

2019 President's Budget
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 and (2) Egg Products Inspection.

1. The Meat and Poultry Inspection 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 correctly 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 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 meat and poultry inspection 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, and facilitates the certification of regulated products.

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, and operational standards, and other prerequisite programs to control pathogen contamination and produce safe and unadulterated food.

2. 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 correctly 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 standards, and facilitates the certification of exported regulated products.

During 2017, the agency maintained headquarters offices in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area; 10 district offices; the Policy Development Division in Omaha, Nebraska; laboratories at Athens, Georgia, St. Louis, Missouri, and Anaheim, California; the Financial Processing Center in Des Moines, Iowa; the Human Resources Field Office in Minneapolis, Minnesota; and a nationwide network of inspection personnel in over 6,433 federally regulated establishments in 50 States, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. Included are 353 establishments operating under Talmadge-Aiken Cooperative Agreements. A Talmadge-Aiken plant is a Federal plant with State inspection program personnel operating as Federal inspectors under Federal supervisors. 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, 2017, the agency employment totaled 9,294 permanent full-time employees, including 621 in the Washington, DC area and 8,673 in the field. FSIS employed 9,355 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs as of September 30, 2017). 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 & Inspection: Expenses associated with operations at all federally inspected meat, poultry and egg product establishments.
2. Public Health Data Communications Infrastructure System (PHDCIS): Expenses associated with providing public health communications and information systems infrastructure and connectivity.
3. International Food Safety & Inspection: Expenses associated with import and export operations and certifications.

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4. State Food Safety & Inspection: Expenses associated with state inspected establishments and state run programs.
5. Codex Alimentarius: In FY 2018, USDA will realign Codex from Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) to the USDA Office of the Secretary, Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs. FSIS will remain the chair of Codex.

Office of Inspector General (OIG) Reports

- Assignment 24601-0001-41, Dated May 14, 2013, FSIS Inspection and Enforcement Activity at Swine Slaughterhouses – the last two remaining recommendations from this audit were closed.
- Assignment 24601-0004-21, dated August 12, 2015, FSIS Ground Turkey Inspection and Safety Protocols – three out of eight recommendations were closed. (one remains open)
- Assignment 24601-0001-23, dated August 28, 2015, Implementation of the Public Health Information System for Domestic Inspection – three out of eight recommendations were closed. (three remain open)
- Assignment 50601-0004-31, dated March 30, 2016, USDA’s Response to Antibiotic Resistance – the last two remaining recommendations from this audit were closed.
- Assignment 50099-0002-21, dated March 31, 2017, FSIS’ Process for Handling Vehicle Misuse Complaints – three out of four recommendations were closed. (one remains open)

Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports

- Assignment 361507, October 20, 2014. Food Safety: USDA Needs to Strengthen Its Approach to Protecting Human Health from Pathogens in Poultry Products. GAO’s final report contained four recommendations directed at FSIS, and one is currently open.
- Assignment 361446, November 6, 2014. Food Safety: FDA and USDA Should Strengthen Pesticide Residue Monitoring Programs and Further Disclose Monitoring Limitations. GAO’s final report contained one recommendation directed at FSIS, and it is currently open.
- Assignment 361560, December 18, 2014. Federal Food Safety Oversight: Additional Actions needed to Improve Planning and Collaboration. GAO’s final report contained one recommendation directed at USDA, and it is currently open.
- Assignment 291264, March 21, 2016. High-Containment Laboratories: Comprehensive and Up-to-Date Policies and Stronger Oversight Mechanisms Needed to Improve Safety. GAO’s final report contained one recommendation directed at FSIS and it is currently open. FSIS will comply with changes in Departmental policies concerning four recommendations directed at USDA.
- Assignment 100267, March 16, 2017. Antibiotic Resistance: More Information Needed to Oversee Use of Medically Important Drugs in Food Animals. GAO’s final report contained one recommendation directed at FSIS, and it is currently open.
- Assignment 100045. Meat and Poultry Worker Safety. FSIS received GAO’s final report on 7 December 2017.), had two recommendations directed at FSIS. An additional four recommendations were directed at OSHA and one more was directed at NIOSH.

Ongoing OIG Audits

Assignment 50701-0001-21 – USDA Agency Activities for Agroterrorism Prevention, Detection and Response. OIG is continuing its audit work.

Assignment 24601-0006-31 – FSIS National Office Oversight of the New Poultry Inspection System. OIG is continuing its audit work.

Assignment 24601-0002-22 – Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program. OIG is continuing its audit work.

Ongoing GAO Audits

Assignment 100940. USDA’s Standards to Control Pathogens in Meat and Poultry. FSIS received GAO’s Statement of Facts document in October 2017. FSIS provided comment. We expect the draft report to be provided in 2018.

Assignment 102093. DOD Biosafety for Handling Select Agents and Toxins. FSIS has not been contacted to provide input for this audit since it began in June 2017.

“2019 EXPLANATORY NOTES – Food Safety and Inspection Service”

Available Funds and Staff Years (SYs)
(Dollars in thousands)

Item	2016 Actual		2017 Actual		2018 Estimate		2019 President's Budget	
	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs
Salaries and Expenses:								
Discretionary Appropriations.....	\$1,014,871	9,160	\$1,032,062	9,243	\$1,021,258	9,054	\$1,032,273	9,224
Subtotal.....	1,014,871	9,160	1,032,062	9,243	1,021,258	9,054	1,032,273	9,224
Transfers In.....	212	-	90	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers Out.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Adjusted Appropriation.....	1,015,083	9,160	1,032,152	9,243	1,021,258	9,054	1,032,273	9,224
Balance Available, SOY.....	15,819	-	8,077	-	7,830	-	-	-
Other Adjustments (Net).....	1,066	-	7,437	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available.....	1,031,968	9,160	1,047,666	9,243	1,029,088	9,054	1,032,273	9,224
Lapsing Balances.....	-206	-	-273	-	-	-	-	-
Balance Available, EOY.....	-8,077	-	-7,830	-	-	-	-	-
Obligations.....	1,023,685	9,160	1,039,563	9,243	1,029,088	9,054	1,032,273	9,224
Obligations under other USDA appropriations:								
APHIS Blood Bacteremia Surveillance Samples.....	99	-	63	-	-	-	-	-
APHIS, Imported Cooked Meat.....	200	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
APHIS, Antimicrobial Susceptibility testing.....	78	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
OPACE, Salary and benefits for detail.....	-	-	76	-	-	-	-	-
OPHS, Salary and benefits for detail.....	272	-	47	-	-	-	-	-
Food Nutrition and Consumer Service, and (Partnership).....	736	-	300	-	306	-	312	-
Other USDA.....	567	-	225	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Other USDA.....	1,952	-	711	-	306	-	312	-
Total, Agriculture Appropriations.....	1,025,637	9,160	1,040,274	9,243	1,029,394	9,054	1,032,585	9,224
Other Federal Funds:								
FDA, Salmonella, Campylobacter, E.coli, and Enterococcus....	678	-	600	-	-	-	-	-
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).....	-	-	28	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Other Federal.....	678	-	628	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Federal Funds								
Meat, Poultry and Egg Products Inspection.....	246,455	37	220,530	29	224,941	29	229,439	29
Accredited Labs.....	248	-	309	-	315	-	321	-
Trust Funds.....	11,102	78	26,244	83	11,550	82	11,781	82
Total, Non-Federal.....	257,805	115	247,083	112	236,806	111	241,542	111
Total, FSIS.....	1,284,120	9,275	1,287,985	9,355	1,266,200	9,165	1,274,127	9,335

“2019 EXPLANATORY NOTES – Food Safety and Inspection Service”

Permanent Positions by Grade and Staff Year Summary

Item	2016 Actual			2017 Actual			2018 Estimate			2019 President's Budget		
	Wash DC	Field	Total	Wash DC	Field	Total	Wash DC	Field	Total	Wash DC	Field	Total
Senior Executive Service	20	2	22	20	2	22	19	2	21	19	2	21
SL	3	2	5	3	2	5	3	2	5	3	2	5
GS-15.....	68	29	97	68	29	97	66	29	95	66	29	95
GS-14.....	212	97	309	212	97	309	209	97	306	209	97	306
GS-13.....	189	476	665	189	476	665	189	476	665	189	476	665
GS-12.....	93	1,169	1,262	93	1,169	1,262	92	1,169	1,261	92	1,169	1,261
GS-11.....	28	112	140	28	112	140	28	112	140	28	112	140
GS-10.....	3	490	493	3	490	493	3	490	493	3	488	491
GS-9.....	39	2,154	2,193	39	2,154	2,193	39	2,154	2,193	39	2,138	2,177
GS-8.....	8	985	993	8	985	993	7	985	992	7	985	992
GS-7.....	22	2,894	2,916	22	2,894	2,916	22	2,894	2,916	22	2,894	2,916
GS-6.....	6	25	31	6	25	31	6	25	31	6	25	31
GS-5.....	-	447	447	-	447	447	-	447	447	-	447	447
GS-4.....	4	7	11	4	7	11	4	7	11	4	7	11
GS-3.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GS-2.....	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1
Total Permanent Positions.....	695	8,890	9,585	695	8,890	9,585	687	8,890	9,577	687	8,872	9,559
Unfilled Positions end-of-year.....	74	290	364	74	217	291	74	398	472	74	210	284
Total Permanent Full-Time Employment, end-of-year.....	621	8,600	9,221	621	8,673	9,294	613	8,492	9,105	613	8,662	9,275
Staff Year Estimate.....	679	8,596	9,275	648	8,707	9,355	640	8,525	9,165	640	8,695	9,335

SIZE, COMPOSITION AND COST OF MOTOR VEHICLE FLEET

FSIS inspects in 6,433 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 except for a vehicle that the agency purchased to use as a mobile Food Safety exhibit. The Food Safety Discovery Zone Vehicle travels throughout the United States visiting, schools, State fairs, and similar local events. FSIS uses the Discovery Zone Vehicle to educate consumers about the risks associated with mishandling food and steps they can take to reduce their risk of foodborne illness. FSIS does not have any discrepancies between the information reported in this exhibit and the information in the Federal Automotive Statistical Tool (FAST).

Size, Composition, and Annual Costs of Operating Vehicle Fleet
(in thousands of dollars)

Fiscal Year	Number of Vehicles by Type*							Annual Operating Costs (\$ in 000) **	
	Sedans and Station Wagons	Light Trucks, SUVs and Vans		Medium Duty Vehicles	Ambulances	Buses	Heavy Duty Vehicles		Total Number of Vehicles
		4X2	4X4						
FY 2016	2,186	64	51	1	-	-	1	2,303	12,076
Change	+43	+4	+3	-			-	+50	+387
FY 2017	2,229	68	54	1	-		1	2,353	12,463
Change	+43	+4	+3	-			-	+50	+623
FY 2018	2,272	72	57	1			1	2,403	13,086
Change	+50	+7	+4	+1			-	+62	+391
FY 2019	2,322	79	61	2			1	2,465	13,477

* Numbers include one vehicle owned by the agency and those leased from GSA.

“2019 EXPLANATORY NOTES – Food Safety and Inspection Service”

Shared Funding Projects

(Dollars in thousands)

	2016 Actual	2017 Estimate	2018 Estimate	2019 President's Budget
Working Capital Fund				
Administration:				
HR Enterprise System Management.....	73	73	95	138
Material Management Service Center.....	4,016	3,817	3,372	3,460
Procurement Operations.....	20	17	19	15
Integrated Procurement Systems.....	205	204	209	211
Mail and Reproduction Management.....	942	978	863	867
Subtotal	5,256	5,089	4,558	4,691
Communications:				
Creative Media and Broadcast Center.....	500	281	435	304
Correspondence Management:				
Correspondence Management.....	301	339	305	329
Finance and Management:				
Financial Management Services.....	5,737	4,660	5,066	5,158
Internal Control Support Services.....	41	101	118	117
National Finance Center.....	2,623	2,701	2,912	2,928
Subtotal	8,401	7,462	8,096	8,203
Information Technology:				
Client Technology Services.....	456	3,991	3,865	3,865
National Information Technology Center.....	2,487	5,384	5,925	5,925
Telecommunications Services.....	1,010	2,120	2,365	3,417
Subtotal	3,953	11,495	12,155	13,207
Total, Working Capital Fund	18,411	24,666	25,549	26,734
Departmental Shared Cost Programs:				
1890 USDA Initiatives.....	281	320	308	308
Advisory Committee Liaison Services.....	4	3	3	3
Classified National Security Information.....	66	67	62	62
Continuity of Operations Planning.....	177	176	174	174
Emergency Operations Center.....	207	202	192	192
Facility Infrastructure Review and Assessment.....	38	39	37	37
Faith-Based Initiatives & Neighborhood Partnerships.....	34	35	33	33
Hispanic-Serving Institutions National Program.....	156	169	163	163
Honor Awards.....	7	-	6	6
Human Resources Transformation.....	136	144	144	144
Identity & Access Management (HSPD-12).....	600	581	553	553
Intertribal Technical Assistance Network.....	-	-	-	-
Medical Services.....	53	44	56	56
Peoples Garden.....	57	56	54	54
Personnel and Document Security.....	83	91	80	80
Preauthorized Funding.....	330	290	304	304
Retirement Processor Web Application.....	52	50	49	49
TARGET Center.....	128	127	119	119
USDA 1994 Program.....	61	69	64	64
Virtual University.....	176	174	163	163
Total, Departmental Shared Cost Programs	2,646	2,637	2,564	2,564

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E-Gov:

Budget Formulation & ExecutionLOB.....	8	7	9	9
Enterprise HR Integration.....	174	174	178	178
E-Training.....	228	-	-	-
Financial Management LOB.....	12	8	8	8
HR Management LOB.....	24	24	26	26
Integrated Acquisition Environment.....	118	13	13	14
IAE - Loans and Grants.....	-	-	-	-
Disaster Assistance Improvement Plan.....	-	-	-	-
E-Rulemaking.....	45	46	57	47
Geospatial LOB.....	19	13	12	12
GovBenefits.....	-	-	-	-
Grants.gov.....	-	-	-	-
FOIA.....	-	-	-	2
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total, E-Gov.....	628	285	303	296
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Agency Total.....	21,685	27,588	28,416	29,594
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Salaries and Expenses:

For necessary expenses to carry out services authorized by the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and the Egg Products Inspection Act, including not to exceed \$50,000 for representation allowances and for expenses pursuant to section 8 of the Act approved August 3, 1956 (7 U.S.C. 1766), [\$1,038,069,000] \$1,032,273,000; and in addition, \$1,000,000 may be credited to this account from fees collected for the cost of laboratory accreditation as authorized by section 1327 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 138f): Provided, That funds provided for the Public Health Data Communication Infrastructure system shall remain available until expended: Provided further, That no fewer than 148 full-time equivalent positions shall be employed during fiscal year [2018] 2019 for purposes dedicated solely to inspections and enforcement related to the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act: Provided further, that this appropriation shall be available pursuant to law (7 U.S.C.2250) for the alteration and repair of buildings and improvements, but the cost of altering any one building during the fiscal year shall not exceed 10 percent of the current replacement value of the building.

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Lead-Off Tabular Statement

Current Law

Budget Estimate, 2019.....	\$1,032,273
2018 Annualized Continuing Resolution.....	<u>1,025,054</u>
Change in Appropriation	<u>+7,219</u>
Adjustment in 2018:	
2018 Annualized Continuing Resolution.....	1,025,054
Activities Transferred to OSEC a/.....	<u>3,796</u>
Adjusted Base for 2018.....	\$1,021,258
Budget Estimate, 2019.....	<u>1,032,273</u>
Change in Appropriation.....	<u>\$11,015</u>

a/ In 2018 the Department will transfer Codex from Food Safety and Inspection Service to the USDA Office of the Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs.

Proposed Legislation

Budget Estimate, Current Law.....	\$1,032,273
Change Due to Proposed Legislation.....	<u>0</u>
Net 2019 Request.....	<u>\$1,032,273</u>

“2019 EXPLANATORY NOTES – Food Safety and Inspection Service”

Project Statement
Adjusted Appropriation Detail and Staff Years (Sys)
(Dollars in thousands)

Program	2016 Actual		2017 Actual		2018 Estimate		Inc. or Dec.		2019 President's Budget	
	Amount	Staff	Amount	Staff	Amount	Staff	Amount	Staff	Amount	Staff
		Years		Years		Years		Years		Years
Discretionary Appropriations:										
Federal Food Safety & Inspection.....	\$896,554	9,006	\$913,288	9,077	\$906,858	8,898	+\$13,545	188	\$920,403	9,086
Catfish	\$2,547		\$2,547	18	\$2,530	18	-\$2,530	-18		
Public Health Data Communication										
Infrastructure System.....	34,580		34,583		34,345		-	-	34,345	
International Food Safety & Inspection...	16,261	125	16,488	120	16,375	119	-	-	16,375	119
State Food Safety & Inspection.....	61,490	20	61,573	20	61,150	19	-	-	61,150	19
Codex Alimentarius.....	3,651	9	3,672	8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal.....	1,015,083	9,160	1,032,152	9,243	1,021,258	9,054	+\$11,015	170	1,032,273	9,224
Supplemental Appropriations:										
Emergency Supp.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Adjusted Approp.....	1,015,083	9,160	1,032,152	9,243	1,021,258	9,054	11,015	170	1,032,273	9,224
Rescissions and										
Transfers (Net).....	-212	-	-90	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sequestration.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriation.....	1,014,871	9,160	1,032,062	9,243	1,021,258	9,054	11,015	170	1,032,273	9,224
Transfers In:										
Cong. Relations.....	212	-	90	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal.....	212	-	90	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rescission.....										
Sequestration.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY.....	15,819	-	8,077	-	7,830	-	-7,830	-	-	-
Recoveries.....	1,066	-	7,437	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available.....	1,031,968	9,160	1,047,666	9,243	1,029,088	9,054	3,185	170	1,032,273	9,224
Lapsing Balances.....	-206	-	-273	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY.....	-8,077	-	-7,830	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations.....	1,023,685	9,160	1,039,563	9,243	1,029,088	9,054	3,185	170	1,032,273	9,224

“2019 EXPLANATORY NOTES – Food Safety and Inspection Service”

FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE

Project Statement

Obligations Detail and Staff Years (SYs)

(Dollars in thousands)

Program	2016 Actual		2017 Actual		2018 Estimate		Inc. or Dec.		2019 Estimate	
	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs
Discretionary Obligations:										
Federal Food Safety & Inspection.....	\$887,712	8,988	\$915,876	9,077	\$906,858	8,898	+\$13,545	188	\$920,403	9,086
Catfish.....	\$2,547	18	\$2,547	18	\$2,530	18	-2,530	-18	\$ -	-
Public Health Data Communication Infrastructure System	43,382	-	42,263	-	42,175	-	-7,830	-	34,345	-
International Food Safety & Inspection.....	16,035	125	13,183	120	16,375	119	0	-	16,375	119
State Food Safety & Inspection.....	70,289	20	62,076	20	61,150	19	0	-	61,150	19
Codex Alimentarius.....	3,720	9	3,618	8	-	-	0	-	-	-
Total Obligations.....	1,023,685	9,160	1,039,563	9,243	1,029,088	9,054	3,185	170	1,032,273	9,224
Lapsing Balances.....	206	-	273	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY.....	8,077	-	7,830	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available.....	1,031,968	9,160	1,047,666	9,243	1,029,088	9,054	3,185	170	1,032,273	9,224
Transfers In:										
Cong. Relations.....	-212	-	-90	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal.....	-212	-	-90	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers Out:										
Working Capital Fund.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rescission.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sequestration.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY.....	-15,819	-	-8,077	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Recoveries, Other (Net)	-1,066	-	-7,437	-	-7,830	-	7,830	-	-	-
Total Appropriation.....	1,014,871	9,160	1,032,062	9,243	1,021,258	9,054	11,015	170	1,032,273	9,224

Justification of Increases and Decreases

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 four 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 9,355 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs as of September 30, 2017). 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 approximately 6,433 Federally regulated establishments.
- Ensures public health requirements are met in establishments that each year slaughter or process
 - 155 million head of livestock
 - 9.45 billion poultry carcasses
- Conducts 6.9 million food safety & food defense procedures
- Condemns each year
 - Over 467.6 million pounds of poultry
 - More than 216,313 head of livestock during postmortem (post-slaughter) inspection
- In FY 2017, performed 178,529 Humane Handling (HH) verification procedures



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

FSIS spends approximately 80 percent of its funds on personnel salary and benefits. This is predominantly for inspection personnel in establishments, and other frontline employees such as investigators and laboratory technicians. In addition to this, FSIS spends about 15 percent of its budget on travel for inspectors and investigators, state inspection programs, system infrastructure, and other fixed costs like employee workers compensation payments. The remaining five percent funds operations including: supplies for the workforce (such as aprons,

goggles, hardhats, and knives), laboratory supplies, management, policy, shipment of meat/poultry samples for testing, recruitment, financial management to include billing industry, labor relations, and purchase of replacement/new equipment. Additionally, FSIS has to adjust to new or anticipated changes in the workforce, industry, law, technology, and the public, plus the introduction or spread of new diseases/pathogens.

- (1) A net Increase of \$11,015,000 and an increase of 170 staff years for FSIS (\$1,021,258,000 and 9,054 staff years is available in 2018).

The funding change is requested for the following items:

- (a) A decrease of \$2,530,000 and 18 staff years for the Siluriformes Inspection Program.

The 2008 and 2014 Farm Bills required USDA’s FSIS to establish a new program for federal inspection of certain fish of the order Siluriformes, including catfish, transferring responsibility from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) upon publication of the FSIS final rule which was published in December 2015.

FSIS began inspecting both domestic and foreign Siluriformes products in FY 2016 as per to the Final Rule titled Mandatory Inspection of Fish of the Order Siluriformes and Products Derived from Such Fish (9 CFR Sec 530-561, December 2, 2015). The Final Rule was effective as of March 1, 2016 with a full compliance date of September 1, 2017, following an 18 month transition period.

It is USDA’s intent to ask Congress to repeal the Farm Bill authorization and transfer this responsibility from Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) back to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

- (b) An Increase of \$13,545,000 and 188 staff years to Federal Food Safety and Inspection Program.

This funding maintains the FSIS frontline workforce at the FY 2017 level and at the level in the President’s FY 2018 budget request. The increase above the CR level enables FSIS to avoid reducing the staffing the frontline workforce (e.g. food inspectors) which are needed to successfully fulfill our mission.

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

This funding is required to continue FSIS frontline food inspection activities. 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 to this, FSIS spends about 15 percent of its budget on travel for inspectors and investigators, state inspection programs, and system infrastructure.

Funding will allow FSIS to accomplish its food safety mission of decreasing the risk of food borne illness. This funding will ensure that FSIS maintains its staffing levels and will allow FSIS to perform food safety verification, humane handling inspection, the collection, testing, and verification of microbiological samples and positively impact employee morale and retention. Funding will prevent potential gaps in inspection coverage and minimize potential economic loss to industry.

“2019 EXPLANATORY NOTES – Food Safety and Inspection Service”

Summary of Proposed Legislation

Inspection Services Budget:
(Dollars in thousands)

	2019		
	Current	Program Changes	President's
<u>Discretionary Appropriation:</u>			
Federal Food Safety & Inspection.....	\$920,403	\$0	\$920,403
Public Health Data Communication Infrastructure System.....	34,345	0	34,345
International Food Safety & Inspection.....	16,375	0	16,375
State Food Safety & Inspection.....	61,150	0	61,150
Total Available.....	<u>\$1,032,273</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$1,032,273</u>

Program: User Fee

Proposal: In FY 2019, FSIS proposes to require establishments and official plants to pay fees to cover the costs of Federal, State and International inspection programs for meat, poultry, and eggs. The user fee, for an estimated total of \$660 million, would cover costs for all domestic inspection activities and import re-inspection and most of the central operations costs for Federal, State and International inspection programs for meat, poultry, and eggs. These fees will be collected starting in 2019 and used to reduce appropriation needs in future years.

Rationale: Industry receives a benefit from USDA inspections of meat, poultry and eggs. A user fee would cover the costs incurred for inspections and related activities. The fee would not cover federal functions such as investigations, enforcement, risk analysis and emergency response. This fee would increase the cost of meat, poultry and eggs for consumers by less than one cent per pound. The measure would allow the Secretary to adjust the terms, conditions, and rates of the fees in order to minimize economic impacts on small or very small establishments and plants.

Goal: To cover the cost of providing inspections and related activities of an establishment and plant.

Offsets: There will be no offset in Fiscal Year 2019.

Budget Impact: (Budgeted Items)

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Discretionary Budget Authority	0	0	660,000	660,000	660,000
Discretionary Outlays	0	0	0	660,000	660,000

“2019 EXPLANATORY NOTES – Food Safety and Inspection Service”

Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years
(Dollars in thousands and Staff Years (SYs))

	2016 Actual		2017 Actual		2018 Estimate		2019 President's Budget	
	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs
Alabama	30,573	392	\$36,262	408	35,896	394	36,007	405
Alaska	780	8	893	7	884	7	886	8
Arizona	3,243	33	3,678	33	3,641	32	3,653	33
Arkansas	37,679	470	44,198	477	43,752	469	43,888	477
California	55,422	565	64,116	571	63,470	562	63,666	571
Colorado	17,996	173	27,140	221	26,866	216	26,949	221
Connecticut	1,446	15	1,745	16	1,727	15	1,733	16
Delaware	9,873	138	12,674	141	12,546	138	12,585	141
Florida	9,393	113	10,039	111	9,937	108	9,968	113
Georgia	73,424	704	80,279	685	79,470	671	79,716	689
Hawaii	2,069	18	2,353	20	2,329	20	2,336	20
Idaho	2,237	24	3,294	28	3,261	28	3,271	27
Illinois	28,282	225	32,207	229	31,883	224	31,981	229
Indiana	12,917	147	14,955	149	14,804	146	14,850	149
Iowa	36,779	403	42,196	416	41,771	409	41,900	419
Kansas	17,193	232	19,894	231	19,693	226	19,754	231
Kentucky.....	13,685	188	16,356	190	16,192	187	16,242	190
Louisiana	9,516	98	10,423	94	10,318	91	10,350	92
Maine	1,362	12	1,551	13	1,536	13	1,540	13
Maryland	26,517	166	30,077	160	29,773	154	29,866	161
Massachusetts	2,142	26	2,519	26	2,494	26	2,501	26
Michigan	8,207	95	9,786	103	9,687	102	9,717	103
Minnesota	24,644	270	29,329	275	29,033	271	29,123	275
Mississippi	30,051	345	35,320	349	34,964	339	35,072	338
Missouri	29,178	335	36,230	341	35,865	331	35,976	341
Montana	2,631	22	3,031	21	3,001	21	3,010	21
Nebraska	24,670	301	28,888	302	28,597	297	28,686	302
Nevada	510	6	621	6	615	6	617	6
New Hampshire	736	9	1,033	11	1,023	11	1,026	11
New Jersey	8,760	104	10,671	109	10,563	106	10,596	109
New Mexico	1,225	14	1,379	14	1,365	14	1,369	14
New York	13,282	161	15,370	162	15,215	159	15,262	162
North Carolina	40,861	458	46,937	456	46,464	441	46,608	455
North Dakota	1,904	14	1,929	13	1,910	13	1,916	13
Ohio	14,785	126	17,248	131	17,074	127	17,127	131
Oklahoma	7,594	82	9,261	88	9,168	87	9,196	88
Oregon	4,229	50	5,094	50	5,042	50	5,058	50
Pennsylvania	37,698	401	36,142	337	35,778	331	35,888	339
Rhode Island	842	10	911	10	902	10	904	10
South Carolina	11,687	127	13,017	123	12,886	121	12,925	123
South Dakota	5,058	49	5,912	56	5,853	56	5,871	56
Tennessee	14,511	192	17,466	196	17,290	193	17,344	196
Texas	56,826	615	67,341	620	66,662	607	66,868	620
Utah	5,207	48	6,188	49	6,125	49	6,144	49
Vermont	2,019	10	2,206	10	2,184	10	2,191	10
Virginia	15,670	181	18,325	184	18,140	181	18,196	184
Washington	8,981	109	10,217	106	10,114	104	10,145	106
West Virginia	3,730	31	4,267	36	4,224	36	4,237	36
Wisconsin	15,326	142	18,095	148	17,913	148	17,968	148
Wyoming	415	0	426	0	422	0	423	0
District of Columbia	236,142	660	125,535	665	124,268	651	124,657	651
American Samoa	0	0	51	0	56	0	56	0
Guam	151	2	227	2	225	2	225	2
N. Mariana Islands.....	60	0	71	1	70	1	70	1
Puerto Rico	3,454	40	4,060	42	4,019	42	4,031	42
Virgin Islands	115	1	130	1	128	1	129	1
Obligations.....	1,023,685	9,160	1,039,563	9,243	1,029,088	9,054	1,032,273	9,224
Lapsing Balances.....	206	-	273	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY.....	8,077	-	7,830	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available.....	1,031,968	9,160	1,047,666	9,243	1,029,088	9,054	1,032,273	9,224

“2019 EXPLANATORY NOTES – Food Safety and Inspection Service”

Classification by Objects
(Dollars in thousands)

		2016	2017	2018	2019
		<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	President's <u>Budget</u>
Personnel Compensation:					
Washington D.C.....		\$78,999	\$80,734	\$78,796	\$79,680
Field.....		500,459	511,842	513,732	515,033
11	Total personnel compensation.....	579,458	592,576	592,528	594,713
12	Personal benefits.....	220,729	224,803	225,620	226,150
13.0	Benefits for former personnel.....	1,312	781	781	781
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits.....	801,499	818,160	818,929	821,644
Other Objects:					
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons.....	38,651	39,239	37,411	37,469
22.0	Transportation of things.....	3,126	2,907	2,907	2,907
23.1	Rental payments to GSA.....	10,085	9,912	10,210	10,312
23.2	Rental payments to others.....	3	3	3	3
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges.....	13,495	10,505	6,485	6,525
24.0	Printing and reproduction.....	811	703	703	655
25.1	Advisory and assistance services.....	2,866	2,887	2,789	2,827
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources.....	39,472	39,681	37,695	37,755
25.3	Other purchases of goods and services				
	from Federal sources.....	44,399	43,165	43,065	43,165
25.4	Operation and maintenance of facilities.....	542	505	505	505
25.7	Operation and maintenance of equipment.....	1,426	1,437	1,426	1,426
26.0	Supplies and materials.....	11,560	11,440	11,220	11,280
31.0	Equipment.....	4,339	7,111	4,339	4,399
32.0	Land and structures.....	-	-	-	-
41.0	Grants.....	50,626	50,994	50,626	50,626
42.0	Insurance claims and indemnities.....	776	766	766	766
43.0	Interest and dividends.....	11	152	11	11
44.0	Refunds.....	-2	-4	-2	-2
	Total, Other Objects.....	222,186	221,403	210,159	210,629
99.9	Total, new obligations.....	<u>1,023,685</u>	<u>1,039,563</u>	<u>1,029,088</u>	<u>1,032,273</u>
DHS Building Security Payments (included in 25.3).....					
		\$ 1,446	\$ 1,495	\$ 1,525	\$ 1,555
Position Data:					
	Average Salary (dollars), ES Position.....	\$173,156	\$176,792	\$181,223	\$184,848
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position.....	\$62,475	\$63,307	\$64,739	\$65,917
	Average Grade, GS Position.....	8.10	8.10	8.10	8.10

Status of Programs

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is the public health regulatory Agency within USDA responsible for ensuring that domestic and imported meat, poultry, and processed egg products are safe, secure, 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 employs 9,355 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) (9,508 employees). Among these employees are a frontline workforce of 8,090 permanent FTEs (8,113 employees) and 147 other-than-permanent FTEs (214 employees) that work in over 6,433 federally regulated establishments, three FSIS laboratories, 133 import establishments, and nearly 160,000 in-commerce facilities nationwide. In addition, there are 1,118 FTEs (1,181 employees) who support them.

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 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 analysis of an applicant country’s legal and regulatory structure, initial and periodic onsite equivalence auditing of the country’s food regulatory systems, and 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 has a second program with four States that have inspection programs that are the same as the Federal program. Under this program, State-inspected establishments in the program can ship products in interstate commerce.

Strategic Plan: In 2017, FSIS completed the FY 2017-2021 Strategic Plan and in preparation for the 2018 FSIS budget request. The Agency utilized the goals included in its new strategic plan to evaluate current and future activities, and innovation for achieving targeted outcomes.

- **Goal 1: Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health**
 - Outcome 1.1. Prevent Contamination
 - Outcome 1.2. Limit Illness From Regulated Products
- **Goal 2: Modernize Inspection Systems, Policies, and the Use of Scientific Approaches**
 - Outcome 2.1. Improve Food Safety and Humane Handling Practices Through Adoption of Innovative Approaches
 - Outcome 2.2. Enhance Access to Complete and Accurate Information to Inform Decisions
- **Goal 3: Achieve Operational Excellence**
 - Outcome 3.1. Maintain a Well-Trained and Engaged Workforce
 - Outcome 3.2. Improved Processes and Services

Selected Examples of Recent Progress:

Enterprise Governance: FSIS has been proactive in identifying and implementing actions that have directly contributed to greater efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of FSIS operations, including fully institutionalizing its enterprise governance (EG) framework over the last few years. FSIS uses its EG process to present public health and other mission-related topics to executive leadership, particularly those that cut across programs and/or have Agency-wide implications, and for collaborative decision-making and implementation. All investments, major projects, proposed policy initiatives, and major changes to existing policies go through this process.

Frontline Inspection: During FY 2017, FSIS inspection program personnel ensured public health requirements were met in establishments that slaughter or process 155 million head of livestock and 9.45 billion poultry carcasses. Inspection program personnel also conducted 6.9 million food safety and food defense procedures to verify that systems at all federally inspected facilities maintained food safety and wholesomeness requirements. During FY 2017, inspection program personnel condemned more than 467.6 million pounds of poultry and more than 216,313 head of livestock during post-mortem (post slaughter) inspection.

Salmonella: FSIS continued its multipronged approach to combat *Salmonella* in FY 2017. FSIS continued sampling of poultry carcasses, comminuted poultry, and chicken parts for *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*, and continued sampling raw beef for analysis while also continuing the sampling program in pork products to determine the presence and levels of *Salmonella* in five types of processed pork products. FSIS also began assessing whether establishments met these new standards and continued to assess whether establishments met the poultry carcasses pathogen reduction standards.

Modernization of Poultry Slaughter Inspection: By the end of FY 2017, all 25 former Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), Inspection Models Project (HIMP) establishments and 36 other poultry slaughter establishments had implemented the new system.

Foodborne illness Outbreak Investigation: FSIS coordinated investigations for 14 foodborne illness clusters representing 615 illnesses, 131 hospitalizations, five Hemolytic-Uremic Syndrome case, and six deaths.

Humane Handling: In FY 2017, the Agency devoted 167 FTEs to the verification and enforcement of humane handling requirements in federally inspected establishments, spending more than 345,714 hours completing these tasks. In total, 178,529 verification procedures were performed.

FoodKeeper Application: The FoodKeeper application was launched in April 2015. In FY 2017, users downloaded the application more than 150,000. FSIS identified, managed and launched updates to the FoodKeeper application to make it tri-lingual (English, Spanish and Portuguese), allowed users to submit suggested items for inclusion in the database, and incorporated recall data in the app.

New Strategic Plan: Completion of FSIS FY 2017-2021 Strategic Plan: FSIS recently published its 2017-2021 Strategic Plan which contains three goals, six outcomes, and fifteen objectives that represent the agency’s path forward over the next five years. This new plan provides an integrated framework for understanding how FSIS is fulfilling our mission and addressing 21st century public health challenges. This plan builds on prior successes and desired outcomes that the Agency delineated in its previous plan, and reflects emerging issues that FSIS faces in ensuring that the food products we regulate are safe to eat.

Sampling Plans: FSIS developed and implemented or updated several sampling programs. These programs include exploratory sampling for Religious Exempt and Low Volume poultry establishments, residue testing on new subclasses for bulls/stags and veal other than bob veal, as well as sampling for imported raw pork product

FSIS Siluriformes Implementation: Following an 18-month transition period, full implementation began September 1, 2017. During the transition period, FSIS continued to identify domestic establishments that prepared and processed Siluriformes, Official Import Establishments (I-Houses) that would handle imported Siluriformes product, and provided training for Inspection Personnel. During FY 2017, a total of nine training classes were held to instruct domestic and import inspectors in Siluriformes inspection. Additionally, FSIS sent Enforcement, Investigation Analysis Officers /Frontline Supervisor teams to domestic establishments and I-Houses to conduct outreach such as assisting establishments to get grants of inspection and explaining inspection requirements. Domestic establishments that prepared and processed Siluriformes products and I-Houses were entered into the FSIS Public Health Information System) and Federal Grants of Inspection (GOI) were approved as establishments met the regulatory requirements. FSIS continued to work with foreign countries on requirements to establish equivalency and reviewed Self-Reporting Tool assessments from the countries Central Competent Authorities.

By the end of FY 2017, FSIS had issued a total of 65 conditional GOIs for plants that process Siluriformes. An additional 26 plants already had GOIs for meat and poultry products updated their GOIs to include Siluriformes.

Current Activities:

Federal Food Safety & Inspection Program

Frontline Inspection: During FY 2017, FSIS inspection program personnel continued to ensure that public health requirements were met in establishments that slaughter or process livestock and poultry carcasses. Inspection program personnel also continued the verification of food safety and defense procedures at all federally inspected facilities to ensure that food safety and wholesomeness requirements were maintained. FSIS inspection program personnel ensured public health requirements were met in establishments that slaughter or process 155 million head of livestock and 9.45 billion poultry carcasses, conducted 6.9 million food safety and food defense procedures and condemned more than 467.6 million pounds of poultry and 216,313 head of livestock.

Salmonella: FSIS continued its multipronged approach to combat *Salmonella* in FY 2017. In FY 2017, FSIS began assessing whether establishments met the FY 2016 *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter pathogen* standards and continued to assessment of the poultry carcasses pathogen reduction standards. FSIS published monthly aggregate (not individual establishment) category status for carcasses, chicken parts, and comminuted poultry. FSIS is currently assessing whether to start posting individual establishment category information.

FSIS continues evaluating data to inform sampling plan development for product that has historically been excluded from *Salmonella* verification testing. Starting in June 2017, FSIS began sampling and analyzing for *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* samples at establishments that produce a low volume of applicable poultry product or religious exempt poultry product. In FY 2017, the Agency transitioned to interim pork sampling. In addition, starting in June 2017, FSIS analyzed for shiga-toxin producing *E. coli* (STEC) pork samples collected from slaughter establishments. Results from the baseline study will be used to develop prevalence estimates and industry guidance. FSIS will also determine whether new or updated performance standards are necessary for pork products.

Modernization of Poultry Slaughter Inspection: FSIS successfully achieved a 100 percent conversion rate of establishments opting-in and ready to implement New Poultry Inspection System (NPIS) in FY 2017. Since its inception, 61 establishments including 25 Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), Inspection Models Project (HIMP) and 36 non-HIMP have implemented this inspection system. These 61 establishments represent about 26 percent of the poultry slaughter volume domestically with the remaining 74 percent from establishments using non-NPIS inspection systems. Of these 61 establishments, 45 produce chicken, 15 turkey, and one multispecies.

For the NPIS converted establishments that were not previously HIMP, the FSIS zero tolerance food safety inspection checks have increased approximately 4-fold, while non-compliance rates have remained steady at about 1.3 percent non-compliance. The increased food safety checks are a key feature of the NPIS system. Ongoing evaluations of FSIS sampling results this year have indicated that NPIS-converted establishments have generally good performance with around 4.5 percent in chicken carcasses positive for *Salmonella* and 1.5 percent in chicken carcasses positive for *Campylobacter*. This is a small indicator as the number in the samples set is very low. Comparably, non-NPIS establishments bear out at 4.1 percent and 1.6 percent respectively. When comparing the two sets to date, one must keep in mind the significant difference in the sample size. The NPIS data is limited and additional establishments and time are needed to determine if the small differences observed are meaningful. HIMP pilot establishments are performing better than other groups (2.9 percent and 0.8 percent, respectively).

Whole Genome Sequencing Expansion (WGS): FSIS hosted a meeting and worked with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), and other stakeholders to develop the agenda and provide speakers. This public meeting was held, to discuss how Federal agencies such as FSIS, FDA and CDC plan to use WGS and the data generated to protect public health and the current state of the science and other issues.

Training: The FSIS workforce is a cornerstone of public health protection. The workforce training strategy used by FSIS includes providing entry-level training on mission-critical inspection skills to new employees, followed by additional training as policy is updated and for training to reinforce knowledge about how to perform complex public health protection duties.

During FY 2017, FSIS provided entry level training to 548 new Food Inspectors, and 378 newly promoted Consumer Safety Inspectors. FSIS also provided training to 71 new Public Health Veterinarians, nine newly hired Enforcement Investigations Analysis Officers, 68 new Egg Inspectors, and 96 new Thermal Processing Inspectors. FSIS offered Ready-to-Eat/Shelf Stable training to 44 employees, Public Health Veterinary (PHV) Mentors training to 16 new hires, Public Health Information System (PHIS) Egg Products training to two employees, Imports training to 77 employees, Fish Inspection training to 72 employees in Siluriformes slaughter and processing inspection, Import Sanitation Inspection training to six new employees to verify sanitation regulations and requirements at Import facilities, and PHIS Export Training to three employees in how to conduct their tasks (SPS and Export) using PHIS. In addition to classroom training, FSIS conducted eight Fish Inspection webinars, covering Fish Further Processing, inspection of imported Siluriformes, and inspection of wild-caught Siluriformes and held two advanced Surveillance, Investigation and Enforcement Methods training courses, training 21 experienced Compliance Investigators (CI) in advanced investigation procedure.

FSIS provided three custom training courses tailored to FSIS employees and external customers: 18 Headquarters employees attended an Inspection Short Course which provided a high-level overview of all field inspection activities for non-field staff, nine Computer Help Desk staff from the Office of the Chief Information Officer attended a PHIS familiarization course, and a one-day refresher course for 13 Health and Human Services Department, Food and Drug Administration, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Staff Officers in support of the FSIS-CDC Memorandum of Understanding.

In FY 2017, FSIS announced a new Further Processing course designed to provide a more detailed review of complex processing operations and non-food safety consumer protection tasks, including formulation, preparation, and labeling verification activities for fresh and cooked sausage operations, cured meat and poultry products, and added solutions in meat and poultry products. It also covers general labeling requirements, calculations, and processing equipment.

FSIS continued to enhance the Inspection Program Personnel Help button, an online training site especially for in-plant personnel. FSIS also added an additional Help button specifically for supervisors. These sites provide performance-related information, training reinforcement, instructional resources, simulations, tutorials, Q&A's, videos, and how-to guides at employees' fingertips to support their work on an as-needed basis. The Help buttons average more than 28,000 hits per month. In FY 2017, FSIS also began transforming the traditional PHV classroom course, devising innovative solutions such as providing the opportunity to view the inspector's work setting in an engaging, highly-sensory manner using cutting-edge 360-degree Virtual Reality technology and media-rich, interactive classroom training environments.

Additionally, FSIS held two safety training courses at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center designed to meet the safety needs of various government regulatory and investigative programs for 48 CIs.

Outreach and Partnerships: In FY2017, FSIS hosted four roundtable educational meetings to discuss FSIS' policy on domestic and wild-caught catfish operations and inspection requirements for Industry. Attendance averaged 40 participants per session. Additionally, FSIS coordinated and facilitated the *Preventing Undeclared Allergens: A Strategic Approach to Reducing Recalls* public meeting on March 16, 2017. In partnership with the FDA and Industry, the meeting highlighted existing challenges with undeclared allergens and the impact on food recalls and provided context for solutions.

FSIS hosted the Fall Board Meeting for the Association of Food and Drug Officials. The meeting highlighted regulations on retail grinding logs and provided proper outreach to the industry for compliance. Efforts from this meeting resulted in development and publication of the Retail Grinding Log Poster.

Small Plant Help Desk: FSIS provides a significant amount of outreach and technical resources to small and very small plants – both Federal and State Inspected. The Small Plant Help Desk, continues to serve small plant owners and operators with valuable technical assistance. In FY 2017, stakeholder inquires totaled 4,557, surpassing last year's record high of 3,421, which is a 33.2 percent increase.

Humane Handling: As part of the 2017 - 2021 Strategic Plan, FSIS is encouraging establishments to create, implement, and maintain a humane handling program that FSIS considers robust. To this end, FSIS implemented in

April 2017 a policy that requires public health veterinarians (PHVs) to complete a monthly assessment to determine if livestock slaughter establishments have maintained a robust systematic approach over a 30-day period and provide documented feedback to individual establishments. FSIS published Notice 04-17: *Assessment and Verification Reviews of an Official Livestock Establishment’s Robust Systematic Approach Plan for Humane Handling and Slaughter* in January 2017.

In FY 2017, FSIS met its 89 percent goal for livestock establishments’ compliance with the Humane Handling regulations. Approximately 62 percent of all livestock establishments who received a monthly task had a written program and approximately 82 percent of those have a robust systematic approach. Fifty-one percent of all the livestock establishments assessed monthly for a robust systematic approach had one.

In addition, FSIS had a humane handling goal as part of its FY 2017 Annual Performance Plan: Deliver refresher training to 40 percent of PHVs in livestock slaughter establishments by September 30, 2017. The FSIS Humane Handling Enforcement Coordinator working with the FSIS District Veterinary Medical Specialists (DVMS) developed a training that the DVMS gave to the PHVs in their respective districts through one-on-one training and through webinars. Seventy-one percent of the PHVs had received training thereby exceeding its’ goal.

In FY 2017, the Agency devoted 167 FTEs to the verification and enforcement of humane handling requirements in federally inspected establishments, spending more than 345,714 hours completing these tasks. In total, FSIS personnel performed 178,529 verification procedures.

Emergency Coordination: In FY 2017, FSIS developed and conducted six preparedness and response exercises based on Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program principles that addressed a range of mission critical issues and potential threats facing the Agency. Each exercise led to the creation of an After Action Report/Improvement Plan that identified critical strengths and areas for improvement, which was monitored to ensure that action items were implemented by participating FSIS program areas. The following exercises were conducted:

- FSIS/ Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza exercise (April 2017)
- FSIS/Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)/Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Recall exercise (March 2017)
- FSIS/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention In-Plant exercise (May 2017)
- FSIS In-House exercise (July 2017)
- FSIS After Recall exercise (August 2017)
- FSIS Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) exercise (September 2017)

Highlights included a COOP focused workshop at the Agency’s COOP Alternate Site that allowed FSIS leadership to test out their plans for leaving the National Capitol Region during a COOP event. Other table top exercises included a FSIS/FNS/AMS Recall exercise, which was designed to improve the understanding of the role of each participating office and Agency during recalls involving the USDA Food Program distributed to schools, and an after-recall exercise, which focused on FSIS’ coordination after a recall. All these exercises and completed improvement plans have resulted in FSIS being better prepared to respond to and recover from a variety of significant incidents while carrying out its critical public health activities.

FSIS also reviewed the FSIS All Hazard Response Plan to ensure the safety and defense of the Nation’s supply of meat, poultry and processed egg products. In addition to protecting the public from unintentional contamination of meat, poultry, and processed egg products. FSIS also mitigates the risk of intentional contamination of FSIS regulated products.

FSIS also assisted Federal Emergency Management Agency with securing safe imported Meals Ready to Eat for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands during Hurricanes Maria and Irma.

Natural Disasters: During FY 2017, FSIS was involved in examining the impact of approximately six disasters from the historic damage caused by Hurricanes Harvey (Texas and Louisiana), Irma (Virgin Islands and Florida), and Maria (Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico). FSIS monitored damages caused by floodwater, outages of electricity, and structural damage to determine if any Tier 1 in-commerce firms (distributors and warehouses) were impacted.

FSIS conducted onsite visits or made phone contact with Tier 1 firms to determine if there was operational impact and also to ensure that damaged products were not entering commerce. For Hurricane Harvey, FSIS investigators collaborated with approximately 751 firms by phone or onsite to ensure over 288,000 pounds of adulterated meat and poultry products and over 2,900 dozen of shell eggs were removed from commerce. For Hurricanes Irma and Maria, FSIS investigators assisted with over 529 surveillance activities, helped ensure over 46,000 pounds of adulterated meat and poultry products and over 450 pounds of liquid eggs were removed from commerce.

Rapid Response Events: In FY 2017, FSIS participated in over 24 rapid response events. FSIS worked with various Federal, State, and industry agencies to train for or share information regarding events that may require FSIS assistance to ensure food safety for the public. Some of the events included Food Safety and Food Defense task force, foodborne illness tabletop exercise, and Agro Terrorism and coordinated response training. Participants included the Food and Drug Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Association of Food and Drug Officials, FSIS, State personnel (Virginia, North Carolina, Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Texas, West Virginia, Maryland, and California), and other groups.

Foodborne Illness Outbreak Investigation: FSIS coordinated investigations for 14 foodborne illness clusters representing 615 illnesses, 131 hospitalizations, five Hemolytic-Uremic Syndrome cases, and six deaths. Two of the illness clusters led to a recall. Of the 14 investigations, two were investigations for Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (both *E. coli* O157:H7), 11 for *Salmonella*, one for *Listeria monocytogenes (Lm)*.

FSIS Foodborne Illness Investigations for FY 2017					
	Investigations	Ill	Hospitalized	Deceased	Resulted in Product Recall
<i>E. Coli</i>	2	23	15	2	1
<i>Salmonella</i>	11	554	83	2	1
<i>Listeria</i>	1	38	33	2	0
TOTAL	14	615	131	6	2

Recalls: During FY 2017, the Agency saw an increase from FY 2016 of 19 food recalls, from 115 to 134, (28 beef, 47 poultry, 25 pork, three Siluriformes and 31 combination products). A total of 23 million pounds of meat, poultry, processed egg and Siluriformes were recalled in FY 2017, a decrease of 33 million pounds from FY 2016. One-hundred four of the recalls were considered Class I (reasonable probability that eating the food will cause health problems or death), 20 were Class II (remote probability of adverse health consequences from eating the food) and 10 were Class III (use of the product will not cause adverse health consequences). Fourteen of the recalls were directly related to microbiological contamination caused by the presence of *Lm*. Eight of the recalls were in response to microbiological contamination caused by the presence of *E. coli* O157:H7. Twenty-two of the recalls were due to extraneous material contamination, one recall was due to contamination of product by *Salmonella*, and 57 recalls were due to undeclared allergens in the product (compared to 29 in FY 2016). The remaining 32 recalls were in response to undeclared or unapproved substances, drug residues, mislabeling/misbranding, processing deviations, produced without benefit of inspection, or unsanitary conditions. Additionally, FY 2017 saw an increase from FY 2016 of seven public health alerts, from two to nine. Public Health Alerts are typically issued in lieu of a recall in situations where the Recall Committee determines that a specific product may present a risk to human health, but the Committee cannot recommend a recall.

Consumer Complaint Management System (CCMS): FSIS uses the CCMS, media reports, CDC PulseNet and SharePoint data and a number of other data sources to conduct surveillance and investigation into potential foodborne hazards associated with FSIS regulated products. Surveillance is the backbone to initiate investigation and support response. In FY 2017, FSIS evaluated 1,092 consumer complaints and 84 illness clusters potentially linked to FSIS-regulated products. Ninety-eight consumer complaints (nine percent) required additional investigations with the consumer and producing establishments. Thirty-six investigations resulted in 23 voluntary, six enforcement and seven regulatory actions. Consumer complaints reported through CCMS led to three Class I and one Class II recalls in FY 2017. Thirty-eight complaints reported after a product recall helped to enhance recall effectiveness activities. Evidence obtained in six of 84 monitored illness clusters suggested involvement of FSIS-products that were subsequently investigated.

In-Commerce Activities: FSIS Carcass Inspectors (CI) conduct investigations, enforcement, and surveillance activities at warehouses, distributors, retail stores, and other businesses operating in commerce that store, handle, distribute, transport, and sell meat, poultry, and processed egg products to the consuming public. In FY 2017, FSIS collected 577 retail ground beef samples for testing for *E. coli* O157:H7 (103 percent of FSIS’ target of 560).

Also in FY 2017, FSIS CIs conducted 978 investigations in response to alleged violations of the FMIA, PPIA or EPIA; 94.4 percent of which were based on food safety violations. The investigative findings and evidence are documented and used to support criminal or civil prosecutions or other enforcement. In FY 2017, FSIS controlled over 2.8 million pounds of meat, poultry, and egg products in-commerce to prevent possible injury or illness to the consumer. Additionally, 22,326 surveillance activities were conducted in FY 2017 (versus 18,636 in FY 2016). These surveillance activities focused on examination of food safety and food defense activities in accordance with Agency policy and directives. FSIS CIs conducted 4,530 shell egg surveillances in FY 2017 with a 99.6 percent 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.” FSIS CIs completed 1,799 “Retail Deli Surveys” in FY 2017. Of the retailers “surveyed” during FY 2017, approximately 93 percent were following the FSIS top eight Retail Deli *Lm* controls.

Also in FY 2017, FSIS CIs began verifying grinding logs at retail establishments. From April 2017 to September 2017, FSIS CIs visited 895 firms, educated 420 non-compliant firms, issued 14 Notice of Warning Letters and 78 Letters of Information to retail firms found in noncompliance of the Grinding Log Final Rule. The compliance rate increased from 47 percent prior to implementation of the Final Rule to 53 percent after implementation. A baseline has been established for future compliance monitoring.

Prosecutions and Other Legal Actions: In FY 2017, FSIS worked directly with USDA Office of the General Counsel, USDA Office of Inspector General (OIG), U.S. Attorneys, and other regulatory and enforcement partners to deter illegal slaughter, sale of adulterated and misbranded food, false and fraudulent use of food as inspected and passed, and other violations. FSIS obtained one felony plea by the owner of a regulated firm; resulting in \$600 in fines and restitution, and probation. FSIS issued 1,232 notices of warning (92 from headquarters and 1,140 from field offices) to individuals and firms for alleged violations of laws. These outcomes sent a strong message that food safety violations will not be tolerated.

Administrative Enforcement: In FY 2017, FSIS filed two administrative complaints to refuse and/or withdraw Federal inspection services for public health violations (e.g., insanitary conditions, HACCP noncompliance), issued one Notice of Ineligibility, and negotiated three consent orders, with terms that improved food safety, company ethics, and inspector safety; issued two notices of summary withdrawal; obtained one consent decision and order for humane violations and two other Consent Orders/Agreements.

In FY 2017, FSIS led litigation actions to obtain ten administrative stipulation agreements in egg cases, totaling \$9,325 in administrative civil penalties for violations of shell egg temperature requirements and issued 20 warning notices to resolve alleged violations of law.

Misconduct Investigations: FSIS conducted a total of 197 personnel misconduct investigations that were received through the USDA OIG Whistleblower Hotline as well as other internal and external requests. Complaints were also received from congressional staff, other USDA agencies, and public entities. FSIS completed 31 computer forensic investigations resulting from direct observation of inappropriate materials detected by vulnerability detection software and OIG hotline allegations.

Litigation and Appeals: In FY 2017, FSIS applied program knowledge and expertise to deliver exceptional accomplishments in employment and labor litigation, ensuring that actions and outcomes obtained preserved management action, protected agency interests, and advanced FSIS strategic goals. Specifically, FSIS had over 78 new cases received for this period, including 17 new Union Unfair Labor Practices and arbitration cases, 40 new

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) complaints, and 21 Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) appeals. Overall, FSIS had a case docket of over 105 EEOC, MSPB and arbitration cases.

Chemical residue: During FY 2017, the FSIS residue workgroup members answered residue questions received from producers with violations, inspection personnel, industry, consumers, and other government agencies and provided policy guidance on sampling projects and other program areas on a variety of residue-related issues for both domestic and imported products. One-hundred thirty one (1.3 percent) incidents in askFSIS, were residue-related. The low number of residue related questions received in FY 2017 indicated that residue policies were being implemented effectively.

FSIS, analyzed the results of the inspector-generated residue sampling pilot project. Based on the results of this analysis, recommendations were developed for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the National Residue Program (NRP) inspector-generated sampling. The recommendations included using a data-driven approach for prioritizing conditions under which samples are collected for KIS™ testing to better target animals with violative residues and modifying the selection options in PHIS for KIS™ testing.

Sampling Plans: In FY 2017, FSIS developed and implemented or updated several sampling programs. These programs include exploratory sampling for Religious Exempt and Low Volume poultry establishments, residue testing on new subclasses for bulls/stags and veal other than bob veal, as well as sampling for imported raw pork product. In addition to the expanded sampling, FSIS designed a pork baseline study which was implemented in June 2017 based off the data collected during Phase I of the Raw Pork Product Exploratory Sampling Program. FSIS has expanded sampling to include Ready-to-Eat (RTE) Siluriformes products for both domestic and imported product.

Since October 1, 2016, FSIS has analyzed 112,282 samples and generated 3,998,436 individual test results on these samples. Additionally, FSIS conducted microbiological characterization of 12,700 bacterial isolates reporting 372,548 separate test results.

Additional sampling accomplishments in FY 2017 included:

- FSIS developed and implemented over 20 sampling algorithms. In October 2016, the Agency updated the directed RTE sampling algorithms to refocus sample collection, giving greater weight to product alternatives, product type percent positive, and establishment size. Additionally, new sampling algorithms were developed and implemented for random and risk-based ready-to-eat sampling, bulls and all veal classes, the Phase II Pork Exploratory Sampling Project, the NARMS sampling project in conjunction with the NRP, and to support the exploratory sampling of low volume and religious exempt poultry producers
- Providing analytical and reporting support for Fish implementation, including:
 - Developed automated Fish reports available 24/7 for the FSIS implementation team
 - Developed the sampling plan for Fish
 - Updated PHIS Alerts and Reports to include Fish establishments

Siluriformes Fish and Fish Products Inspection/Reinspection Programs: In September 2017, FSIS concluded its 18-month transition period and began full implementation of catfish inspection.

- One hundred percent re-inspection of imported shipments of Siluriformes fish began August 2, 2017, while broad regulatory discretion continued.
- Full enforcement of the final regulations began September 1, 2017, at the end of the transition period.
- Foreign countries seeking to continue to export Siluriformes fish to the United States after the transition period expired were required to submit to FSIS by September 1, 2017, adequate documentation showing the equivalence of their Siluriformes fish inspection system with that of the U.S. system. Foreign countries that submitted this documentation by the deadline are permitted to continue exporting Siluriformes fish to the U.S. while FSIS completes equivalency determinations.
- FSIS issued four new Directives that provide instructions for IPP performing inspections or reinspections and sampling at official establishments or I-Houses regarding Siluriformes fish. In addition, FSIS issued a draft Compliance Guideline for fish processors and is responding to comments.
- FSIS continued sampling raw fish products for residues, speciation, and *Salmonella* and began sampling RTE fish products for *Salmonella* and *Lm*.

Food Defense Plans: Through preparation of guidance documents and tools, outreach and education to industry to facilitate adoption of effective risk mitigation strategies, and collaboration with industry, FSIS continued to promote food defense by monitoring that establishments have adopted food defense practices and by ensuring the agency increasingly integrates food defense principles, concepts, and practices into daily activities.

FSIS activities that support food defense include:

- Modifying the food defense verification task and frequency of these tasks conducted by FSIS inspection personnel to determine the percent of regulated establishments maintaining food defense practices. The new task is now quarterly and the questions are more targeted and modernized, taking into account more current vulnerabilities such as cyber threats. This new quarterly task will be used to form a baseline for a new FSIS strategic plan measure as well as target food defense outreach to industry, particularly for small and very small establishments.
- Performing food defense surveillance activities by FSIS compliance investigators to identify potential vulnerabilities in in-commerce facilities or points-of-entry that increase the risk of intentionally adulterated meat, poultry, or processed egg products.
- Posting the “Food Defense Guidelines for Siluriformes Fish Production and Processing” to the FSIS website in March 2017. Also posted in March was a general food defense plan template to assist fish producers and processors in developing a food defense plan. Both were developed in consultation with fish producers, processors, and extension personnel, and are available in multiple languages.
- Conducting outreach to industry to share information pertaining to updated National Terrorism Advisory System bulletins released by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Updates were sent in November 2016 and May 2017.
- Conducting outreach to Federal partners to raise awareness of food defense concerns, conducted joint projects, and provided subject matter expertise for various activities. FSIS leads and participates in multiple (domestic) interagency committees. Through these interactions, FSIS’ food defense goals and interests were promoted. Partner agencies included the USDA Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination (OHSEC), USDA Food and Nutrition Service, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, DHS, the Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Defense, Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Transportation Security Administration, and the White House.
- Releasing a modernized exercise tool in September, the Food Defense Preparedness and Recall Exercise Package (FD-PREP), a discussion-based exercise tool to help FSIS-regulated establishments test and update their food defense practices and plans. In May and July 2017, FSIS participated in the Food Defense Conference at the Food Protection and Defense Institute and also the International Association for Food Protection Annual Conference to present on the FD-PREP. Collaborated with the TSA to develop strategies and best practice deliverables for the transportation industry, which will increase awareness of food defense during transportation and distribution of meat, poultry, and processed egg products. FSIS provided significant content and review of a new visor card for food transporters and for a food defense module for their First Observer training program for highway motor carriers. Both of these products were issued in Q4, FY 2017.
- Providing input to Joint Counterterrorism Assessment Team for development of a food and agriculture poster for law enforcement and first responders. The poster provides an overview of the farm-to-table continuum and discusses food defense considerations for various aspects of the continuum. The poster was issued in March 2017.

Food Defense Vulnerability Assessments: FSIS conducts vulnerability assessments (VAs) to better prevent and protect against an intentional attack on its regulated products, as directed by HSPD-9. These VAs help to identify food defense countermeasures and mitigation strategies aimed at preventing or reducing 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. FSIS implemented the new risk-based VA Framework in FY 2017. Questionnaires for the VA Framework were sent to government and industry subject-matter experts to evaluate changes in policy, risk, threat, and operations that may require a new VA or update to an existing VA. The results for the VA Framework will be finalized in FY 2018.

Issuances

- FSIS published proposed regulations to allow the People’s Republic of China to export poultry and poultry products to the United States.

- FSIS published proposed regulations to modernize and make consistent with FDA requirements the Nutrition Facts panel for meat and poultry products.
- FSIS published a final determination, with a request for comments, announcing FSIS’ intent to hold persons not employed by official establishments responsible for acts of inhumane handling of livestock they commit on the premises of such establishments.
- FSIS published a *Federal Register Notice* (FRN) announcing changes to inspection coverage in *Siluriformes* fish slaughter establishments to align them with processing establishments, based on experience it gained during the transitional period of the fish inspection program.
- FSIS published four Directives that provided instructions for FSIS inspectors for the inspection and testing of *Siluriformes* fish and fish products.
- FSIS published a FRN announcing the availability of FSIS compliance guidelines for small and very small meat and poultry establishments that produce ready-to-eat products.
- FSIS published 117 new or revised Notices and Directives that, in part, provide instructions to FSIS inspectors, investigators and auditors and administrative instructions applicable to all FSIS employees or subsets of those employees.

Management Control Training: In FY 2017, FSIS designed, developed, and delivered management control training for the 10 program areas within the Agency. This training covered concepts identifying risk and the development and implementation of management controls and performance measures and was designed to help management stay focused on the organization’s pursuit of operations, programs, and performance goals while operating within the confines of relevant laws.

Food Emergency Response Network (FERN): Through its cooperative agreements with State food emergency response laboratories, FSIS accomplished the following major activities: FSIS continued the targeted surveillance of USDA regulated commodities (e.g. Ready-to-eat and raw meat and poultry products) at retail. Nineteen States tested 5,947 samples for chemical compounds (toxins, poisons, and heavy metals) 2,933 microbiology samples, 2,660 chemistry samples, and 354 radiochemistry samples. Partner laboratories also participated in a capacity and capability exercise during July 2017 demonstrating the ability to collect, analyze and report results for multiple analytes under time constraints and no previous notice of the testing request.

FSIS participated in 13 proficiency testing events this past year that tested FERN partner labs’ capability to find different analytes within selected food matrices. Over 322 labs from FSIS and FDA participated in these thirteen events analyzing multiple types of samples. Further, FERN held its annual Biosecurity Level-3 (BSL-3) Triage Method Proficiency Check Sample demonstration in July 2017.

FSIS participated in three Department of Homeland Security functional exercises sponsored by the Integrated Consortium of Laboratory Networks (ICLN). FSIS participated in the ICLN Mixed Agent Tabletop Exercise to determine the effects of samples containing chemical and radiochemical analytes on capacity and capability of member network laboratories. Additionally, FSIS members of the ICLN Network Coordinating Group participated in mini tabletop exercises to maintain proficiency and readiness in the use of the various tools on the ICLN Portal.

Establishment-Specific Data Release Strategic Plan: FSIS published the final version of the Establishment-Specific Data Release Strategic Plan for sharing data on federally inspected meat and poultry establishments on December 2, 2016. FSIS has since posted a number of different datasets (pathogen test results by sample for each establishment) on Data.gov and on the FSIS webpage, including:

- Ready-to-eat Meat and Poultry Sampling Results
- Establishment Demographic Data - Supplement
- Egg Products Sampling Results
- Import Refusals
- Raw Ground Beef Sampling Results
- Raw Beef Trim Sampling Results

Stakeholder Inquiries: FSIS reviewed and contributed to approximately 44 draft letters to Congress and other legislators. FSIS also responded to nearly 100 inquiries from Congress, 15 of which resulted in either a conference call or in-person briefing on the Hill; and more than 400 targeted inquiries from media outlets, approximately 30 of

which resulted in interviews with food safety officials. FSIS responded to more than 244 incoming letters overall, of which 82 percent were from consumers, individuals in the regulated community, and students. Responses include information about topics such as: Agency activities, regulations, petitions, compliance, and FSIS jurisdiction.

Foodborne Illness Attribution Achievements and Inter-Agency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration (IFSAC):

Comprised of three Federal agencies the CDC, the FDA, and FSIS the goal of this collaboration is to improve coordination of Federal food safety analytic efforts and address cross-cutting priorities for food safety data collection, analysis, and use. Projects and studies aim to identify foods that are important sources of illnesses. The current focus of IFSAC’s activities is foodborne illness source attribution, defined as the process of estimating the most common food sources responsible for specific foodborne illnesses. Major IFSAC accomplishments include:

- Development of a Wrap-Up document summarizing IFSAC accomplishments during its first strategic plan.
- Publication of the new IFSAC Strategic Plan on March 24th, 2017. An article about the Plan was published in Food Chemical News on May 9th and a webinar describing the Plan was held on May 31, 2017 with over 100 attendees and at least one article written about the webinar.
- A draft manuscript on “A New Scheme for Categorizing Foods Implicated in Foodborne Disease Outbreaks: A Tri-Agency Collaboration”--to develop a new categorization scheme for classifying outbreaks, as well as development of a new manuscript detailing the methods used to estimate harmonized attribution fractions was accepted for publication (anticipated publication mid-December 2017) in *Foodborne Pathogens and Disease*.

FSIS Notices:

Salmonella and Campylobacter:

- FSIS provided instructions to inspection program personnel (IPP) at establishments that produce raw pork products, to sample pork products for *Salmonella* as part of the nationwide raw pork products exploratory sampling project phase II.
- FSIS implemented sampling in poultry establishments that are under a religious exemption for *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* analyses. This is a new exploratory sampling project to further understand the risk of foodborne pathogens on poultry carcasses processed under a religious exemption.
- FSIS implemented the collection of samples at a subset of poultry establishments that process less than 1,000 pounds of product per day for *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* analyses. This is a new exploratory sampling project to further understand the risk of foodborne pathogens from poultry originating from establishments that produce less than 1,000 pounds of product per day.
- FSIS issued *FSIS Directive 7111.1 Verification Procedures for Lethality and Stabilization* that updates and replaces older versions of the lethality and stabilization Directives that were issued in 1989 and 1999. The Directive provides IPP with instructions for verifying lethality and stabilization processes at establishments that make ready-to-eat (RTE) meat and poultry products. It also covers the stabilization processes in establishments that make not ready-to-eat (NRTE) heat treated, not fully cooked, meat and poultry products, including but not limited to partially cooked and char-marked meat patties and partially cooked poultry breakfast strips.
- FSIS issued a revised *Salmonella Compliance Guideline for Small and Very Small Establishments that Produce Ready-to-Eat Products and Revised Appendix A* as well as a *Compliance Guideline for Stabilization (Cooling and Hot-Holding) of Fully and Partially Heat-Treated RTE and NRTE Meat and Poultry Products Produced by Small and Very Small Establishments and Revised Appendix B*. These guidelines will assist establishments in ensuring the lethality and stabilization treatments used during processing of RTE meat and poultry products are effective at addressing hazards of concern.

E. coli O157:H7 and STEC:

- FSIS issued the Compliance Guideline for Minimizing the Risk of Shiga Toxin-Producing *Escherichia Coli* (STEC) and *Salmonella* in Beef (including Veal) Slaughter Operations in March 2017. This guideline provides information that beef and veal slaughter establishments can use to prevent, eliminate, or reduce levels of STEC and *Salmonella* contamination in these products. The target audience for this document are small and very small establishments.
- FSIS issued the Compliance Guideline for Minimizing the Risk of Shiga Toxin-Producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) in Raw Beef (including Veal) Processing Operations in August 2017. This guideline provides information that establishments producing non-intact and intact cuts intended for raw non-intact beef can

use to address STEC contamination in raw beef. The target audience for this document are small and very small establishments.

Listeria monocytogenes:

- In FY 2017, FSIS analyzed data collected during the first year of the project (Jan. 25, 2016 to Dec. 31, 2016); it shows that retailers have increased the percentage of recommendations they are following relative to product handling, cleaning and sanitizing, facility and equipment controls, and employee practices. FSIS decided to extend the pilot project for five more years, until the end of FY 2021 as part of the FY 2017-2021 Strategic Plan. Under the Strategic Plan, FSIS is tracking whether retailers are following eight of the most important recommended actions identified in the FSIS Retail *Lm* Guidelines. Based on feedback from retailers, FSIS is also planning to incorporate an older measure (percent of recommendations that retailers follow) into the FY 2018 APP. The increased acceptance by retail establishments of the guidance, should decrease the amount of *Lm* contaminated ready-to-eat (RTE) meat and poultry products reaching the consumer and the number of *Lm* foodborne illnesses contributed to by RTE meat and poultry products.
- FSIS updated the algorithm used for scheduling RTE samples under the RTEPROD_RISK (risk based sampling project for post-lethality exposed products) and RTEPROD_RAND (random sampling project that includes post-lethality exposed and non-post-lethality exposed products) sampling programs. FSIS also re-allocated sampling resources evenly between the RTEPROD sampling projects. These changes will allow for improved sample scheduling and more effective use of agency resources.

Siluriformes Inspection:

- In FY 2017, the Final Rule for inspecting both domestic and foreign Siluriformes products, titled Mandatory Inspection of Fish of the Order Siluriformes and Products Derived from Such Fish (9 CFR Sec 530-561, December 2, 2015) started enforcing full compliance on September 1, 2017 following the 18-month transition period. After enforcement began, FSIS Compliance Investigators completed three investigations involving Siluriformes products that were closed with six Notices of Warning. Two cases involved ineligible product shipments and one case was a Failure-to-Present. A total of 206 Siluriformes firms have registered with FSIS. Two product control detentions totaling 116 pounds of Siluriformes product was controlled in-commerce. One product control action was for an illegal import of Siluriformes products and one was Siluriformes product from an ineligible country.

Allergens:

- On March 16, 2017 FSIS, with participation from FDA, CDC, international partners, and academic institutions, hosted a public meeting to discuss the prevention of undeclared allergens in FSIS-regulated product. Specifically, the meeting addressed the continued occurrence of product recalls due to undeclared allergens and best practices for preventing the presence of undeclared allergens in FSIS-regulated products. Topics focused on FSIS policy and enforcement regarding undeclared allergens, labeling compliance, best practices for prevention, and emerging issues. Industry and interested individuals, organizations, and other stakeholders were invited to participate in the meeting and comment on these topics.

Food Labeling Compliance: In FY 2017, FSIS evaluated and processed 28,337 label submissions from industry for meat, poultry, and processed egg products. Of these submissions, 24,460 were approved, and 3,877 submissions were not approved and returned to be corrected. FSIS received and responded to more than 11,000 email inquiries from domestic producers and manufacturers, foreign establishments, trade groups, State and foreign government officials, embassies, Congressional offices, consumers/consumer groups, universities, and research organizations that requested guidance on labeling, food standards, ingredients, and jurisdiction policies. FSIS also responded to over 12,000 ask FSIS incidents and other correspondence to manufacturers explaining labeling, food standards, ingredients, and jurisdiction policies in response to recalls and compliance actions.

Labeling Guidance: In response to much industry interest, FSIS made compliance guidance available on how to label product that desire to make claims related to the amount of whole grains in a meat or poultry product. Additionally, the Agency posted guidance to further assist establishments in distinguishing whether or not a label needs to be submitted for approval by the Agency.

Lab Methodology Updates: FSIS completed extensive work revising and validating the Microbiology Laboratory Guidebooks (MLG) and the Chemistry Laboratory Guidebook methods (CLG). The laboratories updated/revised three MLG chapters, created a lab-wide 41 Whole Genome Sequencing SOP and lab-wide CCMSA260 to detail

TEMPO dilutions, revised and validated the new CLG-MRM2.00 Screening and Confirmation of Animal Drug Residues by UHPLC-HRMS-MS. FSIS also improved the usability of the CLG website by rearranging and increasing the number of method groupings allowing the user to interact more easily with the website and efficiently retrieve needed information.

International Food Safety & Inspection Program

Customs and Border Protection Coordination: In FY 2017, FSIS continued efforts to develop and maintain data exchange capabilities through the Customs and Border Protections’ (CBP), Automated Commercial Environment (ACE), Partner Government Agency (PGA) Message Set. The PGA Message Set automates the collection of information provided by the importer of record (or its agent). These data elements are transmitted electronically to FSIS when the entry is filed with CBP through the ACE and eliminates the need for importers of record or agents to submit a paper copy to FSIS. This process also eliminates the need for FSIS inspection personnel to manually enter data in the PHIS. All ports of entry are available to filers of FSIS regulated products that have developed PGA Message Set capabilities in ACE. To date, over 100 customs brokers are participating in the FSIS PGA Message Set and 65 percent of all import applications received by FSIS are now filed electronically. FSIS also developed outbound message capabilities in ACE, which provide messages back to importers through ACE of the status for the shipments re-inspected by FSIS.

Equivalence Determinations: FSIS overhauled the Self Reporting Tool (SRT) to reduce redundancy, make questions more understandable, and clearly define the equivalence criteria that FSIS uses to evaluate foreign countries’ food safety systems.

FSIS reviewed 24 equivalence requests from 22 countries (21 initial requests, one reinstatement, and two individual sanitary measures) and made one reinstatement of equivalence and one individual sanitary measure equivalence determination. Of the 21 initial requests, FSIS reviewed 13 SRT submissions and supporting documentation from countries that currently can ship Siluriformes fish and fish products to the U.S. so they can gain equivalency determination under FSIS. The remaining eight initial requests received include two for Siluriformes from countries that are not currently shipping fish products to the U.S., three requests for poultry, two requests for pork and one request for beef. In addition, FSIS initiated the rule making process to amend the list of countries eligible to export poultry to the United States to identify the People’s Republic of China as eligible to export slaughtered poultry. FSIS overhauled the Equivalence website by redesigning the layout of the equivalence webpages and posting resource documents to the website to assist countries with completing the SRT and understanding the equivalence process. Resource materials on the webpages include the new, improved SRT, guidance documents to assist foreign countries in understanding the equivalence process, presentations, user guides, and links to webinars/videos on becoming e-authenticated and completing the SRT in PHIS.

FSIS developed and implemented three guides to assist foreign countries with their annual submissions: FSIS Guidance for Completing a Certified Establishment List, FSIS Guidance for Suggested Reporting Tables of the Government Residue Control Program and FSIS Guidance for Suggested Reporting of Annual Government Microbiological Testing Program Results.

Foreign Equivalence Verification Audits: In FY 2017, FSIS completed ongoing equivalence verification audits of 17 countries to ensure compliance with equivalence requirements of the Federal Meat Inspection Act, Poultry Products Inspection Act, Humane Methods of Slaughter Act, and Egg Products Inspection Act. Onsite audits included 16 equivalence re-verification audits for the countries of Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Croatia, England, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Namibia, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Poland, San Marino, South Korea, and Spain, and one initial equivalence audit for egg products for Lithuania.

Update of Foreign Audit Policies: In FY 2017, FSIS completed *FSIS Directive 9770.1*, Determining Initial and Reinstating the Equivalence of Foreign Food Safety Inspection Systems and *FSIS Directive 9790.1*, Writing an Audit Report of Foreign Food Safety Systems. Both completed in February 2017.

Foreign Audit Training: In FY 2017, FSIS sent a cadre of 11 international auditors to attend the High Threat Security Overseas Seminar and the Foreign Affairs Counter Threat Classes which focused on the new mandatory training requirements for government personnel assigned to international duties in foreign countries.

Import Re-Inspection Activities: FSIS re-inspects all meat, poultry, and processed egg products offered for import to the U.S. by eligible foreign countries at U.S. ports of entry. FSIS inspects all shipments presented at ports of entry to ensure proper certification by the foreign country and examines each shipment for general condition and labeling compliance. Additionally, FSIS randomly assigns more targeted re-inspections of approximately ten percent of the meat and poultry presented, including laboratory sampling to identify microbiological pathogens, drug and chemical residues, and even species. FSIS determines the intervals for each type of re-inspection based on compliance history of the foreign establishment, country, and product volume from previous years. During FY 2017, approximately four billion pounds of meat and poultry products were presented for re-inspection from the eligible countries that are actively exporting product to the United States, and approximately 12 million pounds of processed egg products were presented from Canada. The table below provides the 2017 statistics for meat and poultry products:

Imported Meat and Poultry Product					
FY 2017	Total Product Presented for Routine Re-inspection (Pounds) ₁	Product Subjected to Additional TOIs (Pounds) ₂	Total Product Refused Entry (Pounds) ₃	Refused Product Rectified (Pounds) ₄	Total Accepted (Pounds) ₅
TOTAL⁶	4,064,517,284	390,021,669	63,153,526	51,162,131	4,052,525,889
Imported Processed Egg Product					
FY 2017	Total Product Presented for Routine Re-inspection (Pounds) ₁	Product Subjected to Additional TOIs (Pounds) ₂	Total Product Refused Entry (Pounds) ₃	Refused Product Rectified (Pounds) ₄	Total Accepted (Pounds) ₅
TOTAL⁶	12,489,825	2,032,540	216,503	193,741	12,467,063

¹ Routine re-inspection includes the Certification and Label Verification Types of Inspection (TOIs) as well as verification of product condition and identification of shipping damage.

² Type of Inspection (TOI). 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 re-inspection TOIs (Certification and Label Verification).

³ Total product refused entry. The importer of record has options including destruction, re-export if allowed, conversion to animal food with Food and Drug Administration approval, or rectification (see footnote 4).

⁴ Initially refused entry but subsequently brought into compliance and accepted. Issues amenable to rectification include labeling and certification, among others.

⁵ Total Accepted includes all products that was initially inspected and passed plus product that was initially refused entry but later rectified.

FSIS uses the results of these re-inspection activities to engage with foreign governments in order to continually reassess the ongoing equivalence of foreign government inspection systems. When regulatory violations significant to public health are observed during re-inspection, FSIS notifies the foreign government requesting an immediate investigation including verification to ensure that corrective actions are implemented by foreign establishments and that those actions are appropriate to address the issue and prevent recurrence.

In FY 2017, FSIS implemented increased re-inspection of all Brazilian meat products in response to a bribery scandal in Brazil involving government officials and a number of Brazilian establishments. Based on results of this increased re-inspection and in-country audit results, the Department suspended the eligibility of imported raw beef from Brazil on June 22, 2017. FSIS continues to assess the ongoing equivalence of Brazil’s meat inspection system.

Siluriformes Fish and Fish Products Oversight/Reinspection Programs: The FSIS Siluriformes rule established criteria for foreign countries to continue exporting Siluriformes products during the 18-month transition period including: an attestation that the country has a foundation in law for regulating the safety of Siluriformes products, an attestation that the establishments in the foreign country are in compliance with FDA’s seafood HACCP regulations, and a requirement that the country provide to FSIS a listing of eligible establishments. During the transitional period, 14 countries provided such documentation and were eligible to continue exporting Siluriformes products. In order to remain eligible to export Siluriformes after the end of the transitional period, foreign countries were required to submit a completed equivalence SRT by September 1, 2017. Brazil did not submit an SRT and is no longer eligible to export Siluriformes. In FY 2017, currently more than 185 establishments and 13 countries were deemed eligible by FSIS.

On August 2, 2017, FSIS began full implementation requiring re-inspection of all imported Siluriformes. Sixty Official Import Establishments have Grants of Inspections to facilitate required re-inspection of Siluriformes fish, up from 46 in FY 2016.

In FY 2017, over 715,000 pounds of adulterated or ineligible imported Siluriformes product has been prevented from entering/removed from U.S. commerce. This included, in part, 23 Siluriformes product shipments from ineligible countries and/or establishments representing 74,000 pounds of product. In addition, FSIS re-inspected 1,132 lots of imported Siluriformes fish and fish products; of these, 23 lots representing over 412,000 pounds were determined to be violative for chemical residues or failed physical examination. FSIS refused entry to eight additional lots including over 53,000 pounds because chemical independence from violative lots could not be established.

In FY 2017, FSIS developed and implemented a “Hold and Test” procedure for use during the transition period when FSIS sampling determines a Siluriformes product to be adulterated or misbranded. In such cases, FSIS now requires the importer to hold all subsequent shipments of Siluriformes products from the same establishment until; 1) each Siluriformes product in each shipment is sampled and analyzed by an accredited third party laboratory; 2) the importer provides a rationale explaining how each specific shipment is chemically independent from previous violative shipments; and 3) FSIS reviews lab results and supporting rationale and determines admissibility. Three shipments were distributed into U.S. commerce without meeting these requirements resulting in the recall of 84,000 pounds of Siluriformes products. An additional 24,000 pounds were controlled for destruction/re-export. FSIS also rejected seven shipments through this process because the importer was not able to support chemical independence from the previous violative shipments resulting in the control for destruction or re-export of over 155,000 pounds.

Foreign Outreach: In March 2017, FSIS designed, developed, and delivered training material for the Ghana International Meat Inspection Seminar in Accra, Ghana, Africa. Inspection officials from Ghana, Egypt, Morocco, South Africa, and Nigeria attended a seminar in FSIS inspection methodology. The seminar covered the concept of equivalence and the FSIS equivalence process, the design, development, implementation of FSIS’ inspection system, including HACCP and pathogen reduction; meat, poultry, Siluriformes, and egg products inspection as well as import and export policies and procedures. Additional outreach seminars were held in Mexico City, Mexico for the National Service of Health, Food Safety and Quality (SENASICA) and Washington, D.C. with Canada, New Zealand, and the Netherlands. The goal was to help countries understand the food safety systems in the United States, including the equivalence process and provide guidance to countries on how to improve their food safety and to be eligible to import to the United States.

International Food Defense Outreach: FSIS participated in international activities aimed at protecting against intentional contamination of the food supply and to promote adoption of food defense practices and programs internationally, including:

- Participation in a workshop conducted in Saudi Arabia (October 2016) and Indonesia (November 2016) to aid in the development and enhancement of food defense programs. Participants were assisted in developing a national food defense strategy and associated action plans for private industry. Academia was also encouraged to incorporate food defense concepts in food science curriculums.
- As part of the U.S.-France Biodefense Bilateral Agreement, participation on an interagency workgroup with the White House National Security Council, FDA, USDA’s OHSEC, FEMA, and the French Ministry of Agriculture and Secretariat General for National Defense and Security, to enhance cooperation and collaboration on food defense matters.

Audits by Foreign Countries: In FY 2017, FSIS coordinated nine foreign countries’ audits of the U.S. food safety system to verify equivalence of the food safety inspection system for meat and poultry products to the following countries: China, Japan, Korea (two audits), Canada, Mexico, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Argentina. There were no findings of non-compliances.

Export Verification: In January, 2017 FSIS and AMS began operating the Export Verification (EV) Program and registered eleven establishments. The program is designed to verify establishment’s control of closed-faced sandwiches destined for Canada. Canada is requiring that closed-faced sandwiches be produced under a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan. Closed-faced sandwiches are under the jurisdiction of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), but FDA does not require that the sandwiches are produced under a HACCP plan.

Once the program is implemented, only establishments participating in the program will be able to export closed faced sandwiches to Canada.

Electronic Export Application and Certification: FSIS amended the meat and poultry inspection regulations to provide for an electronic export application and certification system that will be a component of Public Health Information System (PHIS). The PHIS Export Component will be available as an alternative to the paper-based export application and certification process. FSIS will charge an application fee to exporters that use the PHIS Export Component; in FY 2017, FSIS established a formula for calculating the fee. To ensure adequate awareness of PHIS Export, FSIS created a new PHIS export web page, the first public-facing web site exclusively dedicated to informing the public (consumers, FSIS IPP, industry, and countries) on this topic. FSIS also sent letters to all countries eligible to export to the US regarding PHIS Export and related changes, and a letter tailored to 13 countries that maintain commercial seal/container requirements on how PHIS Export will meet those requirements.

Public Health Data Communication Infrastructure System (PHDCIS)

FSIS continued to transition remote locations with FSIS network equipment to managed network services with our telecommunications vendors. As a result, the maintenance and tech refresh requirements of endpoint network equipment at these remote locations was shifted to the vendors providing the circuit.

FSIS with USDA and DHS, deployed DHS’s Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation security suite to the FSIS network security perimeter to enhance our security posture. The system is currently monitoring over 20,000 devices and additional ones are being added through partnership with our telecommunications vendors to enable monitoring of our remote employee’s IT equipment.

FSIS significantly increased compliance to 90 percent for technical enforcement of LincPass, USDA’s personal identity verification card for multi-factor authentication, in order to comply with Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12.

FSIS enhanced the Demilitarized Zone security posture through the implementation of Web Content Filtering tools, intruder detection systems, and Sandboxing functionality to combat threats from domestic and foreign entities. The aforementioned measures, in addition to the 24x7 security monitoring and the user awareness and training efforts has reduced the overall security risks in FSIS by 25 percent.

State Food Safety & Inspection Program

State Inspection Reviews: FSIS continued to support approximately 1,649 State-inspected establishments under the 27 State Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) programs through cost sharing of up to 50 percent of allowable State costs. In FY 2017, FSIS completed annual reviews of each of the 27 MPI programs. The comprehensive State review process consists of two parts: (1) annual self-assessments and (2) triennial onsite reviews, which are used to determine whether the State MPI program enforces requirements “at least equal to” the Federal requirements. In FY 2017, FSIS completed onsite reviews of nine State MPI programs (Alabama, Arizona, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Montana, Ohio, Utah, and Vermont) and one targeted onsite review in Wisconsin.

Audit of State MPI Laboratory Methodologies: In FY 2017, FSIS evaluated laboratory methods by using subject matter experts in Microbiology, Chemistry, and Quality Assurance to perform desk audits and review State laboratories and State contract laboratory analytical methodologies to determine overall equivalence compared to FSIS’ laboratory methods. In addition, FSIS completed onsite reviews of nine State MPI program laboratory methods and State contract laboratory methods (Alabama, Arizona, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Montana, Ohio, Utah, and Vermont). Based on FSIS’ review, States are expected to provide corrective action plans in response to specific areas of concern.

Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) Program: To date, Ohio, Wisconsin, Indiana and North Dakota are officially approved for the CIS program. At the end of FY 2017, Ohio had thirteen operational CIS establishments, Wisconsin had twelve selected establishments, and Indiana had nine selected establishments. North Dakota has one operational CIS establishment and several State establishments that have indicated an interest but have not formally applied for the CIS program.

The National CIS Coordinator, selected establishment coordinator (SEC), and District Manager met in person with the Ohio State Inspection Director and other State Inspection representatives to discuss FSIS findings observed during onsite verification visits of select establishments in Ohio. This meeting provided opportunity for direct outreach to the state inspection program and improved communication channels through increased familiarity of involved State and Federal parties.

FSIS performed onsite and record reviews of state Cooperative Interstate Shipment Programs, and contracted laboratories. As a result, FSIS broadened their quality assurance programs and analytical testing of meat and poultry products. See Table 1 below for a summary of FSIS visits performed in FY 2017.

Table 1. Number of Verification Visits Performed by the SEC in FY 2016 by State and Verification Type.

State	# Outreach Visits	# Initial Visits	# Verification Visits	# Routine Visits	# Total Visits
Indiana	4	5	16	0	25
Ohio	2	0	27	0	29
Wisconsin	5	2	27	3	37
North Dakota	5	2	4	1	12
TOTAL	16	9	74	4	103

Public Health Information System (PHIS) for State MPI Programs: In FY 2017, FSIS published 64 additional PHIS Reports for States, displaying information about humane handling, non-compliances, and inspection task reports.

State IT Program: During FY 2017, FSIS successfully coordinated the ordering and distribution of 133 Windows 10 State Computers to 11 different State Programs in a short window. FSIS successfully approved, processed, and tracked for invoicing - 141 pieces of equipment for 16 different State programs throughout the year. In FY 2017, 23 states had Supplemental Agreements. Of the 23 states with Supplemental Agreements, 100 percent were complete, as well as 100 percent completion of the USDA Security Awareness Training for the State Programs. FSIS also successfully administered the State SharePoint site, which kept information up-to-date, and administered permissions to the overall site, and specifically to the Wisconsin Document Library.

In-Commerce State Activities/Cost-saving: In FY 2017, FSIS continued to provide support to the AssuranceNet/In-Commerce System (ANet/ICS) State program users. Also in FY 2017, FSIS brought Maine and Missouri into ANet/ICS. The successful integration of state programs into ANet/ICS provides state users with the ability to access five key functional areas (firm information, surveillance, investigation, product control, and enforcement). State users conducted 1,363 surveillance activities, controlled 22,838 pounds (17,119 pounds detained), and conducted 216 investigations. This joint system usage maintains 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 into ANet/ICS also results in an enhanced execution of mission critical public health functions across FSIS and State programs.

Codex Alimentarius

The U.S. Codex Office manages the participation of the United States in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies, which operate within the framework of the Joint Food Standards Program established by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO). The Codex Alimentarius Commission is an inter-governmental body with 188 members that sets voluntary international food safety and quality standards that protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the international trade of food. The U.S. Codex Office is administratively attached to FSIS and serves a government-wide interagency clientele, as well as stakeholders in U.S. industry and consumer groups to promote U.S. interests in Codex Alimentarius’ international food standards work.

In April 2017, FSIS attended the 49th Session of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR49). During the meeting, the Committee (1) advanced a record number 488 Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) for final adoption by

the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) at its next session scheduled for July 2018; (2) Six of the ten new compounds reviewed by Joint Meeting on Pesticide Residue (JMPR) in 2017 were nominated by the United States; (3) the Committee reached consensus on crop groupings for vegetable and grass commodities; (4) the Committee reached consensus on the guidelines on performance criteria for methods of analysis used to determine pesticide residues in food and feed; and (5) discussions were held on potential new work on the IESTI (International Estimate of Short Term Intake) equation and a new electronic working group (eWG) was formed to continue exploratory work.

In November 2016, FSIS chaired the 48th Codex Committee on Food Hygiene meeting. FSIS successfully lead the discussion and adoption of the revision of the Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CAC/RCP 53-2003 – one year ahead of schedule) and reached consensus (and submitted for adoption) the Guidelines on the application of general principles of food hygiene to the control of foodborne parasites.

With the adjournment of the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products, the CCFH accepted the responsibility to resolve the one outstanding issue from that committee, the Guidance on Histamine Control and Sampling Plans for Histamine (Histamine Work plan).

Setting Global Standards: The Commission adopted in July new or revised global food safety and quality standards, including the *Standard for Fish Oil* and the *Standard for Dairy Permeate Powder*, and it adopted maximum residue limits for the veterinary drugs lasalocid sodium, ivermectin, and teflubenzuron. The Commission also recognized the Joint Expert Meeting on Nutrition (JEMNU) as the primary source of scientific advice for the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU). The U.S. Codex Office prepared draft positions for issues under negotiation at Codex meetings, and presented these positions for stakeholder input at ten public meetings.

Committee Responsibilities and participation: The U.S. Codex Office hosted two committee meetings: the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs (CCRVD) in Foods in Houston, TX, in October, which was attended by delegates from 62 member countries and representatives of eight international non-governmental organizations; and the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) in Los Angeles, in November, which was attended by delegates from 49 countries and eight international organizations.

Outreach: The U.S. Codex Office manages an extensive program of outreach to facilitate the exchange of views among delegates to Codex meetings for the purpose of achieving consensus on adopting Codex standards that support U.S. food safety policy objectives. The U.S. Codex Office organized six multi-day outreach events for Codex delegates, including one event for Asian countries in China in June, two for Latin American and Caribbean countries (Ecuador in March, Argentina in September), two in Africa (Zambia in February, and Senegal in September), and a multi-regional event in Ottawa, Canada, in June.

Training: The U.S. Codex Office organized a workshop in Charlottesville, VA, June 1-2, for 49 U.S. delegates from eight Federal agencies to share experiences, refine committee strategies, enhance effective delegation leadership skills, and promote consistent approaches on cross-cutting Codex issues.

Cross-Cutting Accomplishments

Public Health Information System (PHIS): FSIS continued to enhance the implementation of the Public Health Inspection System (PHIS). The PHIS strengthens FSIS’ operations and policy implementation strategies by providing FSIS inspectors and managers the tools needed to carry out FSIS’ food safety mission. In FY 2017, FSIS enrolled three countries in the PHIS eCert: New Zealand, Australia, and the Netherlands. FSIS focused on new functionality and enhancements for PHIS Exports, Export Batching, Foreign Country Login, Demilitarized Zone security upgrades, and other improvements and corrections. Functionality enhancement of PHIS:

- Completed three major PHIS releases and established an Industry Test Environment for export testing.
- FSIS performed a security assessment of PHIS. The Assessment and Authorization package included a current System Security Plan, a Security Assessment Report, a Risk Analysis Report, a Threat Matrix Report, a Residual Risk Report, an electronic-Authentication Risk Assessment, a Plan of Action and Milestones Report, a Privacy Threshold Analysis/Privacy Impact Assessment and a Contingency Plan.
- FSIS amended the meat and poultry inspection regulations to provide for an electronic export application

and certification system that will be a component of PHIS. The PHIS Export Component will be available as an alternative to the paper-based export application and certification process. FSIS also amended the meat and poultry export regulations to provide flexibility in the requirement for official export inspection marks, devices, and certificates.

- Incorporated the new Self-Reporting Tool into PHIS for foreign central competent authorities to access and complete electronically.

PHIS Reports: Because of PHIS, the Agency is collecting more data about inspection activities than it has in the past, resulting in a greater need for reports summarizing this data. FSIS has expanded the suite of PHIS reports. There are now 186 PHIS reports available to users based on their PHIS role, and there are 23 reports ready to be published. These reports include 107 Federal reports, 65 State reports, four industry reports and ten import reports, containing information about lab sampling, slaughter, inspection tasks, establishment profile, resource management, imports and industry. New versions of existing reports were published 118 times in response to 180 user change requests. From Oct 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017, a total of 125,276 reports were generated by PHIS users.

Public Health Information System (PHIS) Alerts: PHIS alerts are data driven generated food safety messages that in-plant personnel (IPP) receive via email and/or system notification allowing IPP to proactively react to food safety information. These alerts ensure that IPP are receiving the correct sampling tasks, ensure that food defense activities are being tracked, as well as notifying IPP when an establishment has an elevated Public Health Regulation (PHR) non-compliance rate that is close to the threshold for Public Health Risk Evaluation/Food Safety Assessment scheduling. Eleven PHIS alerts were successfully deployed, including the PHR Early Warning Alert.

Data Quality: The objective of the FSIS Data Quality Initiative is to improve the accuracy and efficiency of reporting and data driven decisions. The data quality team is documenting and analyzing known and new data issues, implementing data corrections, and providing detailed recommendations for preventing future issues. In FY 2017, FSIS wrote six detailed recommendations for PHIS enhancements and system fixes for long term data quality improvement, which included requirements for PHIS fixes and enhancements.

Accomplishments in FY 2017 include the following projects/activities:

- Conducted training for Agency data analysts on using logistic regression for categorical data analysis, on time series modeling, and on using quality control software to monitor, evaluate, and improve the quality of current processes.
- Worked with all FSIS program areas to identify existing data quality issues and resolved issues and made recommendations on how to prevent similar data quality issues in the future.

Policy Enhancement, Development and Implementation: FSIS updated the following policies.

- The “At Least Equal To” Guideline for State Meat and Poultry Cooperative Inspection Programs by working collaboratively with FSIS. The comprehensive update of the guideline incorporates previous amendments for laboratory methods review and data systems used to track inspection activities for those State MPI programs that elected not to use PHIS as well as outlines policy changes that have been published since the original guideline was published in 2008. This guideline was published in November 2016.
- FSIS Directive 5720.3, *Methodology For Performing Scheduled And Targeted Reviews Of State Meat And Poultry Inspection Programs* by working collaboratively with FSIS. The updated directive includes policy changes since the last revision in 2011 and clarifies methodology used to evaluate State MPI programs that aligns with the “At Least Equal To” Guidelines for State Meat and Poultry Cooperative Inspection Programs. This Directive was published in November 2016.
- Revised FSIS Form 5000-9, Domestic Audit Checklist, by working collaboratively with the FSIS. The revisions to the form are more inclusive to reviews of State MPI programs and data collected transfers into an electronic database allowing for data mining and evaluation of review documentation to ensure “at least equal to” Federal requirements. The form has also been renumbered (FSIS Form 5720-3) to coincide with FSIS Directive 5720.3, *Methodology For Performing Scheduled And Targeted Reviews Of State Meat And Poultry Inspection Programs* and renamed State On-site Audit Checklist. This form was finalized in November 2016.

Analysis Activities: FSIS initiated several significant analysis projects this year, preliminary analysis of the New Poultry Inspection System, evaluations of the Siluriformes, Raw Ground Beef Components and Comminuted Poultry sampling programs as well as several rapid analyses to support the agency’s activities throughout the year. FSIS also evaluated the impact of the neutralized Buffered Peptone Water on poultry verification sampling and presented its findings to stakeholders in September.

FSIS analyzed the effectiveness of the Public Health Risk Evaluation (PHRE) task to inform updates to the decision criteria for For-Cause PHREs and help the Agency better allocate resources and better target the number of Food Safety Assessments (FSA) performed at establishments that pose the greatest risk to public health.

This year FSIS expanded its enterprise reporting capabilities through the implementation of a Tableau server. Training was provided and several workbooks have been developed to provide information on import activities, *Salmonella* sampling and residue violations.

FSIS retired the Residue Violator Information System and developed a replacement system to support the traceback and case management activities of both FSIS and FDA. This work has resulted in improved reporting and processing of data and better in house support and development.

Additional, specific FSIS reporting, alert, and analysis activities included:

- Developed and implemented quarterly letters to individual establishments providing sample results and comparative performance information with respect to applicable FSIS pathogen and residue verification testing programs to aid establishments in process control evaluation and potential improvements.
- Implemented the FY 2017 Public Health Regulations, used for the PHIS Early Warning Alert and for FSA prioritization.

Advanced Analytics: FSIS continued its Five-Year Advanced Analytics Plan. This plan outlined the current state of advanced analytics at FSIS and provided a vision for developing this program over the next five years FSIS advanced analytics is focused on four main areas: reporting and alerting, field support and maintenance, big data analytics, and data sharing. The five-year plan provides the framework to increase capacity, speed, and quality of the data accessed from systems/databases, increase the level and complexity of analysis capability, implement more automation to better use analysis resources, make the best use of current and newly available data, acquire and use data from previously untapped resources, such as being able to perform analysis of the narrative in a non-compliance report in PHIS; use data to predict potential hazards and either prevent or respond faster to these hazards, and shape lab sampling initiatives.

FSIS is developing the FSIS Analytical Portal. The Analytical Portal is a one stop shop for data, analysis, and analytical tools. The portal will provide enhanced search capabilities, operational dashboards, access to automated analytical tools, automated reports, prepackaged FSIS data and reports, and guidance for access to FSIS databases and additional analysis tools.

The 2nd annual FSIS Analytics Conference was held in FY 2017. The conference was an FSIS-wide event that brought together more than 100 FSIS analysts from across the agency. The conference fostered internal collaboration and analysis.

Additionally, FSIS participates in regular workgroup meetings with CDC and States to discuss the T-Cube Web Interface (TCWI) and associated PulseNet Reports, which enable computationally efficient analysis and visualization of even the most massive time series datasets.

FSIS has also, in conjunction with CDC, updated training manuals and trained FSIS employees, state users, and other authorized Federal public health users to use the PulseNet reports and TCWI. Trainings have occurred at various PulseNet meetings throughout the year as well as via remote session.

Foodborne Illness Attribution Achievements and Inter-Agency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration (IFSAC): IFSAC is a high-level CDC, FDA, and FSIS workgroup formed in 2011 to investigate new attribution methods and develop a harmonized approach across all three agencies. FSIS has placed significant value on the success of IFSAC as a harmonized government body responsible for improving foodborne illness attribution methods, data,

and estimates. Representatives from several FSIS Program Areas actively participate in IFSAC projects, the IFSAC Technical Workgroup, and provide senior-level executives to serve as IFSAC Steering Committee members. Major IFSAC accomplishments include:

- Development of a Wrap-Up document summarizing IFSAC accomplishments during its first strategic plan.
- Publication of the new IFSAC Strategic Plan on March 24, 2017. An article about the Plan was published in Food Chemical News on May 9th and a webinar describing the Plan was held on May 31, 2017 with over 100 attendees and at least one article written about the webinar.
- A manuscript on an IFSAC project--“A New Scheme for Categorizing Foods Implicated in Foodborne Disease Outbreaks: A Tri-Agency Collaboration”--to develop a new categorization scheme for classifying outbreaks, as well as development of a new manuscript detailing the methods used to estimate harmonized attribution fractions was accepted for publication (anticipated publication mid-December 2017) in *Foodborne Pathogens and Disease*.

AssuranceNet/In-commerce System (ANet/ICS): In FY 2017, FSIS prioritized and implemented performance improvements for ANet/ICS, including:

- Continued implementation and ongoing administration for the ANet/ICS Modernization project.
- Enhanced In-Plant Performance System and Supervisory Tool for
- Assessment Results search functionality to be more flexible and user friendly, updated/added dropdown/list box selections, new field additions including labels, textboxes, check boxes and radio buttons, updated evidence destruction formulas, new forensic evidence tab.
- Responsibilities for privacy impact and security system assessments, completing FY 2017 accreditation/certification activities, ensuring system met government, USDA, and FSIS information technology and policy requirements.
- Led program responsibilities for system operations and maintenance, including patches for functionality fixes, software upgrades, and security improvements.

Occupational Safety and Health: FSIS continued its collaboration with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

FSIS successfully negotiated the settlement of several OSHA citations through OSHA’s higher level Regional Administrators. FSIS continued its collaboration with NIOSH in both the evaluation of potential risk to FSIS employees from *Brucella suis*, as well as in the evaluation methods for peracetic acid, both of which are potential occupational hazards for both FSIS and industry employees.

FSIS made significant improvements to assure the safety and health of its employees, through such measures as developing outreach tools to help provide field supervisors resources to maintain safe and healthful working environments. Some examples of these tools include a Safety Quick Guide, a new safety public website, and Personal Protective Equipment Training Sheets. In addition, FSIS developed and presented employee training on several emerging zoonotic diseases (animal disease that can spread to human), such as Zika virus, *Brucella suis* and *Leptospira*.

Significant progress was made this year in advancing guidance and policy to protect agency employees. FSIS Directive 4791.5 “Occupational Safety and Health Hazard Communication Program” was updated and FSIS Notice 34-17 for protection from potentially *Brucella* infected animals was developed and released.

Workers’ Compensation: FSIS achieved a six percent increase in cost savings of nearly \$965,897 by returning injured employees to work through the Alternative Duty Program, Work Hardening Program and job offers. The agency also saved a total of \$60,617 in prescription and medical cost through the use of the pharmacy program. Achieved the goal of timely filing of wage-loss claims (form CA-7) of 95 percent, which is an increase from FY 2016.

Workplace Violence: FSIS continued its focus on outreach and education to mitigate the risks of workplace violence. FSIS processed 452 new workplace violence complaints—and closed over 451 complaints. In addition, the agency created a Critical Incident Response Group designed to address situations that have resulted in Workplace Violence cases that also cross over into other Agency programs.

FSIS leadership and Development Training: To improve supervisory employee engagement, FSIS conducted monthly training on topics such as Basic Workers’ Compensation, Performance Management, Ethics and Leadership, and Workplace Violence Prevention; in addition to continued support of New Supervisor Training and Experienced Supervisor Training Programs. With the goal of maintaining a well-trained, empowered and engaged workforce, FSIS launched two new leadership courses, offered a variety of competency-based, open enrollment training as well as a formal Mentoring Program.

Staffing and Position Management: FSIS Human Resources (HR) aligned human capital planning processes to 5 CFR 250 and the FY 2017- 2021 FSIS Strategic Plan using the USDA Workforce and Succession Planning automated tool. Conducted routine self-audits of recruitment case files to identify and address areas for process improvement and Human Resources staff development needs. FSIS HR monitored and evaluated effectiveness of recruitment incentives for FSIS Mission Critical Occupations (MCOs) and hard to fill positions. Also participated in MCO Skills Gap Workgroups to implement strategies and track metrics for the GS-404 and GS-701 series. FSIS completed two additional approaches to address human capital needs and held End-to-End Hiring events to address positions for critical mission and revised hiring freeze exemption processes driven by occupational series managed within FSIS existing protocols. Position Sensitivity Designation projections were completed in mid-June and reported to the Office of Personnel Management.

Recruit and Retain Performing Employees: FSIS continuously work towards improving the hiring model and on improving onboarding operations in order to keep the field adequately staffed. FSIS provided a Public Health and Regulatory Onboarding session for 22 PHV employees hired within the last three years. The session focused on the FSIS’ public health and regulatory food safety mission with an emphasis on field activities. In addition, key FSIS Offices presented information demonstrating their contribution to the FSIS’ food safety mission and strategic goals.

Recruitment of Veterans: The FSIS Human Resources Recruitment Team is actively marketing the quarterly full-time food inspector announcement via employment sites and workforce centers throughout the country by directing emails to veterans and prospective applicants who signed in at recruitment/outreach events, groups for veterans and persons with disabilities, and through contacts at the Department, program recruiters, and LinkedIn.

Labor Management Initiatives: During Fiscal Year 2017, FSIS successfully conducted four Pre-Decisional Involvement sessions with the National Joint Council including three telephonic sessions and one face-to-face covering six different issues.

Employee Engagement: In FY 2017, the Partnership for Public Service released the Mission Area rankings for the 2016 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government. FSIS ranked six out of 14 agencies (top half) in the public health mission area. Three USDA subcomponent agencies ranked in the five mission area categories, and FSIS was highest ranked of any USDA agency. The Department’s Employee Engagement Program Manager sent an email across USDA agencies to recognize FSIS’ accomplishments.

Student Employment Program (SEP): While exceeding FSIS’ Annual Performance Plan goal, there has been positive feedback from both students and Program Offices reflecting considerable improvements in the Student Employment Program. There were 175 interns in FY17, which included 119 Pathways, 35 3rd party, and 21 volunteers. Ten interns were converted to fulltime permanent employees after successfully completing the program.

Shared Services: During FY 2017, FSIS successfully provided Human Resources (HR) shared services support to several Agencies within USDA to include Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, Office of the General Counsel, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration. Support included HR Position Classification, Staff Acquisition, and Processing Operations, Labor and Employee Relations Services support, and a number of administrative support functions provided by HR.

Small business contracting: In FY 2017, FSIS continued to exceed all small business targets for socially disadvantaged contractors, including veteran/woman-owned/HUBZone (Historically Underutilized Business Zones). In FY 2017 FSIS awarded 64 percent of its contracts to small businesses.

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Socio-Economic Category	% of Awards
Small Business:	64.3%
Small Disadvantaged Business:	40.1%
Woman-Owned Business:	21.3%
HUBZone (Historically Underutilized Business Zone) Small Business:	11.3%
Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business:	4.6%
Strategic Source Achievements:	45%
CPARS (Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System) Completion:	50.9%

Civil Rights: To ensure compliance with guidance contained in Management Directive 715 (MD-715), Civil Rights Staff completed five Compliance Assistance, Reviews, and Evaluations reviews during FY 2017.

FSIS reviewed and completed three Civil Rights Impact Analyses and reviewed 86 Agency policies to determine if they would have a disparate impact on the Agency employees in relationship to any of the protected bases.

In FY 2017, the Agency processed 147 informal complaints and resolved 91 for a counseling resolution rate of 62 percent, which is considerably higher than USDA’s resolution rate of 46.4 percent and the Federal government rate of 54.4 percent. One hundred percent of all informal cases were counseled timely, and 100 percent were offered the opportunity to participate in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). Feedback obtained from surveys indicated the Agency’s ADR process is effective in resolving conflict and reducing the formal complaint inventory. Seventy-six percent of the participants reported being ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with the ADR program and 84 percent would recommend the ADR program to a colleague.

FSIS completed three mandatory reports: FY 2016 MD-715; Annual 462; and No FEAR Act reports. As part of the MD-715, the Agency conducted a comprehensive barrier analysis to identify potential barriers to equal employment for women, minorities, and persons with disabilities. Once this analysis was complete, an action plan was developed to address each barrier. To date, the Agency has completed several of these actions and continues to monitor implementation on a quarterly basis.

FSIS Web Presence: Digital communication enables FSIS to quickly reach its large and diverse audiences. FSIS delivers news, food defense information, policy issuances, compliance guidance, import/export requirements, workforce training materials and more via its main Website, www.fsis.usda.gov. Documents distributed through the FSIS public Website represent the efforts of all FSIS program areas and support all eight strategic goals.

The public Website is a window on Agency activities and for citizens, a means of participating in the policy development process. For many, the site is their only direct contact with FSIS and is a primary source of their food safety information. In FY 2017, FSIS reached a total of 107.3 million cumulative page views for www.fsis.usda.gov; the site averaged nine million page views per month during the year. Website traffic is in large part media driven and therefore subject to fluctuation, but this figure exceeded the year’s target for page views. Because it is easy for customers using mobile devices (tablets, smartphones) to view the site, FSIS continues to see more mobile device use. Approximately 38 percent of more than 8.6 million visits to the site during the year were made using a mobile device, an increase from about 25 percent the previous year.

A digital subscription service notifies subscribers of additions and changes to the FSIS public website. In FY 2017, 283,331 subscribers with a total of 1.8 million subscriptions received more than 68 million e-mail bulletins regarding their chosen topics. This direct notification is particularly popular and effective in publicizing recall information. The digital subscription service (provided by GovDelivery) continues to show growth in the number of subscribers (+27.31 percent over last year) and total subscriptions (+31.54 percent over last year). More website page views are attributed to this source than to any other referrer. Currently, 45 topics are listed for subscription. Many are related to import/export issues; important changes to country requirements can be conveyed to the subscriber base in a matter of hours.

AskFSIS system:

In FY 2017, FSIS supported effective policy implementation by FSIS through the askFSIS system. The askFSIS database provides online answers to technical, inspection-related questions and is designed to serve the business audience in much the same way that Ask Karen is designed to serve consumers. In FY 2017, askFSIS customers visited the site 578,240 times, conducted 225,802 searches, and viewed 662,826 published answers. The askFSIS customers also submitted 26,260 questions for individual answers. The table below provides information regarding askFSIS correspondents who submitted questions. Roughly, 45 percent of the 26,260 questions submitted to askFSIS came from FSIS employees.

Information Requests by Correspondence FY 2017

Customer Type	# of Questions Submitted	Percentage of total (#)
Establishment – Large	1,899	7.2%
Establishment – Other	260	1.0%
Establishment – Small	3,843	14.6%
Establishment – Very Small	1,846	7.0%
FSIS – District Office	119	0.5%
FSIS – EIAO	572	2.2%
FSIS – Frontline Supervisors	381	1.5%
FSIS – Other	982	3.7%
FSIS at Establishment – Large	3,071	11.7%
FSIS at Establishment – Other	567	2.2%
FSIS at Establishment – Small	3,754	14.3%
FSIS at Establishment – Very Small	2,246	8.6%
Government Agency Other than FSIS	624	2.4%
Industry – Other	2,159	8.2%
No Value	2,519	9.6%
Other	1,418	5.4%
TOTAL	26,260	

Tribal Relations: During 2017 FSIS assisted in coordinating consultations and provided services to more than 23 Tribal governments, 15 of 33 Tribal Colleges and Universities, 16 tribal organizations and numerous tribal members. FSIS assisted tribes interested in establishing slaughter and processing operations to improve economic development opportunities and access to traditional food for their communities, most of which are designated food deserts.

On September 7, 2017 the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma hosted a grand opening of the first tribal owned slaughter and processing facility constructed on Indian reservation land in Oklahoma.

Employee Outreach: During FY 2017, FSIS launched phase 2 of i-Impact, an Agency initiative to help each employee understand how his or her work supports the Agency’s mission and strategic goals. FSIS provided employees a workbook and rolled out in-person workshops to 7,870 employees across the country.

FSIS also communicated with employees through two entries in the FSIS Administrator’s Blog; one Town Hall meetings (which was an interactive Town Hall and included the capability for employees to submit questions via live chat), three industry webinars and weekly issues of the Wednesday Newsline publication and the monthly newsletter, The Beacon. Additionally, FSIS launched the Employee Connections on a quarterly basis. Employee Connections is an employee-focused newsletter that shares health and wellness information, employee-submitted items and photos, and human interest yet work relevant articles. In FY 2017 there were more than 450 page views by FSIS employees.

InsideFSIS, the Agency intranet site, facilitates and encourages communication among FSIS employees. The site fosters a sense of community among FSIS’ geographically dispersed workforce. InsideFSIS is supported by a large network of content contributors, representative of all FSIS programs and offices. Featured content is updated frequently to highlight items of importance to all employees. In FY 2017, the site was used effectively to inform

employees of key initiatives across the Agency, including healthcare and benefits information, and educational and training opportunities, which helped to facilitate completion of required in-service training.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA): FSIS pursued program enhancements and efficiencies to reduce the FOIA workload through training program areas responsible for responsive records. FSIS developed and executed a plan to conduct training sessions with FSIS staff, focused on highlighting all employees’ responsibilities under FOIA, to ensure knowledge of FSIS processes and requirements, while improving the quality and timeliness of FOIA responses. In FY 2017, the FOIA office conducted seven trainings for program areas at headquarters and for several district field offices. This exceeded the FY target by two trainings.

FSIS reduced the overall backlog and exceeded expectations by successfully completing all FY 2014 and FY 2015 FOIA cases which included five cases of significance and extreme volumes. At the start of FY 2017, FSIS faced a sizeable backlog of approximately 50 FY 2016 cases, which again included requests of considerable volume. In addition to those requests, the FSIS received over 350 new FOIA requests during FY 2017. FSIS successfully managed to keep the number of FOIA requests older than 20 days old at a volume lower than previous years.

Education and Outreach Accomplishments

Seasonal and Opportunistic Outreach: FSIS conducts outreach strategically to promote food safety related to seasons, holidays, and the implementation of new regulations. During Thanksgiving, Super Bowl, the Fourth of July, Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, FSIS achieved 53 million weighted impressions from media outreach, web page views, social media engagements, educational material distribution, app downloads and direction conversations with individual, which surpassed the established goal by 16 percent. Successful pitching during periods of seasonal food interest resulted in more than 350 proactive media placements, including 85 in Spanish. Below is a summary of the campaigns used to promote food safety during FY 2017.

Thanksgiving: FSIS conducted one of the most successful Thanksgiving media efforts to date. It generated 18 million impressions. FSIS conducted 28 television interviews and 54 radio interviews in English –Spanish- including two national TV feeder interviews with NBC News and FOX News. The two national television feeder interviews aired 134 times, across 88 stations in 62 markets and radio interviews aired on 2,188 affiliates.

Super Bowl: This outreach generated more than 11.6 million verifiable impressions. For the tour the Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Education conducted 50 English and 18 Spanish interviews related to Super Bowl food safety. National outlets in English included NBC News Radio and This Morning with Gordon Deal and Spanish national outlets included CNN en español, Univision, Telemundo and Despierta América morning show.

Summer: This outreach generated more than 5.3 million impressions. Broadcast media efforts supporting summer food safety resulted in 395 television airings, 60 radio interviews and 37 digital placements, with a reach of eight million viewers and listeners.

During June 2017, FSIS conducted its annual Fourth of July media tour. Seventy-nine interviews were conducted with various national, regional, state and local, TV news, radio, newspapers, and online outlets. Highlights include CBS, NBC and FOX’s national news feeder services, NBC News radio, ‘What’s Cooking’ (a nationally syndicated radio show) and the Tom Joyner Morning Show (national radio).

During the hurricane season - June 1 – Oct. 31, FSIS provided food safety outreach information to areas affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. This outreach effort resulted in 11 radio and 18 digital/print placements.

Fourth quarter 2017, FSIS continued to see major success, closing out a strong year raising awareness of safe food handling guidance, recalls and information about foodborne illness. Impressions achieved through media outreach, web traffic to FoodSafety.gov and FSIS.gov, educational material distribution all exceeded expectations for the year.

FoodSafety.gov: In FY 2017, FSIS continued to work closely with those at FoodSafety.gov to promote content on the *Food Safe Families* campaign site. Total sessions, unique users, and page views were consistent with statistics from FY 2016. Four of the top five pages on the Website are directly related to USDA and *Food Safe Families* campaign messaging. This continued high traffic to FoodSafety.gov can be attributed to a variety of factors, including the robust outreach FSIS conducted during FY 2017. More than 30 blogs from FSIS were posted on

FoodSafety.gov during this fiscal year. Additionally, blogs were heavily promoted on social media this year. These efforts routinely directed readers to find more information on specific FoodSafety.gov pages, contributing to the year’s strong traffic.

Food Safety Discovery Zone: The USDA Food Safety Discovery Zone (FSDZ) continues to be a highly visible part of FSIS’ public health mission and the agency’s public health outreach to consumers. In FY 2017, FSDZ was updated to allow for a new self-guided experience in addition to the existing classroom style show. This ability to offer two types of visitor experiences greatly expands the vehicle’s usability and reduces the number of personnel required to staff it.

The FSDZ achieved more than 20,000 direct connections with consumers while exhibiting at 15 events. The marquee event of this year was the California State Fair, at which the FSDZ achieved more than 9,000 direct connections with consumers, and included a joint appearance with the California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary. The vehicle also appeared at the Georgia Strawberry Festival in Reynolds, and the Gathering of Nations, the largest gathering held by many different Native American communities in North America.

FoodKeeper Application: The FoodKeeper application was launched in April 2015. It provides consumers with information about safe handling and storage times for hundreds of food items. The FoodKeeper app remains a relevant, useful and effective way to educate consumers about proper food storage and its relationship to safe food handling behaviors. The application provides consumers with information about safe handling and storage times for hundreds of food items. The FoodKeeper application was updated in August 2017 to offer recall information. Users can choose to receive automatic notifications when food safety recalls are announced by FSIS and FDA. The update also added instructional videos on proper handling and storage of food, and expands the list of food and beverage products by 20 percent. The update resulted in 112 media placements, including the San Francisco Chronicle, MSN.com and MarthaStewart.com. These placements resulted in approximately two million impressions. To date the application has been downloaded more than 150,000 times.

USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline: Hotline staff responded to more than 52,000 consumer inquiries via the Meat and Poultry Hotline during FY 2017. Meat and Poultry Hotline staff also responded to 7,709 email inquiries during FY 2017. April 2017 FSIS expanded the hotline’s hours to provide consumers in the Pacific Time Zone greater access to USDA food safety experts. By expanding its hours, the number of calls increased by 34 percent, while live chats increased by 24 percent. Total engagements increased by 31 percent during all open hours in FY 2017 (10 a.m. - 6 p.m.) compared with FY 2016 (10 a.m.-4 p.m.).

Ask Karen: Ask Karen is FSIS’ food safety virtual-representative and the most popular feature on the FSIS Website. The Ask Karen database received 3,704 email questions and 2.8 million answers were viewed in FY 2017. The Ask Karen chat feature allows consumers to chat on-line with a Hotline food safety specialist. The Ask Karen chat received 3,296 chat requests in FY 2017. Answer views on the service were up considerably compared to last fiscal year, more than 20 percent.

Social Media: During FY 2017, FSIS used a variety of social media networks to promote recalls and communicate about proper safe food handling practices. FSIS used Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, blogs, and webinars for routine outreach. In FY 2017 FSIS achieved more than 50 million weighted impressions from media outreach, web page views, social media engagements, educational material distribution, app downloads and direction conversations with individuals, exceeding the annual target by nearly 10 percent. Successful pitching during periods of seasonal food interest (examples: Thanksgiving, Super Bowl, Fourth of July) resulted in more than 413 proactive media placements, including 102 in Spanish.

- **Twitter and Facebook:**
 - Consistent social media engagement drove the FSIS Twitter account @USDAFoodSafety to more than 1 million followers this fiscal year, becoming the second largest public health account in the Federal government. FSIS’ effective and engaging social media outreach during the response and recovery efforts for Hurricanes Harvey and Irma was praised by USDA Secretary for accounting for more than half of all the engagements the entire department received on the topics.

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- In an effort to educate the Hispanic community about safe food handling, FSIS began posting some messages in Spanish on Facebook. This year, the FSIS Spanish language Twitter account achieved a total of 317,078 impressions and 789 new followers.
- In FY 2017, FSIS has continued to see high engagement with traditional food safety messages accompanied by infographics. For example, FSIS shared the *Food Safety Before, During and After a Power Outage* infographic for severe weather multiple times on FSIS social media platforms, generating more than 1.4 million impressions on Twitter.
- FSIS incorporated food safety messaging into trending topics, such as Black History Month, Pi Day, Valentine’s Day, Mardi Gras, National Pizza Day, National Puppy Day, NCAA Basketball, National Burger Day, the 2017 solar eclipse and Hispanic Heritage Month.
- Overall, FSIS’ Twitter messages received more than 14.4 million impressions and 152,603 engagements this year (an engagement is the number of unique people who have clicked, liked, commented on or shared posts). FSIS’ Facebook messages posted to the FoodSafety.gov Facebook page received more than 5.5 million impressions and 202,836 engagements.

FSIS launched three digital communications initiatives in FY 2017: the FSIS Pinterest account, the Food Safety Wedding campaign, and the Latino Camping Campaign.

FSIS proposed to establish an agency Pinterest account and became the first Agency to represent USDA on Pinterest. FSIS created and launched a consumer-targeted Pinterest to increase the reach of our consumer messages to key audiences and drive users to our online resources. In the three months since its launch, FSIS’s Pinterest account has already shared six boards and 65 pins and is reaching more than 1,300 viewers each month.

In June, FSIS launched The Wedding Food Safety Campaign. FSIS repackaged our consumer food safety tips in 12 modern infographics targeted toward specific wedding related events and activities and shared one graphic each Wednesday on multiple social media channels to leverage the trending #WeddingWednesday. The campaign reached nearly 400,000 people and garnered nearly 6,000 engagements (likes, shares, comments).

In response to growing numbers of new Latino campers, FSIS launched a digital outreach campaign to share safe food handling practices tailored to this audience. The campaign included two blogs and several graphics. Presented to quickly engage the audience, the blogs provided new campers with six packing tips for a food safe camping trip and tips on how to safely cook three popular Latino dishes while camping. The blogs were promoted through the Neogen blog, a Café con Leche radio interview, Kampgrounds for America (KOA), the Mundo Excursiones Blog, and GobiernoUSA.gov.

Content published on the FSIS public site is also used on social media sites, feeds, and the government partner portal site www.FoodSafety.gov. These efforts support consumer education activities that improve home food-handling practices and prevent foodborne illness. FSIS uses YouTube as a video hosting platform. FSIS’ YouTube channel has received more than 1.84 million views since its inception. A large number of consumer food-handling videos are available. Training videos are also being hosted, per request of the Civil Rights Staff, to facilitate access by State meat and poultry inspectors. Videos on inspection-related topics (sampling, HACCP validation) are used to support policy issuances. Recorded webinars, such as those on the PHIS Export Component, provide important information for industry audiences.

In 2017, LinkedIn was a focus of social media efforts. Use of LinkedIn supports recruiting efforts. Currently, FSIS’ LinkedIn page has more than 7,100 followers; during the year, there were more than 154,000 impressions.

Constituent Outreach Publications: FSIS communicated with constituents, including consumers, industry and consumer representatives, via weekly issues of Constituent Update, a publication featuring articles pertaining to agency policy and regulatory changes, FSIS sampling program results, international trade issues, and other FSIS-related issues of importance to industry and consumer groups. This publication currently has nearly 26,000 subscribers. FSIS published a monthly edition of Small Plant News, and also produced and posted several podcasts for small and very small plants. FSIS also published news releases that offered food safety tips to assist consumers during power outages; natural disasters, such as wildfires, tornados, and floods; holidays, such as July 4, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day; and special occasions, such as going back to school, spring festivities, and the Super Bowl.

Educational Publications: During FY 2017, FSIS instituted a number of improvements to its publication distribution process that have resulted in a more responsive, quicker, more efficient distribution program. FSIS achieved the goal of transferring all mailing duties from public affairs staff on the team to the USDA warehouse in Beltsville, MD. This improved process also resulted in a 50 percent reduction in FSIS’ footprint at the USDA warehouse in Beltsville, MD, saving the agency an estimated \$186,000 (down 54 percent) in rent at the facility.

Partnerships: In FY 2017, FSIS continued and established partnerships with numerous national organizations representing at-risk groups. These organizations include the National Public Health Information Coalition, the Network for Public Health Law, National Association for County and City Health Officials, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, Association for Public Health Laboratories, the Greater Washington Urban League, Hispanicize, and the Council for State and Territorial Epidemiologists.

FSIS worked with these partners to disseminate targeted products, host events and webinars, develop infographics and training programs, and collaborate on social media. Below are some of the highlights related to FSIS partnership and outreach to at-risk groups:

- Partnering with the National Council on Aging to hold Food Safety for Older Adults training presentations at 18 senior centers in 10 states and Washington, D.C.
- Developing a partnership with the American Diabetes Association and participating in 23 Tour de Cure and Step Out events nationwide, distributing food safety information.
- Partnered with the American Cancer Society, providing Food Safety for Cancer Patient booklets each quarter to all 32 Hope Lodges across the country.
- The Hispanic Outreach team partnered to work with La Clínica del Pueblo-DC, La Clínica de Familia Inc Head Start Program, Extension Office-PR, San Ysidro Health Center in San Diego, CA; Clínica Sierra Vista, Interamerican American University; Arecibo Campus-PR and Women’s Medical Associates in NM. As part of the collaborative efforts, more than 53,000 food safety publications in Spanish were to the PR Extension Office (HQ), National Council of La Raza and Comprando Rico y Sano Program.

Hispanic Outreach: The FY 2017 goal was to proactively place 75 stories in Spanish by Sept. 30, 2017. The total stories by the end of the fiscal year was 102, surpassing the goal by 27 percent. Most of this was accomplished during one of the most successful Thanksgiving and winter media tours FSIS has conducted, focusing on Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Three Kings Day. During the Super Bowl media tour, 18 Spanish interviews were conducted with top media outlets that included CNN en español, Univision, Telemundo and Despierta América morning show.

- In FY 2017, FSIS engaged five new Hispanic partners, bringing the total number of Hispanic partners to 25. As part of our collaboration efforts, a total of 38,700 food safety publications in Spanish were ordered for shipment to the Puerto Rico Extension Office. Additionally, FSIS shipped “Is it Done Yet” and “Keep Your Family Safe” magnets in Spanish as part of the National Council of La Raza’s Comprando Rico y Sano Program. These magnets reached 25 sites participating in this program nationwide.

Consumer Research:

Safe Food Handling Behavior Research (Annual Consumer Research): During FY 2017, Office of Management and Budget approved an observational study FSIS will use to better understand safe food handling behaviors in the home. The primary purpose of this annual test kitchen experiment is to evaluate the public’s adherence to the four recommended food safety behaviors of clean, cook, separate, and chill, and to determine whether FSIS messaging focused on those steps affects consumer behaviors while preparing food. A secondary purpose of the observational study is to provide FSIS with information on year-over-year comparisons in consumers’ adherence to recommended food safety practices. Information collection for this research began in July 2017; since that time 100 observations were scheduled and 86 were conducted (14 individuals did not show up). Four-hundred total observations will be conducted before research concludes around the end of Q1 FY 2018. The earliest FSIS can see data from this project will be at the start of FY 2018.

Public Awareness: During FY 2017, FSIS saw major success in raising awareness of safe food handling guidance, recalls and information about foodborne illness. Impressions achieved through media outreach, web traffic to

FoodSafety.gov and FSIS.gov, and educational material distribution all exceeded expectations for the year. Although application downloads and social media engagements were below targets for the year, the successes FSIS achieved in other areas of the weighted goal resulted in cumulative figures 16 percent higher than our goal for the fiscal year. Our goal for this fiscal year was to achieve approximately 46 million weighted impressions in all our efforts to increase public awareness of safe food handling guidance and recalls through communications channels. FSIS achieved 53 million.

Program Evaluations:

Reform Plan: Phase III: In FY 2017, FSIS conducted the third phase of internal reviews to help improve operations, streamline organizational structure and reduce costs. This cross functional review documented many of the Agencies accomplishments and identified several areas for future improvement:

- Streamlining Poultry Inspection Systems
- New Swine Slaughter Inspection System
- Non-continuous Egg Product Inspection
- Egg Products HACCP
- Expanding the Use of Accredited Laboratories to Analyze Samples on Behalf of FSIS
- Providing Shared Services Solutions to Other USDA Agencies
- Agency Position Analysis

Most of these initiatives will require rulemaking or legislative changes in order to implement the proposals; however, those proposals have been drafted. In conjunction with the Strategic Plan, these initiatives will help guide Agency efficiencies and effectiveness in the future.

Student Employment Program (SEP) Evaluation: The purpose of this evaluation, completed in April 2017, was to evaluate SEP program outcomes, with a specific focus on the last cycle of implementation (Summer 2016) and to make recommendations to enhance its implementation for 2017. The evaluation used several methods to review SEP’s intended goals and objectives, framework, and administration and to better understand the experiences of interns, supervisors, and mentors. The evaluation found that the program requires enhancements to further mature and better meet agency demands, and made several recommendations that coupled stronger program management activities with a sustained focus on ensuring a strong, positive, and meaningful intern experience. FSIS has already implemented several of the 13 recommendations and will have the remainder implemented by September 2018.

Human Resources Hiring Process Evaluation: The purpose of this evaluation was to evaluate FSIS’ end-to-end hiring process to better reflect FSIS’ speed and quality in hiring practices, as well as to provide a more accurate estimate of cost per certificate of eligible candidates. The evaluation used several methods to document and assess hiring activities prior to submitting an SF-52 through entry-on-duty activities, and associated roles and responsibilities. The evaluation made several recommendations related to the hiring process to increase efficiency and effectiveness, and resulted in the development of strategies and measures in the FSIS 2017-2021 Strategic Plan and resulting FY 2017 and FY 2018 APP whose implementation is still underway.

CARE Evaluation: The purpose of the evaluation, completed in September 2017, was to assess FSIS’ Compliance, Assistance, Review and Evaluation (CARE) program and process. The evaluation used several methods to identify ways to enhance and enable a more streamlined and effective CARE process, as well as FSIS’ analysis of data, implementation of meaningful strategies, and communication of the program. The evaluation makes several recommendations to enhance the process, data analysis, and communication activities that the agency is currently considering.

Comparative Analyses: FSIS completed analyses of inspection data and non-compliance rates to inform decisions on whether to take enforcement action for three separate establishments.

Surveys: FSIS completed several surveys during the course of FY 2017 that assisted management in internal customer service and in program enhancement and accountability, including in support of evaluations and strategic plan measures. Specifically, FSIS completed the following:

- FSIS’ second annual customer satisfaction survey on a range of topics including training, communications, human resources and benefits, information technology, and other areas, which inform Strategic Plan measures.
- Surveys to inform other Strategic Plan measures regarding coordination with state partners on foodborne outbreak, analysts’ access to data and tools, and knowledge gained through training.
- A survey targeting student veterinarians to gauge their interest in Federal employment, and to inform FSIS targeting of possible hiring and retention incentives for veterinarians.
- Opinion and satisfaction surveys gathering information on new hire experiences, on FSIS’ health and wellness offerings, on an internal career ladder program, on the alternative dispute resolution program, and on FSIS laboratory customer service.
- Surveys supporting the CARE, SEP, and HR evaluations.

In addition, to enhance planning and integration of agency evaluation activities, FSIS formed an Evaluation Working Group under the agency’s Enterprise Governance Board structure in October 2016, and has since issued an Evaluation Directive and finalized an EWG charter. The group meets regularly to discuss program activities that may benefit from further review, and its members provided staff resources and expertise in conducting evaluations that cut across FSIS program area activities.

Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports:

Audit of Government-owned Vehicles: FSIS completed a follow-up audit of the General Services Administration’s Government-owned vehicles (GOVs). The audit covered commitments and authorizations regarding GOV usage for FSIS’ regional offices. There is now a central repository of all required forms and new internal controls shown in written procedures. FSIS ensured that new internal procedures were implemented to enhance the Agency’s managerial accountability for GOVs. FSIS initiated a second audit in September 2017 to cover district office GOV usage.

Audit of Telecommunication Services: In May 2017, FSIS initiated a follow-up audit of the telecommunication services in FSIS. The audit covered the implementation of several management controls of telecommunication policies. FSIS implemented standardized procedures, which would allow FSIS to adequately monitor telecommunications inventories and eliminate excess services in a timely manner. FSIS was able to ensure that improvements are made to enhance FSIS’ managerial accountability for telecommunications and to ensure that resources are being managed effectively.

Summary of Budget and Performance
Statement of Agency Goals and Objectives

Mission: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), a public health regulatory Agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is responsible for protecting the public’s health by ensuring the safety of meat, poultry, and processed egg products. Legislative mandates provide FSIS with the authority to conduct its public health mission.

FSIS contributes to USDA Strategic Goal 7, Provide all Americans access to a safe, nutritious, and secure food supply and coincides with Objective 7.1, Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health. The Agency aligned its 2017-2021 Strategic Plan to its Annual Plan framework, which directly influences how the Agency operates and allocates resources. The chart below outlines the alignment with the USDA Strategic Plan.

Key Performance Measures¹:

Percentage of Establishments That Meet Pathogen Reduction Performance Standards				
	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Target	2019 Target
Percent	N/A	77.2%	78%	81%

Selected Past Accomplishments Toward the Achievement of the Objective FY 2017:

FSIS met its target for FY 2017. FSIS made slight changes to the methodology and calculation behind this measure’s baseline to present the most accurate results.

With this measure, FSIS continued its multipronged approach to combat these pathogens in FY 2017 through the following activities:

- FSIS continued sampling of poultry carcasses and began assessing whether establishments met new pathogen reduction standards for *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* in comminuted poultry and chicken parts. The Agency also continued sampling raw beef for Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) and *Salmonella* and continued the sampling program for *Salmonella* in pork products to determine the presence and levels of *Salmonella* in five types of processed pork products.
- The Agency continued to analyze the impact of neutralizing Buffered Peptone Water (nBPW) on the performance standards for chicken carcasses and parts. FSIS published monthly aggregate category status for carcasses, chicken parts, and comminuted poultry.
- FSIS also began sampling and analyzing for *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* samples at establishments that produce a low volume of applicable poultry product or religious exempt poultry product.
- FSIS transitioned to Phase II of exploratory sampling of *Salmonella* in pork processing and slaughter establishments and also started sampling these products for STEC.

Accomplishments Expected at the FY 2019 Resource Level/Challenges for the Future

- Continue to drive compliance and prevent contamination in FSIS-regulated establishments through using this performance standard measure.

¹ Data before FY 2017 is not available because this KPM was not in existence in years prior.

“2019 EXPLANATORY NOTES – Food Safety and Inspection Service”

Percentage of Establishments Whose Non-compliance Rate Decreases 120 Days after Receiving an Early Warning Alert (EWA)				
	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Target	2019 Target
Percent	N/A	72.7%	71.4%	72.0%

Selected Past Accomplishments Toward the Achievement of the Objective FY 2017:

- In FY 2017, FSIS Implemented the FY 2017 Public Health Regulations, used for the Public Health Information System (PHIS) EWA and for Public Health Risk Evaluation (PHRE) prioritization. Eleven PHIS alerts were successfully deployed, including the PHR EWA.
- FSIS analyzed the effectiveness of the PHRE task to help the Agency better allocate resources and focus Food Safety Assessments (FSAs) on establishments that pose the greatest risk to public health.

Accomplishments Expected at the FY 2019 Resource Level/Challenges for the Future

- Continue to increase the number of establishments whose non-compliance rate decreases 120 days after receiving an EWA.

Section 1: Selected Accomplishments toward Achievement of the Key Outcomes

Provided below is a summary-level compilation of Agency accomplishments in FY 2017.

FSIS published its 2017-2021 Strategic Plan in early FY 2017, containing three goals, six outcomes, and fifteen objectives that represent the Agency’s path forward. Our three goals are Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health; Modernize Inspection Systems, Policies, and the Use of Scientific Approaches; and Achieve Operational Excellence. The Plan builds on prior successes and reflects emerging issues that FSIS faces in ensuring that the food products we regulate are safe to eat. By using cutting-edge yet practical science, enhanced data capabilities, and our employees’ skills and expertise, we will continue to modernize and be more effective in meeting our public health mission. FSIS is assessing its progress using six outcomes and fifteen objectives under those outcomes that directly align with FSIS annual plan results.

FSIS Goal 1: Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health

FSIS Outcome 1.1: Prevent Contamination

- Expanded Use of Public Health Risk Evaluations: The PHRE is a decision-making process FSIS uses to determine whether a FSA or immediate enforcement action is warranted by placing establishments that exhibit certain public health risk “triggers” such as human illness linked to FSIS-regulated product, positive STEC test results on ground beef, patties, or raw beef components, FSIS positive *Listeria monocytogenes (Lm)* or *Salmonella* in ready-to-eat product, a Class I or II recall and others on a prioritized list for evaluation. For much of FY 2017, the percentage of establishments scheduled for PHREs due to public health risk determinants was under 1.3 percent, generally meeting the annual target. FSIS will continue to perform activities and take steps to reduce non-compliance related to these public health risk determinants.
- Enhanced Domestic Sampling Program: FSIS enhanced its sampling program in FY 2017 to test for *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* in more regulated products, including the following:
 - Closed sampling gaps by beginning to sample giblets, necks, and ½ and ¼ chicken carcasses; poultry slaughtered in religious exempt establishments; and low volume producers of chicken and turkey carcasses, comminuted chicken and turkey, mechanically separated chicken and turkey, and chicken parts;
 - Updated its sampling algorithm for ready-to-eat (RTE) products to refocus sample collection, giving greater weight to product alternatives, product type percent positive, and establishment size;

- Collected pork samples to conduct a prevalence assessment of *Salmonella* and STEC in certain pork products to determine whether new performance standards or guidance are warranted; and
- Met its target to sample from 46 percent of product/establishment pairs, based on the number of product/establishment pairs in domestic slaughter and production subject to regulation.
- Ensured State Programs Complied with Federal Standards: FSIS ensured that States with an “at least equal to” Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) program maintained compliance with Federal requirements through various forms of monitoring. This included exceeding the Agency’s targets for completing on-site audits for eligible State MPI Programs and fully auditing nine State MPI laboratories.
- Conducted Outreach to Small and Very Small Establishments: FSIS provided information and technical assistance to owners and operators of small and very small establishments to assist them in complying with FSIS laws, regulations, and/or guidance. In FY 2017, FSIS conducted outreach at 13 high-impact industry events and held 12 webinars for Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) contacts and university extension coordinators to provide information on food safety practices.
- Promoted Food Defense: FSIS promoted food defense practices through revision of a food defense task, providing updated guidance and tools, collaborating with federal agencies, and reaching out to industry and other stakeholders. For example, the Agency updated the food defense tasks for inspection personnel and used task data to develop a baseline for the percent of establishments that maintain food defense practices. By the end of FY 2017, the Agency met its target to have 85 percent of establishments maintaining food defense practices. FSIS also developed several food defense quick reference guides to disseminate to industry and FSIS personnel (e.g., food defense guidance document in the Inspection Program Personnel (IPP) Help Button and the TSA visor card).
- Improved Strategies for Sampling Imported Products: FSIS revised its import sampling plan, and a cross-office workgroup identified new strategies to reduce point-of-entry violations and to focus on increasing the country/product combinations from equivalent countries that FSIS tests for both biological and chemical hazards. Last, the Agency exceeded its target of 19 percent in FY 2017, reaching 22 percent, of country/product combinations from equivalent countries that FSIS tests for biological and chemical hazards.
- Continued Outreach to International Stakeholders: FSIS organized, managed, and participated in outreach activities and various engagements with foreign officials to promote international, science-based, food safety standards. This included co-hosting a meeting with the World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization and U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to create guidance for developing countries on how to utilize Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) for foodborne disease surveillance and outreach efforts to advance U.S. positions on international standard setting by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. In total, approximately 341 foreign governments and officials participated in FSIS outreach activities in FY 2017, exceeding FSIS’ target.

FSIS Outcome 1.2: Limit Illness from Regulated Products

Outcome 1.2 focused on activities to improve food safety at in-commerce facilities, increase responsiveness to foodborne outbreaks, and expand public awareness of food safety practices in order to limit illness. In FY 2017, FSIS limited illness in the following ways:

- Improved Food Safety by Understanding How Retail Delis Adhere to FSIS Guidelines: FSIS assessed food safety at in-commerce facilities by monitoring the retail industry’s adherence to the Agency’s recommended actions to control *Lm* in RTE meat and poultry products. In FY 2017, FSIS achieved a 64.7 percent rate of retailers/in-commerce facilities that follow all eight priority recommended actions in FSIS’ deli *Lm* guidelines, exceeding its target.
- Strengthened Partnerships with Federal and State Entities: FSIS has further enhanced collaborations with Federal and State partners to facilitate timely foodborne illness outbreak investigations and response activities, with a focus on information sharing. For example, to enhance collaborative outbreak investigations and food safety hazard assessments, FSIS and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted a joint in-plant and laboratory outbreak investigation exercise, along with refresher training on FSIS regulations and

procedures, per the FSIS-CDC memorandum of understanding. FSIS also began publishing outbreak reports on its website to share lessons learned with partners. Other partnership activities included the following:

- Publishing a new 5-year strategic plan for the Interagency Food Safety Analytic Collaboration (IFSAC) and hosting a public webinar on the Plan with more than 300 registrants;
 - Updating the Interagency Foodborne Outbreak Response Collaboration charter;
 - Ensuring FSIS engagement with each of the FDA-State Rapid Response Teams; and
 - Conducting a survey of state partners to determine ways to better understand their communication and collaboration needs.
- **Strengthened Public Engagement:** By adopting a more proactive strategy that combined use of traditional media, digital engagement, events, and social media, FSIS increased awareness on recalls, foodborne illness, and safe food handling practices. FSIS achieved 413 (311 English and 102 Spanish) story placements through September 2017, many through the Thanksgiving and summer campaigns. In total, FSIS achieved 53 million weighted impressions from all public outreach and educational efforts, which exceeded the FY 2017 target of 46 million. FSIS also began limited social science research on consumer food safety practices.

FSIS Goal 2: Modernize Inspection Systems, Policies, and the Use of Scientific Approaches

FSIS Outcome 2.1: Improve Food Safety and Humane Handling Practices through Adoption of Innovative Approaches

Outcome 2.1 focused on identifying new scientific techniques and technologies that can help the Agency enhance public health protection and positively affect workflow and decision-making. Actions taken during FY 2017 include the following:

- **Expanded Capacity of FSIS Laboratories to Conduct WGS:** FSIS continued to expand its capacity to characterize isolates from samples the Agency collects using whole genome sequencing. FSIS conducted WGS on more than 7,000 FSIS isolates, double that of the previous year. The Agency placed particular emphasis on using this technology to better understand *Lm* harborage at establishments.
- **Worked to Modernize FSIS Data Systems:** FSIS continued progress on modernizing surveillance and investigation data systems during FY 2017. The Agency made significant enhancements to PHIS by beginning to enhance import functionality, and deliver export functionalities in PHIS, to decrease manual input of data and improve efficiency, reduce paper, and promote consistency in operations. This included completing task orders for export applications, certification, export library configuration, and industry testing for implementation in FY 2018. The enhancements also included the transfer of *Siluriformes* entry data from Customs and Border Protection’s Automated Commercial Environment/International Trade Data System (ACE/ITDS) to PHIS. FSIS also worked to improve external data systems by awarding a contract to integrate the Consumer Complaint Monitoring System and the electronic Consumer Complaint Form with PHIS; CCMS’ functionality with mobile devices; and development of a Spanish online complaint reporting form.
- **Analyzed Effectiveness of Early Warning Alerts for Improved Performance by Industry:** In FY 2017, FSIS introduced a new corporate performance measure that estimates the percentage of establishments that improve their performance (i.e. lower rate of non-compliances) within 120 days of receiving a PHR EWA. FSIS completed a baseline analysis and established targets for this measure, meeting them in FY 2017—with 72.7 percent of establishments improving their performance within 120 days of receiving a EWA.
- **Developed and Tested New Tools for Inspectors:** FSIS engaged in developing and testing multiple tools that can support inspectors’ decision making on food safety issues. For example, FSIS conducted in-field trials for two new handheld devices. FSIS determined that the tools did not meet FSIS’ evaluation criteria (suitability, time to results, and usability by inspectors). In addition, FSIS proposed criteria to assess an in-field device that can detect pathogens in real time. The Agency also developed a pilot project on multi-drug resistant *Salmonella* to identify conditions that may lead to cross-contamination during slaughter and processing.
- **Continued Implementation of the New Poultry Inspection System:** As part of the Poultry Slaughter Modernization Rule, establishments continued to have the option to join the New Poultry Inspection System

(NPIS). This inspection system is designed to facilitate pathogen reduction in poultry products. With NPIS, food safety inspectors are now better equipped to verify that establishments maintain effective HACCP systems by increasing food safety and sanitation tasks, which is a more effective and efficient way to use our inspection resources. NPIS was adopted in 100 percent of establishments that opted in and were ready to adopt the new system as of the end of FY 2017.

- **Drafted Hog Modernization Rule:** After analyzing and finding significant positive results from its pilot, FSIS drafted a rule for a new, voluntary inspection program informed by the Agency’s experiences under its HACCP Inspection Models Project (HIMP) called the “New Swine Slaughter Inspection System” (NSIS). Through the rule, FSIS intends to improve food safety, compliance with the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act, and the effectiveness of market hog slaughter inspection; make better use of the Agency’s resources; and remove unnecessary regulatory obstacles for establishments.
- **Encouraged Adoption of Humane Handling Best Practices:** The Agency continued to encourage adoption of humane handling best practices. FSIS met its target this year of 89 percent of slaughter establishments’ being compliant with all livestock restraint and/or stunning requirements. To encourage increased industry compliance, the Agency required Public Health Veterinarians (PHVs) to increase the frequency of the PHV reviews to determine whether an establishment is operating under a Robust Systematic Approach (RSA) and to inform establishments of these results. Additionally, FSIS delivered refresher training specific to consciousness determination to more than 71 percent of PHVs in livestock slaughter establishments.

Outcome 2.2: Enhance Access to Complete and Accurate Information to Inform Decisions

Outcome 2.2 focused on increasing and improving data flows so that information is easily accessible to both inspectors in their daily decision-making, as well as management and senior leadership when assessing Agency performance. This also included enhancing mechanisms to make information more available to external audiences. Actions that FSIS took in FY 2017 include the following:

- **Developed and Distributed Key Food Safety Information to Internal and External Stakeholders:** FSIS continued to leverage various communication technologies to distribute information both internally and externally regarding food safety and regulatory policy implementation. This included the following:
 - Published the Compliance Guidelines for Beef Processing, which will help educate small and very small establishments on evaluating process control within slaughter and processing operations.
 - Began sending Quarterly Establishment Information Letters to establishments to provide timely and comprehensive sampling results for all products sampled at the establishment within the past 12 months.
 - Issued the New Technology Directive (5020.2), which provides improved guidance for how to review requests from the field to use new technology.
 - Created videos for communicating humidity monitoring guidance, in partnership with a university.
 - Established and identified IPP knowledge gaps on process control and created an action plan for developing IPP Job Aids to help address this issue.
- **Improved Access to Information Technology (IT) Systems and Tools:** FSIS worked to expand electronic access to information and tools to all Agency employees in several ways:
 - Increased the number of employees with a network account and a LincPass so that employees can use necessary IT systems.
 - Continued to enhance the IPP Help Button, an online training site especially for IPP, and similarly, added an additional help button specifically for supervisors—that together average more than 28,000 monthly hits. These sites provide performance-related information, training reinforcement, instructional resources, simulations, tutorials, Q&A’s, videos, and how-to guides at employees’ fingertips to support their work on an as-needed basis.
- **Evaluated Access to Data Analysis and Visualization Tools:** In striving to conduct effective, timely, and actionable analyses, the Agency conducted a survey to determine a composite score for its analysts based on the

frequency and number of tools used, and the time allocated to access, analyze, and visualize Agency data. The composite score of 18.8 exceeded this year’s target of 17.16. The Agency also made available two new key platforms to assist in data visualization and analytics.

- Began Development of Establishment-Specific Datasets and Other Data for Public Release: In working to allow customers to make more informed choices and motivate individual establishments to improve performance, FSIS began developing the first edition of the *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* Industry Prevalence Analysis Report. The Agency also exceeded its target for releasing other establishment-specific data sets, including, establishment demographic data, a Meat Poultry Inspection (MPI) directory supplement, RTE meat and poultry sampling, egg products sampling, import refusals, raw ground beef sampling, and raw beef trim sampling.

FSIS Goal 3: Achieve Operational Excellence

FSIS Outcome 3.1: Maintain a Well-Trained and Engaged Workforce

FSIS relies on its workforce and support systems to achieve success and accomplish its food safety mission. Outcome 3.1 focused on workforce planning, defining and closing competency gaps, expanding diversity to better reflect the civilian labor force, and meaningfully improving the organizational climate and employee engagement. In FY 2017, results included the following:

- Improved Recruitment and Retention for Mission Critical Positions: FSIS implemented an expanded set of recruitment, retention, relocation, and other new and innovative initiatives to increase hiring for mission critical occupations. This included four “on site” targeted hiring events for mission critical occupations and veterinarian scholarship opportunities for field locations. As a result, in FY 2017, FSIS filled 97 percent of food inspector, consumer safety inspector, and veterinarian positions, and more than 94 percent of enforcement, investigations, and analysis officer positions, and other mission critical positions.
- Improved Employee Engagement: FSIS improved employee engagement through implementing or continuing a variety of programs. These included launching Phase II of i-Impact, which helps all employees understand their role in ensuring food safety; incorporating suggestions from the field into Management Council’s decision-making process; managing and supporting effective Special Emphasis Programs (SEP) and Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committees (EEOACs); and promoting the Work Life Balance and Wellness Programs. Both Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) participation and trends increased related to both FSIS’ unique FEVS index as well as the government-wide indices (Employee Engagement, Leaders Lead, Supervisors, and Intrinsic Work Experience).
- Continued Work on Enhancing Employee Training and Development: FSIS developed a plan for utilizing competencies to determine training priorities, and a method to assess knowledge gained from training efforts using updated methods to analyze training results to better interpret and measure training outcomes. FSIS achieved a 78.9 percent knowledge gained score for mission critical training. FSIS also developed a plan to begin assessing competency gaps in the FSIS Workforce. FSIS completed 250 leadership 360 assessments. FSIS implemented new management procedures for Individual Development Plans (IDP) and 97 percent of FSIS non-bargaining employees that did not opt out had an IDP.
- Continued to Ensure Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO): FSIS continued to ensure equal opportunity for all employees and to promote a diverse and inclusive environment. Activities included improving how competency on EEO topics is measured through training, issuing updates to several policy statements to increase employee awareness, and increasing the percentage of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) acceptance rate for informal EEO complaints. In completing these and other activities, FSIS met or exceeded its related metrics in this area.

FSIS Outcome 3.2: Improve Processes and Services

Outcome 3.2 focused on integrating continuous process improvement practices to ensure that FSIS uses limited resources efficiently and effectively. Actions taken during FY 2017 included:

- Continued to Improve Human Resources (HR) Hiring Practices: FSIS continued to pursue hiring excellence goals through improving the end-to-end hiring process and time to hire. Some of the actions included assessing hiring timeframes and processes, and developing new materials, tools, and training that enable communications across programs and HR staff. Further the Agency identified occupations or programs that were experiencing hiring process challenges and focused on developing and implementing solutions in those areas.
- Refined Procurement Practices: FSIS focused on improving long-term acquisition planning for investments necessary to facilitate efficiencies, timely execution, and quality outcomes. FSIS developed and deployed a more comprehensive process that increased collaboration among program managers, contracting officers, and executive sponsors to achieve organizational goals. FSIS also provided tools for managers to incorporate advanced planning into the budget process by identifying appropriate project needs, timelines, success indicators, and performance metrics, and procurement methods for known actions early in the program and budget development process.
- Improved IT Practices: FSIS delivered top-rated IT investments that leveraged opportunities for shared service and cloud delivery. FSIS continued to improve and rigorously align organizational business and management processes, data flows, and technology that support sound operations.
- Enhance Service Delivery: In FY 2017, FSIS developed a more robust service standard for service and product delivery components and customer-facing roles and responsibilities. Using a data-driven approach, FSIS was able to assess status and quality of service to identify areas needing improvement. To improve in some of these weak areas, FSIS developed Agency policy and guidance for IT investment planning and control, a project to be further completed in FY 2018.

Section 2: Selected Accomplishments Expected at the 2019 Proposed Resource Level

FSIS Goal 1: Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health

FSIS Outcome 1.1: Prevent Contamination

- Continue to drive compliance and prevent contamination in FSIS-regulated establishments and products through regularly using existing measures related to public health regulations, state programs, import safety, sampling, enforcement, performance standards, and food defense. This will include further updating our approach using our PHRE tool.
- Use data collected over FY 2018 to determine industry compliance with the grinding log final rule and identify ways to improve industry compliance.
- Utilize the Agency’s internal assessment on the use of domestic and import sampling resources to enhance how the Agency allocates and uses its sampling resources.
- Complete initial sampling assessment for pork to establish baselines of pathogen prevalence, and, based on these data, determine whether standards or guidance are necessary.

Outcome 1.2: Limit Illness from Regulated Products

- Continue to improve food safety at in-commerce facilities by using a risk-based approach to target FSIS’ resources, including surveillance activities, investigations, enforcement activities, and other initiatives, with a continued focus on *Lm* in retail delis.
- Continue to enhance response to outbreaks through improved communications and information sharing, and collaborating with partners on investigations and removal of contaminated product from commerce.
- Sustain progress in food defense by encouraging establishments to adopt and incorporate food defense practices into their day-to-day operations, with an emphasis placed on conducting outreach to small and very small establishments.

- Continue to find ways to better target information distribution to public and stakeholder audiences, and also improve outreach to promote safe food handling by updating consumer educational efforts with information collected from an observational study of consumer habits.
- Use information gathered from healthcare practitioners in FY 2017 and FY 2018 to target outreach to those groups, with a long-term goal of increasing the identification and reporting of foodborne illnesses.

FSIS Goal 2: Modernize Inspection Systems, Policies, and the Use of Scientific Approaches

FSIS Outcome 2.1: Improve Food Safety and Humane Handling Practices through Adoption of Innovative Approaches

- Continue exploring technologies to aid inspectors to more quickly identify food safety risks.
- Expand FSIS use of WGS to aid in accurately identifying and responding to outbreaks, conducting trace backs, and studying the environmental influences on pathogens in regulated establishments.
- Continue to enhance the PHIS import/export functionalities and fully integrate data from Customs and Border Protection for Siluriformes inspection.
- Continue to increase the number of establishments whose non-compliance rate decreases 120 days after receiving a EWA.
- Apply data and information gathered in FY 2018 from small and very small establishments on humane handling to increase awareness of best practices, and to inform FSIS on how to better conduct outreach to the livestock industry.

FSIS Outcome 2.2: Enhance Access to Complete and Accurate Information to Inform Decisions

- Continue to improve reliability, access, collection, and timely distribution of information and data to facilitate communications across FSIS. To accomplish this, FSIS will continue working to ensure employee access to systems and tools, data, targeted reports, and other information needed to prioritize and manage work in innovative ways, such as through videos, webinars, and other internal channels.
- Continue to share establishment-specific datasets or other FSIS data sets publicly.

FSIS Goal 3: Achieve Operational Excellence

FSIS Outcome 3.1: Maintain a Well-Trained and Engaged Workforce

- Continue to enhance recruitment and retention for mission-critical positions, such as targeting and use of key incentives for hard-to-fill positions.
- Advance work on developing competency models, assessing gaps, and filling identified gaps in key positions, as well as deploying new approaches to training and development beyond classroom training.
- Continue to broaden and deepen FSIS’ approaches to further improve Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), such as through increased communications and internal education about EEO requirements, as well as Agency actions that promote and support a diverse and inclusive work environment.

FSIS Outcome 3.2: Improve Processes and Services

- Continue to assess information on FSIS workforce requirements to maintain a balanced and sustainable frontline-to-support ratio.
- Continue to complete high priority internal assessments aimed toward enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of FSIS operations as well as gathering and analyzing annual customer service survey results to ensure employees’ satisfaction with key internal processes and services.