for an animal science degree must take an internship in order to graduate. What does that mean to a meat processor? Students can learn the meat cutting business and earn credit toward their degree while working at your butcher shop.

Each student is responsible for finding their own internship, so a butcher shop could create a detailed internship job description that the students could use to apply toward school program requirements. A thoughtful and complete job description may attract many students to apply. Fall is the perfect time for plants to start working on the documents, since the internship announcements are emailed to all animal science students and posted in boards on campus. The students are encouraged to find internships early, so you would miss a lot of applicants if you wait until the summer.

If you have questions or would like to submit a .pdf of the job description for a potential NDSU student intern, email NDSU meats manager Spencer Wirt at [spencer.a.wirt@ndsu.edu](mailto:spencer.a.wirt@ndsu.edu), and he will post it for all animal science students to see. Good luck!

## Regulation Reminder

The North Dakota legislature has voted that cell-cultured proteins cannot be called meat. Their intent was not to impede or limit scientific advancement, but to prohibit the marketing of cell-cultured protein as meat.

**History:**  
Effective August 1, 2019  
**General Authority:**  
NDCC 4.1-31-24  
**Law Implemented:**  
NDCC 4.1-31-05.1

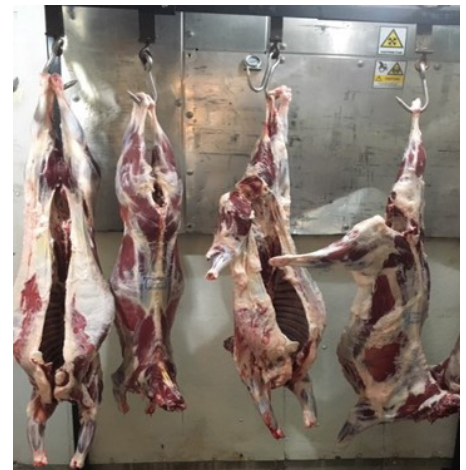
# NDMPIP Welcomes Official Establishment

The Whistlestop Butcher Shop in Amenia, ND, is the newest official establishment slaughtering under the North Dakota Meat and Poultry Inspection Program (NDMPIP). Fred Kreuger opened the establishment as custom exempt with the sole purpose of providing fresh goat meat to the ethnic communities of the greater Fargo and Grand Forks areas in September 2017.

Fred's previous experience in the construction business was useful, as he converted a refrigerated semi-trailer into a goat slaughter facility. He was buying live goats to raise and sell, before custom slaughtering for his customers.

Demand for fresh goat meat grew steadily and he was approached about providing fresh goat carcasses to the markets in Fargo. The majority of the goat and lamb that he slaughters is Halal and he slaughters about 40 goats per month.

Fred said that learning the rules and regulations and developing the paperwork was the most challenging aspect of opening his business, and he complimented the NDMPIP staff for assistance in getting everything on the right track and teaching him the importance of food safety.



The NDMPIP regulates 15 official establishments and 76 custom exempt operations within North Dakota. Three of the official establishments operate as a selected establishments within the NDMIP Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program so they can ship product across state boundaries, the same as any federally-inspected official establishment.

## FSIS Recalls & Alerts Count (Apr - Jun 2019)

Allergens and misbranding	4	
Products possibly contaminated with STEC 0103, 0157 or Listeria	4	
Presence of foreign materials	8	
Products were not presented at the U.S. point of entry for inspection	2	
Product produced without the benefit of inspection - U.S.	5	
Products subjected to temperature abuse during transport	1	
Adulteration and misbranding	2	
Total Recalls April - June 2019	26	
<b>Class 1 recalls - 23</b> Reasonable probability that eating the food will cause health problems or death	<b>Class 2 recalls - 3</b> Potential health hazard situation in which there is a remote probability of adverse health consequences from eating the food	<b>Class 3 recalls - 0</b> Situation in which eating the food will not cause adverse health consequences
One recall involved nearly 11 million pounds of poultry product. Another expanded to include a two-year span of product that was produced without official inspection.		

Further information on all current recalls and alerts can be found at: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/recalls-and-public-health-alerts>

# Classified Ads

We are always looking for industry related items to advertise in the Meat Messenger. We post sale and want ads FREE. Contact Julie Nilges (701-204-3248) at [jnilges@nd.gov](mailto:jnilges@nd.gov) or Nathan Kroh (701-328-4767) at [nkroh@nd.gov](mailto:nkroh@nd.gov) with product description and contact information.

**Meat Tumbler**-500 lbs capacity: DFE Brand, without vacuum, completely stainless steel.

**Smokehouses**- 500 lbs capacity each. Call for information and details.

**Globe Meat Slicer**- functioning, but needs minor work. Call for information and details.

**True Brand cooler**- Cooler has two sliding doors and was manufactured in 2001 - \$1,000;

**New one-quart plastic containers with lids**- \$20 per lot of 50.

Please contact Calvin or Alex for more information at 701-743-4451. Located in Parshall.

**Berkel 812 Automatic Slicer**- New Blade, used little. \$2500 or best offer.

**Budget ½ ton Chain Hoist**- 3 Phase. \$700 or best offer.

**Biro Patty Machine with cart**- Model F3000N, foot control. Two sizes diameter drums. \$6500 or best offer.

**Braising Kettle**- Natural gas, needs work. \$500 or best offer.

**Maple Valley Locker, Enderlin**- Contact Dustin 701-437-3311 Please call for pictures or inquires.

**Wanted- Next-to-New Band Saw**- Please call Bruce at 701-254-4232, if you have a nice condition band saw to offer for sale.

**Splitting Saw for Sale**- Good condition carcass splitting saw available. Located in Great Bend. For more information call Steve Manock at 545-7513.

**Hobart Mixer-Grinder**- ~200 lb capacity used mixer available in Mandan. Call Brian for more details at 701-663-0558.

**Two Coolers/Freezers with Double Glass Retail Display Doors** - Can be set for either cooler or freezer. Each is about 4ft wide with two pull open doors. For more information or pictures, contact Greg at S&K Processing at 701-839-6488.

## What would you like to read in the next issue?

The Meat Messenger is your newsletter. If you like the content, please feel free to share this issue with your employees, your livestock producers and customers. We welcome any questions, comments, or suggestions for future topics. Please contact **Nathan Kroh** at [nkroh@nd.gov](mailto:nkroh@nd.gov) or 701-328-4767 or **Julie Nilges** at [jnilges@nd.gov](mailto:jnilges@nd.gov) or 701-204-3248.

## **Meat Messenger**

North Dakota Department of Agriculture  
600 East Boulevard Avenue, Dept. 602  
Bismarck, ND 58505-0020

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