ISSUES & INSIGHTS

New Swine Inspection System

SITUATION

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) New Swine Inspection System (NSIS) is part of a continuous effort by the agency’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) to ensure a safe supply of wholesome American pork. A voluntary program supported by many years of research, NSIS aims to improve the inspection process by shifting FSIS employees’ responsibilities to focus on inspection duties more directly related to food safety and animal welfare (like plant sanitation and humane handling). In turn, pre-inspection sorting and quality control tasks would be delegated to plant employees on the line. Final inspection accountability and authority remains with the USDA. By enabling FSIS inspectors to focus on issues more pertinent to animal welfare, food safety and sanitation, the NSIS will help to provide for a safer food supply, while allowing packing companies to more effectively use their staff and resources. The U.S. pork industry has long been a global leader in offering a quality product to consumers domestically and abroad, and the NSIS program advances this position.

The NSIS, currently under review by the Office of Management and Budget, is endorsed by the National Association of Federal Veterinarians (NAFV). Federal veterinarians play an integral role in ensuring our national food safety, and their expertise makes certain that best practices are in place across multiple phases of our food production system. Their endorsement highlights the strong science and research used in designing the NSIS.

NPPC POSITION

NPPC strongly supports the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety Inspection Service's (FSIS) proposed New Swine Inspection System (NSIS). This program will increase efficiency and effectiveness of the federal inspection process, allow for the rapid adoption of new food-safety technologies in pork slaughter, and has the potential to increase U.S. harvest capacity. NPPC is urging USDA to finalize the NSIS.

FAST FACTS

- Currently, five U.S. pork packing plants are participating in an NSIS pilot project; the plants have made significant investments in training and have used their own staff to perform food-safety monitoring functions under continuous verification from FSIS inspection staff.

- NSIS creates an environment where new food-safety technologies can be rapidly incorporated into a facility’s HACCP plan and implemented under federal inspection; there is no rational basis for claims that wider adoption of NSIS will create new animal handling issues or jeopardize the safety of workers.

- NSIS does nothing to alter any FSIS rules related to animal welfare.

NPPC CONTACTS

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