

2027 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES - FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE

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PREFACE

This publication summarizes the fiscal year (FY) 2027 Budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Throughout this publication any reference to the "Budget" is in regard to the 2027 Budget, unless otherwise noted. All references to years refer to fiscal year, except where specifically noted. The budgetary tables throughout this document show actual amounts for 2024 and 2025; Working Families Tax Cut Act; Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agency Appropriations Act, 2026; and the President's Budget request for 2027. Amounts for 2026 estimated levels include: non-enacted amounts such as Full-Time Equivalent levels, fleet levels, information technology investment levels, recovery levels, transfers in and out, balances available end of year, and obligation levels.

Throughout this publication, the Working Families Tax Cut Act is used to refer to the Public Law 119-21.

Pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, sequestration is included in the numbers for mandatory programs in 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027.

In tables throughout this document, amounts equal to zero (0) are displayed as dashes (-). Amounts less than 0.5 and greater than zero are rounded and shown as a zero (0). This display treatment is used to prevent the masking of small non-zero amounts that do not round up to one (1). Due to rounding, some tables may not sum exactly.

AGENCY-WIDE**PURPOSE STATEMENT**

Since the passage of the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) in 1906, the United States has committed to ensuring the safety and quality of its meat products. This pioneering legislation laid the groundwork for over a century of rigorous food safety standards, exemplifying the Nation's unwavering dedication to public health. The FMIA's establishment marked a transformative era, inspiring confidence in the meat industry and safeguarding millions of consumers from potential hazards.

Federal food safety oversight continued to evolve with the passage of the Poultry Products Inspection Act (PPIA) in 1957 and the Egg Products Inspection Act (EPIA) in 1970. Over the years, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has developed a legacy of trust in the food supply, ensuring every bite of meat, poultry, and egg products is backed by a pledge of food safety.

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 USDA. The mission of FSIS is to protect the public's health by ensuring the safety of meat, poultry, and processed egg products. FSIS is composed of two major inspection programs: (1) Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) and (2) Egg Products Inspection.

The MPI Program is authorized by the FMIA as amended and the PPIA. The purpose of the program is to ensure that meat and poultry products are safe, wholesome, and properly 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, which requires livestock at federally inspected establishments to be handled and slaughtered in a humane way.

FSIS conducts inspection activities at federally inspected meat and poultry establishments; and for State programs, the Agency ensures that State MPI programs have standards that are at least equivalent to Federal standards. FSIS also ensures the safety and integrity of FSIS-regulated food products imported from eligible countries as well as domestically-produced product exported to all countries that accept U.S. product around the globe.

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

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

During 2025, the Agency maintained headquarters offices in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area; nine district offices; laboratories in Athens, Georgia, Normandy, Missouri, and Albany, California; the Financial Services Center in Urbandale, Iowa; and a nationwide network of inspection personnel in 7,100 federally regulated establishments in 50 States, N. Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, American Samoa and the Virgin Islands. Much of the Agency’s work is conducted in cooperation with Federal, State, and municipal agencies, as well as private industry.

As of September 30, 2025, the Agency employment totaled 7,997 permanent full-time employees, including 738 headquarters staff and 7,259 in the field. FSIS employed 8,084 Full Time Equivalents (FTE’s) as of September 30, 2025. This included other-than-permanent employees in addition to permanent full-time ones.

FSIS activities contribute to the success of USDA’s overall mission to provide leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues based on public policy, the best available science, and effective management. USDA is currently developing the FY 2026 – 2030 Strategic Plan. A detailed FY 2027 performance plan, including Key Performance Indicators, can be found at <https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/about-usda/performance>.

FSIS funding is broken out into the following categories:

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

OIG AND GAO REPORTS

Table FSIS-1. Closed, Implemented OIG Reports

ID	Date	Title	Result
24601-0004-22	7/3/2025	Food Safety and Inspection Service’s Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program	FSIS should update its policy to include applicable legal requirements and financial processes pertaining to its Cooperative Interstate Shipment program.

Table FSIS-2. Closed, Implemented GAO Reports

ID	Date	Title	Result
GAO-20-325	4/7/2020	Food Safety: FDA and USDA Could Strengthen Existing Efforts to Prepare for Oversight of Cell-Cultured Meat	GAO found that FSIS and FDA should more fully incorporate the seven leading practices for effective collaboration in the agencies' interagency agreement for the joint oversight of cell-cultured meat.
GAO-25-107606	2/3/2025	Food Safety: Status of Foodborne Illness in the U.S.	No recommendations directed at FSIS
GAO-25-107613	1/22/2025	Food Safety: USDA Should Take Additional Actions to Strengthen Oversight of Meat and Poultry	<p>Recommendation 1 – A Priority Recommendation. FSIS should develop a prioritization plan to fully document which products to address and the additional policies needed to effectively address pathogen reduction for <i>Salmonella</i> in meat and standards for <i>Campylobacter</i> in turkey parts.</p> <p>Recommendation 2 – FSIS should review the public health impacts of delaying proposed pathogen standards for <i>Salmonella</i> in meat and standards for <i>Campylobacter</i> in turkey parts, to inform a prioritization plan. This review could include assessing risks to human health and gathering information about potential gaps in oversight.</p> <p>Recommendation 3 – FSIS should update its memorandum of understanding with APHIS, or create a new agreement, to clearly identify specific pathogens of concern and each agency's responsibilities in coordinating and responding to these pathogens' occurrence in outbreak investigation activities.</p> <p>Recommendation 4 – FSIS should offer educational materials, such as signage, to its regulated plants on sanitation to support their efforts to comply with FSIS's requirements and guidance to reduce the spread of pathogens in meat and poultry products.</p> <p>Statement of Action awaiting USDA Secretary's signature</p>

Table FSIS-3. In-Progress GAO Reports

ID	Title	Result
108210	Animal Disease Risks from Imports	GAO is continuing its work
108123	Animal Transport: Implementation and Enforcement of the Twenty-Eight Hour Law	GAO is continuing its work
108175	Engineered Microbes for Waste Cleanup	GAO is continuing its work

AVAILABLE FUNDS AND FTES

Table FSIS-4. Available Funds and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

Item	2024		2025		2026		2027	
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs
Salaries and Expenses:								
Discretionary Appropriations.....	\$1,190,709	8,303	\$1,214,709	7,979	\$1,215,200	8,000	\$1,215,718	8,000
Total Adjusted Appropriation	1,190,709	8,303	1,214,709	7,979	1,215,200	8,000	1,215,718	8,000
Balance Available, SOY.....	909	-	8,833	-	12,803	-	-	-
Recoveries, Other.....	2,813	-	8,222	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available	1,194,431	8,303	1,231,764	7,979	1,228,003	8,000	1,215,718	8,000
Lapsing Balances.....	-120	-	-872	-	-	-	-	-
Balance Available, EOY.....	-8,833	-	-12,803	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations, FSIS	1,185,478	8,303	1,218,089	7,979	1,228,003	8,000	1,215,718	8,000
Other USDA:								
Agriculture Marketing Service ...	1	-	5	-	-	-	-	-
Office of Chief Financial Officer..	20,394	-	15,000	-	-	-	-	-
Office of Secretary	577	-	350	-	-	-	-	-
USDA Departmental admin.....	37	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Foreign Agriculture Service.....	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Animal & Plant Health.....	569	-	525	-	-	-	-	-
Office of General Counselor	94	-	40	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Other USDA.....	21,683	-	15,920	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Agriculture Available	1,216,114	8,303	1,247,684	7,979	1,228,003	8,000	1,215,718	8,000
Other Federal Funds:								
Food and Drug Administration... ..	719	-	298	-	-	-	-	-
US DHS Customs and Border Protect	103	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dept of Health & Human Services	85	-	11	-	-	-	-	-
FEMA.....	-	-	137	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Other Federal	907	-	446	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Federal Funds:								
Meat, Poultry and Eggs								
Products Inspection	226,983	26	229,992	24	229,992	26	229,992	26
Accredited Labs.....	235	-	235	-	235	-	235	-
Trust Funds	17,773	85	17,847	81	17,847	85	17,847	85
Total, Non-Federal	244,991	111	248,074	105	248,074	111	248,074	111
Total Available, FSIS.....	1,462,012	8,414	1,496,204	8,084	1,476,077	8,111	1,463,792	8,111

PERMANENT POSITIONS BY GRADE AND FTEs

Table FSIS-5. Permanent Positions by Grade and FTEs

Item	2024 Actual			2025 Actual			2026 Estimated			2027 Estimated		
	HQ	Field	Total	HQ	Field	Total	HQ	Field	Total	HQ	Field	Total
SES	23	1	24	23	1	24	22	-	22	22	-	22
SL	4	-	4	3	-	3	3	-	3	3	-	3
GS-15	49	27	76	50	23	73	34	26	60	34	26	60
GS-14	179	98	277	180	76	256	119	96	215	119	96	215
GS-13	242	327	569	235	358	593	159	313	472	159	313	472
GS-12	137	776	913	136	701	837	85	750	835	85	750	835
GS-11	34	48	82	23	45	68	22	46	68	22	46	68
GS-10	1	253	254	-	261	261	1	246	247	1	246	247
GS-9	34	4,272	4,306	28	4,442	4,470	19	4,349	4,368	19	4,349	4,368
GS-8	2	454	456	4	430	434	1	441	442	1	441	442
GS-7	40	1,142	1,182	50	863	913	27	1,090	1,117	27	1,090	1,117
GS-6	11	1	12	2	1	3	7	1	8	7	1	8
GS-5	3	243	246	3	58	61	2	229	231	2	229	231
GS-4	1	1	2	1	-	1	1	1	2	1	1	2
Total Permanent....	760	7,643	8,403	738	7,259	7,997	502	7,588	8,090	502	7,588	8,090
Total Perm FT EOY....	760	7,643	8,403	738	7,259	7,997	502	7,588	8,090	502	7,588	8,090
FTE.....	685	7,729	8,414	801	7,283	8,084	427	7,684	8,111	427	7,684	8,111

VEHICLE FLEET

Motor Vehicle Fleet

FSIS uses vehicles to deliver mission critical services. Project sites are frequently in locations only accessible through construction zones and off-road areas. Furthermore, specially equipped vehicles are required to transport scientific equipment.

FSIS requires operation and maintenance logs for all of its vehicles. Periodic reviews ensure optimal use of each vehicle in the fleet.

Replacement Criteria

FSIS retires or replaces vehicles based upon age, utilization, operating costs, and maintenance costs. FSIS always replaces vehicles with a more efficient and cost-effective model.

Reductions to Fleet

FSIS plans to reduce the vehicle fleet by 24 in 2027. This reduction is made possible by the reduced maintenance requirements of the vehicles acquired over the past four years.

Table FSIS-6. Size, Composition, and Annual Costs of Motor Vehicle Fleet

Item	Sedans and Station Wagons	Vans	SUVs	Light Trucks 4X2	Light Trucks 4X4	Medium Duty Vehicles	Buses	Heavy Duty Vehicles	Total Vehicles	Annual Operating Costs
2018 End of Year Operating Inventory	2,180	79	62	-	-	2	-	-	2,323	\$12,426,226
2024 End of Year Operating Inventory	1,558	20	627	16	10	-	-	-	2,231	17,878,017
2025 Actual Acquisitions.....	407		100			-	-	-	507	
2025 Actual Disposals.....	555	6	-	2	2	-	-	-	565	
2025 End of Year Operating Inventory	1,410	14	727	14	8	-	-	-	2,173	18,224,823
2026 Planned Acquisitions	498	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	498	
2026 Planned Disposals.....	522	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	522	
2026 End of Year Operating Inventory	1,386	14	727	14	8	-	-	-	2,149	19,500,000
2027 Planned Acquisitions	498	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	498	
2027 Planned Disposals.....	522	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	522	
2027 End of Year Operating Inventory	1,362	14	727	14	8	-	-	-	2,125	19,500,000

SHARED FUNDING PROJECTS

Table FSIS-7. Shared Funding Projects (thousands of dollars)

Item	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Estimated	2027 Estimated
Working Capital Fund:				
Administrative Services:				
Material Management Service Center.....	\$4,805	\$5,168	\$3,783	\$3,787
AskUSDA Contact Center.....	794	774	-	-
General Counsel Legal Compliance.....	-	46	566	566
Mail and Reproduction Management Division.....	1,096	757	469	474
Integrated Procurement Systems.....	278	223	178	178
Personnel and Document Security.....	452	522	468	-
Procurement Operations Division.....	16	20	18	18
Human Resources Enterprise System Management.....	857	931	907	908
Subtotal.....	8,298	8441	6,389	5,931
Communications:				
Creative Media & Broadcast Center.....	238	256	218	217
Finance and Management:				
National Finance Center.....	2,698	2,552	2,336	2,336
Internal Control Support Services.....	60	39	32	32
Financial Shared Services.....	7,209	6,570	5,448	5,448
Subtotal.....	9,967	9,161	7,816	7,816
Information Technology:				
Client Experience Center.....	34,269	33,968	27,296	25,066
Department Administration Information Technology Office.....	5	-	-	-
Digital Infrastructure Services Center.....	10,635	7,949	8,449	8,449
Enterprise Cybersecurity Services.....	4,818	5,323	4,857	4,857
Enterprise Data and Analytics Services.....	789	492	103	108
Enterprise Network Services.....	15,094	15,563	20,696	20,696
Subtotal.....	65,610	63,295	61,401	59,176
Office of the Executive Secretariat.....	165	82	66	66
Total, Working Capital Fund.....	84,278	81,235	75,890	73,206
Department-Wide Shared Cost Programs:				
Advisory Committee Liaison Services.....	6	4	-	-
Agency Partnership Outreach.....	609	584	321	339
America’s Agricultural Heritage.....	-	-	50	39
Diversity Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility.....	216	44	-	-
Employee Experience.....	308	225	25	-
General Counsel Legal Compliance.....	-	46	566	566
Medical Services.....	169	-	-	-
OCFO Shared Services Branch.....	-	-	57	102
Office of Customer Experience.....	248	114	9	-
Personnel and Document Security.....	452	522	468	468
Physical Security.....	390	474	229	232
Security Detail.....	443	639	1,368	1,385
Security Operations.....	618	554	624	624
Talent Group.....	275	272	33	-
TARGET Center.....	134	130	107	107
NCR Interpreting Services.....	68	60	59	59
Total, Department-Wide Reimbursable Programs.....	3,484	3,100	2,882	2,887
Agency Total.....	87,762	84,335	78,772	76,093

ACCOUNT 1: SALARIES AND EXPENSES

APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE

The appropriations language follows (new language underscored; deleted language enclosed in brackets):

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 \$10,000 for representation allowances and for expenses pursuant to section 8 of the Act approved August 3, 1956 (7 U.S.C. 1766), [~~\$1,205,209,000~~]\$1,215,718,000; 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 2026 for purposes dedicated solely to inspections and enforcement related to the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (7 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.): *Provided further*, That the Food Safety and Inspection Service shall continue implementation of section 11016 of Public Law 110-246 as further clarified by the amendments made in section 12106 of Public Law 113-79: *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].

Change Description

The first change (lines 8 through 17 of paragraph 1) Delete all language after the word expended in line 8. This language is repetitive of the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) and by Executive Order 14238.

LEAD-OFF TABULAR STATEMENT

Table FSIS-8. Lead-Off Tabular Statement (in dollars)

Item	Amount
Estimate, 2026	\$1,215,200,000
Change in Appropriation	<u>+518,000</u>
Budget Estimate, 2027.....	<u><u>1,215,718,000</u></u>

2027 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES – FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE

PROJECT STATEMENTS

Table FSIS-9. Project Statement on Basis of Appropriations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)¹

Item	2024		2025		2026		2027		Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.	Chg Key
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs			
Discretionary Approp:											
Federal Food Safety & Inspection	\$1,066,390	8,168	\$1,089,208	7,840	\$1,075,199	7,865	\$1,064,917	7,865	-\$10,282	-	(1)
State Food Safety & Inspection	67,462	11	67,641	10	82,841	11	93,641	11	+10,800	-	(2)
International Food Safety & Inspection	20,885	124	21,888	129	21,888	124	21,888	124	-	-	-
PHDCIS	35,272	-	35,272	-	35,272	-	35,272	-	-	-	-
Tribal Bison (General Provision)	700	-	700	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal.....	1,190,709	8,303	1,214,709	7,979	1,215,200	8,000	1,215,718	8,000	+518	-	-
Total Adjusted Approp	1,190,709	8,303	1,214,709	7,979	1,215,200	8,000	1,215,718	8,000	+518	-	-
Add back:											
Transfers In and Out, Rescissions.....	-	-	-700	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriation	1,190,709	8,303	1,214,009	7,979	1,215,200	8,000	1,215,718	8,000	+518	-	-
Transfers Out:											
Office of Tribal Relations	-	-	700	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Transfers Out.....	-	-	700	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Recoveries, Other	2,813	-	8,222	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY.....	909	-	8,833	-	12,803	-	-	-	-12,803	-	-
Total Available	1,194,431	8,303	1,231,764	7,979	1,228,003	8,000	1,215,718	8,000	-12,285	-	-
Lapsing Balances	-120	-	-872	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY	-8,833	-	-12,803	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations	1,185,478	8,303	1,218,089	7,979	1,228,003	8,000	1,215,718	8,000	-12,285	-	-

¹ This table does not match MAX Schedule X due to reimbursables.

Table FSIS-10. Project Statement on Basis of Obligations (thousands of dollars, FTEs) ²

Item	2024 Actual	FTEs	2025 Actual	FTEs	2026 Estimated	FTEs	2027 Estimated	FTEs	Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.
Discretionary Obligations:										
Federal Food Safety & Inspection	\$1,064,041	8,168	\$1,074,105	7,840	\$1,075,199	7,865	\$1,064,917	7,865	\$-10,282	-
State Food Safety & Inspection	70,400	11	82,591	10	82,841	11	93,641	11	+10,800	-
International Food Safety & Inspection	20,876	124	21,870	129	21,888	124	21,888	124	-	-
PHDCIS	29,688	-	33,637	-	35,272	-	35,272	-	-	-
Tribal Bison GP.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal Disc Obligations	1,185,005	8,303	1,212,203	7,979	1,215,200	8,000	1,215,718	8,000	+518	-
Supplemental Obligations:										
COVID-19 Supplemental	-	-	-	-	12,255	-	-	-	-12,255	-
PHV Incentives Carryover	473	-	295	-	367	-	-	-	-367	-
Goodfellows Mid-Western Lab Relocation (Division N)	-	-	5,591	-	181	-	-	-	-181	-
Subtotal Supp Obligations	473	-	5,886	-	12,803	-	-	-	-12,803	-
Total Obligations	1,185,478	8,303	1,218,089	7,979	1,228,003	8,000	1,215,718	8,000	-12,285	-
Add back:										
Lapsing Balances	120	-	872	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Balances Available, EOY:										
Goodfellows Mid-Western Lab Relocation	-	-	181	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PHDCIS	8,450	-	12,255	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PHV Incentives Carryover	383	-	367	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Bal. Available, EOY	8,833	-	12,803	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available	1,194,431	8,303	1,231,764	7,979	1,228,003	8,000	1,215,718	8,000	-12,285	-
Less:										
Total Transfers Out	-	-	-700	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Recoveries, Other	-2,813	-	-8,222	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY	-909	-	-8,833	-	-12,803	-	-	-	+12,803	-
Total Appropriation	1,190,709	8,303	1,214,009	7,979	1,215,200	8,000	1,215,718	8,000	+518	-

² This table does not match MAX Schedule X due to reimbursables.

JUSTIFICATION OF CHANGES

An increase of \$518,000 for FSIS (\$1,215,200,000 available in 2026).

The 2027 Budget assumes a pay freeze for all employees and provides \$1.216 billion for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) - a net increase of \$0.5 million over the 2026 Enacted Appropriation. This increase will allow FSIS to maintain state reimbursement levels and support anticipated cost increases in the USDA Working Capital Fund, driven by cost redistribution across USDA and ongoing Public Health Information System (PHIS) modernization.

This funding will enable FSIS to ensure a safe food supply. Specifically, FSIS will:

- Conduct statutorily required food safety inspections at approximately 7,100 federally inspected establishments.
- Ensure accurate labeling.
- Reinspect imported meat, poultry, and egg products to protect consumers and domestic producers from unsafe food and foreign animal diseases.
- Support deregulatory actions that maintain food safety while promoting economic growth, such as removing barriers to increased line speeds in poultry and swine establishments.
- Enhance IT systems to reduce paperwork, improve efficiency, and expand market access for meat and poultry processors.
- Track and identify sources of foodborne illness outbreaks, including pathogens like Listeria in deli meats.

FSIS partners with state agencies through Cooperative Agreements to develop and administer State MPI, Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) and Talmadge-Aiken inspection programs. These programs support small and very small establishments and help expand meat and poultry processing capacity, thereby strengthening supply chain resilience.

In accordance with administration policy announced in the Budget, FSIS will follow new government-wide grants guidance prohibiting the use of Federal funds to pay for subscriptions to academic journals, as well as for the publication of research results that are not specifically required by Federal statute or approved in advance by a Federal agency. This policy preserves funds to support actual research by ensuring that the American taxpayer does not pay for the research, publication, and access to that research, essentially triple-charging the public for the same product.

1. A decrease of \$10,282,000 and 0 FTEs for the Federal Food Safety Inspection Program (\$1,075,199,000 and 7,865 FTEs available in 2026).

Federal: This reduction reflects administrative savings achieved through the Deferred Resignation Program and the implementation of the President's Workforce Optimization Initiative, all while preserving FSIS's core Food Safety Mission. These initiatives have enabled FSIS to streamline administrative and policy operations, enhancing the Agency's ability to respond swiftly to emerging food safety issues, reduce costs, and conserve taxpayer resources.

Additionally, the budget includes a reclassification of \$220,238 for FERS Agency Contributions, reflecting a 0.5 percentage point decrease in the required contribution rate. These savings will be repurposed to support other operational expenses, further reinforcing FSIS's commitment to efficient resource utilization.

A decrease in funds of \$491,000 for National Security Related Expenses, being realigned to the Office of Homeland Security (OHS), will enhance efficiency and effectiveness within USDA. This strategic realignment will centralize resources under OHS, which provides leadership in national security through policy development, emergency preparedness and response initiatives, and threat mitigation coordination. Consolidating the budget under OHS eliminates redundancies, ensures more coordinated resource allocation, and improves the execution of departmental

security policies, ultimately bolstering the USDA's resilience and readiness without compromising overall security.

These efforts will continue into 2027 as part of a broader commitment to continuous improvement, leveraging technology to strengthen science-based decision-making and identify further operational efficiencies.

2. An increase of \$10,800,000 and 0 FTEs for the State Food Safety Inspection Program (\$82,841,000 and 11 FTEs available in 2026).

State: An increase of \$10,800,000 for reimbursement of state Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) programs. Under the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) and the Poultry Product Inspection Act (PPIA), FSIS may contribute up to 50 percent of State MPI program costs, no less than 60 percent for CIS programs, and up to 100 percent of TA program costs. However, since 2019, the average State MPI and TA reimbursement rates have declined from 49.2 percent to 45.5 percent, even as the number of participating states increased from 27 to 29 and establishments from 1,833 to 2,032.

Rising costs—driven by inflation, increased salaries and benefits, and program expansion—have outpaced funding. Two new states launched programs in 2023, and three more are considering doing so by 2026. The CIS program has also grown from four to ten states between 2018 and 2024.

The last funding increase for State programs was in 2020 (\$5 million). By 2025, the average reimbursement rate was projected to fall to 40 percent. A one-time \$14.54 million allocation from the USDA Nonrecurring Expenses Fund (NEF) temporarily restored the average to 50 percent. Without additional funding, FSIS anticipates the average reimbursement rate will drop to approximately 38 percent in 2026 and 2027—well below the historical average of 50 percent.

This decline has raised concerns among participating states, many of which are now covering more than 50 percent of program costs. If states withdraw or transfer establishments to FSIS for federal inspection, FSIS would be legally obligated to provide coverage—without the necessary personnel or funding. Covering an estimated 2,000 additional establishments could severely strain FSIS resources and compromise its food safety mission.

To prevent further erosion of state participation and avoid significantly higher federal costs, FSIS requests a \$10.8 million increase in funding. This investment is essential to sustain and expand the MPI, TA, and CIS programs, support small processors, and ensure a safe and abundant food supply for all Americans.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Program: Workplace Flexibility

Proposal: In 2027, FSIS will re-propose permanent changes to provide inspection personnel flexible work arrangements.

With this change, FSIS can provide flexible scheduling for inspectors rather than requiring them to work all hours and days of plant operations. This proposal would provide FSIS flexibility in scheduling inspectors for Overtime/Holiday shifts and allow the agency to better meet its food safety mission. This change will be cost neutral for industry because industry will still only be charged for the extra services they are receiving.

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

21 USC 468

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

21 USC 695

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

21 USC 1053(a)

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

7 USC 2219a

a. In general

The Secretary of Agriculture may-

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

b. Availability

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

There will be no offsets in 2026. No change in budget authority is anticipated.

Rationale: Current policy prevents FSIS from employing part-time employees or providing flexible schedules to employees while still collecting fees for overtime or holiday services provided as requested by the plant.

Goal: This proposal would provide FSIS flexibility in scheduling inspectors for Overtime/Holiday shifts.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND FTEs**Table FSIS-11. Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)**

State/Territory/Country	2024		2025		2026		2027	
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs
Alabama	\$35,881	299	\$35,661	270	\$38,084	292	\$37,718	292
Alaska	986	8	769	5	1,047	8	1,037	8
American Samoa	6	-	-	-	6	-	6	-
Arizona	4,867	36	5,652	42	5,165	35	5,115	35
Arkansas	40,140	331	43,368	327	42,606	323	42,197	323
California	80,970	576	86,579	559	85,942	565	85,117	565
Colorado	31,992	226	36,675	220	33,957	220	33,632	220
Connecticut	1,842	15	2,173	17	1,954	13	1,935	13
Delaware	11,742	104	11,171	83	12,461	101	12,342	101
District of Columbia	103,056	454	112,051	400	79,502	322	78,248	322
Florida	15,471	141	15,653	136	16,421	137	16,264	137
Georgia	87,905	637	88,527	586	93,301	625	92,405	625
Guam	487	3	474	4	421	3	417	3
Hawaii	4,112	27	3,631	29	4,365	27	4,323	27
Idaho	6,832	50	7,517	68	7,252	49	7,182	49
Illinois	39,177	228	42,181	215	41,583	222	41,184	222
Indiana	16,337	129	16,215	112	17,341	127	17,175	127
Iowa	47,371	373	47,268	329	50,279	365	49,797	365
Kansas	23,086	201	20,527	159	24,503	198	24,268	198
Kentucky	16,891	143	16,569	140	17,928	139	17,756	139
Louisiana	12,218	84	12,101	82	12,969	82	12,844	82
Maine	2,233	12	2,451	12	2,370	11	2,347	11
Maryland	57,307	125	51,529	219	60,826	123	60,242	123
Massachusetts	3,288	27	3,498	27	3,490	27	3,457	27
Michigan	11,648	103	12,106	104	12,365	100	12,246	100
Minnesota	42,701	331	43,718	320	45,324	323	44,889	323
Mississippi	34,506	251	37,119	248	36,625	245	36,273	245
Missouri	39,110	288	37,454	257	41,514	281	41,115	281
Montana	4,880	26	5,589	35	5,179	26	5,130	26
N. Mariana Islands	127	2	147	1	37	1	36	1
Nebraska	33,648	289	32,136	255	35,714	282	35,371	282
Nevada	1,384	12	1,531	13	1,469	11	1,455	11
New Hampshire	1,036	10	1,152	9	1,099	10	1,089	10
New Jersey	13,713	115	15,125	121	14,556	113	14,416	113
New Mexico	2,053	16	2,068	17	2,179	14	2,158	14
New York	18,215	161	19,514	161	19,333	158	19,147	158
North Carolina	51,202	376	50,450	343	54,347	369	53,825	369
North Dakota	2,348	12	2,725	14	2,491	11	2,467	11
Ohio	21,725	126	23,193	126	23,059	124	22,838	124
Oklahoma	10,974	73	11,639	72	11,647	72	11,536	72
Oregon	6,254	53	6,563	55	6,637	53	6,573	53
Pennsylvania	39,506	299	39,540	295	41,931	293	41,529	293
Puerto Rico	4,851	46	5,048	47	4,795	44	4,749	44
Rhode Island	1,262	10	1,200	9	1,339	10	1,326	10
South Carolina	15,806	116	17,008	122	16,777	114	16,617	114
South Dakota	7,697	60	7,231	53	8,170	59	8,091	59
Tennessee	18,698	165	19,163	155	19,846	161	19,656	161
Texas	85,733	615	89,883	618	91,312	605	90,436	605
Utah	7,468	47	7,730	49	7,926	46	7,850	46
Vermont	3,308	13	3,749	13	3,511	12	3,478	12
Virgin Islands	127	1	119	1	122	1	121	1
Virginia	17,036	147	16,662	116	18,083	144	17,909	144
Washington	12,732	106	12,987	111	13,514	104	13,384	104
West Virginia	4,614	33	5,686	35	4,897	32	4,850	32
Wisconsin	24,454	160	24,900	150	25,956	156	25,705	156
Wyoming	1,510	10	1,590	11	1,603	10	1,587	10
China	521	1	673	1	283	1	278	1
Mexico	434	1	451	1	590	1	579	1
Obligations	1,185,478	8,303	1,218,089	7,979	1,228,003	8,000	1,215,718	8,000
Lapsing Balances	120	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY	8,833	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available	1,194,431	8,303	1,218,089	7,979	1,228,003	8,000	1,215,718	8,000

OBJECT CLASSIFICATION

Table FSIS-12. Classification by Objects – Discretionary Funding (thousands of dollars) ³

Item No.	Item	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Estimated	2027 Estimated
Personnel Compensation:					
	Washington D.C.	\$89,923	\$91,006	\$66,760	\$66,760
	Personnel Compensation, Field	580,788	595,922	614,526	604,735
11	Total personnel compensation	670,711	679,974	681,286	671,495
12	Personal benefits	300,530	302,425	300,483	300,483
13.0	Benefits for former personnel	472	565	773	773
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits	971,713	982,964	982,542	972,751
Other Objects:					
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons	32,695	33,780	33,800	33,800
22.0	Transportation of things	3,958	4,138	4,138	4,138
23.1	Rental payments to GSA.....	4,464	6,095	9,292	9,292
23.2	Rental payments to others.....	-	123	123	123
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges	2,154	1,939	1,939	1,939
24.0	Printing and reproduction	395	200	200	200
25.1	Advisory and assistance services	2	-	-	-
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources.....	29,362	24,306	24,306	24,306
25.3	Other goods and services from Federal sources	61,272	71,339	83,594	70,481
25.4	Operation and maintenance of facilities.....	21	5,338	202	21
25.7	Operation and maintenance of equipment	548	390	390	390
26.0	Supplies and materials.....	10,771	6,678	6,678	6,678
31.0	Equipment.....	3,142	3,747	3,747	3,747
32.0	Land and structures.....	246	-	-	-
41.0	Grants, subsidies, and contributions	64,576	76,880	76,880	87,680
42.0	Insurance Claims and Indemnities.....	157	132	132	132
43.0	Interest and Dividends.....	2	40	40	40
	Total, Other Objects.....	213,765	235,125	245,461	242,967
99.9	Total, new obligations.....	1,185,478	1,218,089	1,228,003	1,215,718
DHS Building Security Payments (included in 25.3)					
		\$842	\$996	\$697	\$700
Position Data:					
	Average Salary (dollars), ES Position	\$200,012	\$210,012	\$216,012	\$221,413
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position.....	\$75,503	\$79,278	\$81,543	\$83,582
	Average Grade, GS Position	10.3	10.4	10.5	10.4

³ This table does not match MAX Schedule O due to reimbursables.

STATUS OF PROGRAMS

Current Activities

As USDA’s public health regulatory agency, FSIS is responsible for ensuring that domestic and imported meat, poultry, and egg products are safe, wholesome, and properly labeled. Consistent with its role, FSIS’ mission is to protect public health by preventing illness from these products. This mission guides agency actions to implement and enforce the Acts from which it gets its regulatory authority—the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), the Poultry Products Inspection Act (PPIA), the Egg Products Inspection Act (EPIA), and the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (HMSA)—to incorporate data and science into decision making, and continually improve operations to ensure the Agency functions efficiently and effectively. FSIS also ensures the safety and integrity of FSIS-regulated food products imported from eligible countries as well as U.S. products exported to all countries that accept U.S. product around the globe.

Thousands of FSIS inspection personnel across the Nation conduct daily inspection activities to verify industry compliance with applicable food safety regulatory requirements. The work of FSIS employees across all program areas is critical for achieving agency goals to prevent foodborne illness and protect public health; transform inspection strategies, policies, and scientific approaches to improve public health; and achieve operational excellence.

FSIS’ Status of Programs highlights accomplishments that fall within its four funding categories—Federal programs, State programs, international programs, and digital infrastructure for public health communications and information systems—and closes with cross-cutting examples of progress. Across its programs, FSIS integrates hazard prevention, program modernization, and science-based decision making to consistently protect public health and strengthen trust in the safety of the food supply.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

SECTION 1: 2025 Highlights

In 2025, FSIS continued to advance its public health mission through actions aligned with USDA’s five-point plan to bolster food safety.

1.1. Enhanced Microbiological Testing & Oversight

FSIS public health efforts are grounded in years of scientific research and data analysis that aim to strengthen detection capabilities for pathogens such as *Salmonella*, *Listeria monocytogenes* (*Lm*), and Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC). In 2025, FSIS analyzed approximately 88,500 microbiological samples across poultry, beef, pork, and egg products, representing a 13 percent increase from 2024. FSIS tested more than 15,000 samples for *Listeria* collected during in-depth food safety reviews, known as “Food Safety Assessments,” (FSAs). These FSA *Listeria* samples represented an approximate 200 percent increase from 2024. The agency also made enhancements to its *Listeria* testing method to provide quicker results to industry and to detect a broader set of *Listeria* species. These additional results highlight conditions where *Lm* can thrive in facilities producing ready-to-eat (RTE) products and help industry and FSIS identify potential sanitation problems. FSIS also enhanced monitoring of emerging threats, including avian influenza and antimicrobial resistance.

To support these enhanced testing efforts, FSIS opened its new, modernized Midwestern Laboratory in Normandy, Missouri. This facility, which opened in July 2025, plays a critical role in analyzing verification samples for foodborne pathogens and chemical residues. Collectively, these enhancements allowed FSIS to more rapidly identify risks, conduct follow-up inspections as needed, and support timely recalls or enforcement actions to strengthen consumer protection.

1.2. Updated Training & Tools for Inspectors

In 2025, FSIS equipped approximately 6,000 inspectors with updated training on *Listeria* prevention and launched a new weekly questionnaire for inspectors to identify vulnerabilities in RTE operations. The new training provided deeper understanding of the regulatory requirements in FSIS' *Listeria* Rule and how to verify establishments have designed and implemented food safety systems that comply with those requirements. By the end of 2025, approximately 94,000 weekly questionnaires had been completed by inspection personnel at RTE establishments, with over 1.5 million new data points collected.

FSIS also enhanced instructions to inspectors to help recognize and elevate problems with an establishment's food safety system. By the end of 2025, FSIS issued four new and 17 updated FSIS directives, which provide official instruction to agency personnel in carrying out their functions.

Based on employee feedback, the Continuing Education Program was expanded in 2022 to provide all FSIS employees an opportunity to develop and enhance core competencies, further their education, better perform in their current roles, and qualify for other positions within the agency. For 2025, FSIS reimbursed 208 employees for qualifying college courses to support continuing education efforts.

1.3. Focused Efforts to Reduce *Salmonella* Illnesses

In 2025, FSIS initiated the development of a revised strategy to reduce *Salmonella*-related illnesses attributable to poultry, building on years of scientific research, epidemiological data, and inspection findings. The agency held separate listening sessions with industry, consumer groups, and public health experts at the end of 2025 to gather initial input on how best to implement an improved, data-driven, implementable, science-based approach. This initiative represented a significant step forward in translating current science and program experience into measurable improvements in food safety, with the goal of reducing illness while supporting practical, evidence-based interventions in poultry production.

1.4. Stronger State Partnerships

States are crucial partners in ensuring a safe and strong food supply and in bringing nutritious, affordable American food products to dinner tables across the country. In May, Secretary Rollins signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture to improve collaboration with States. The Secretary also announced a \$14.5 million increase in reimbursements to States participating in FSIS' State Meat and Poultry Inspection (State MPI) programs in 2025. This funding allows FSIS to maintain up to 50 percent reimbursement to States for eligible costs to maintain this inspection. State MPI programs support nearly 1,400 State-inspected establishments and more than 2,000 custom-exempt facilities. The majority of these establishments are small and very small processors. Additionally, FSIS renewed cooperative agreements with all 29 State MPI programs, welcomed Nevada as the 30th state, and completed in-person reviews at all 408 operational Talmadge-Aken (TA) establishments. Together, these actions strengthen national consistency in food safety standards while supporting both States and small and very small establishments across local and regional markets. FSIS' support for small and very small establishments is detailed in Section 2.3. More information on FSIS State Inspection Programs can be found in Section 3.

1.5. Empowered Enforcement to Drive Compliance

In 2025, FSIS empowered its frontline workforce to take more timely and decisive actions to address noncompliance and protect public health. The agency took more than 200 enforcement actions to protect consumers this fiscal year. As noted above, FSIS mobilized its resources to perform more robust, in-person FSAs, prioritizing RTE meat and poultry establishments, to proactively identify and address potential food safety concerns. In 2025, the agency completed 863 FSAs, a 62 percent increase from 2024. These efforts underscore FSIS' commitment to safeguarding consumers and upholding industry accountability.

FSIS also conducts extensive investigations, compliance activities, and outreach at in-commerce facilities, such as warehouses, distributors, food transporters, retail stores, and delicatessens. If these activities identify adulterated or misbranded meat, poultry, or egg products, the agency removes these products from in-commerce facilities and takes appropriate regulatory action to deter future violations. FSIS conducted more than 14,000 surveillance activities in 2025. The agency detained nearly 1.5 million pounds of noncompliant meat, poultry, and egg products in commerce. FSIS also conducted more than 1,350 investigations in response to alleged violations of the FMIA, PPIA, or EPIA, approximately 96 percent of which were based on food safety violations.

SECTION 2: Federal Food Safety & Inspection Program

While FSIS' authorities are dictated by statute, science and data guide how FSIS implements these responsibilities, shaping day-to-day inspection tasks, sampling program design, laboratory methods, and policy and regulatory approaches to ensure agency actions effectively protect food safety and public health. During 2025, FSIS protected public health by conducting ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection of 160 million head of livestock and 9.9 billion poultry carcasses. Additionally, FSIS inspected 2.9 billion pounds of liquid, frozen, and dried egg products and conducted 8.1 million food safety procedures to verify that systems at all federally inspected facilities continued to maintain food safety requirements.

FSIS investments in its workforce strengthen frontline capacity. Meanwhile, efforts to modernize inspection systems and support small and very small establishments contribute to stronger regulatory compliance. The agency's efforts in labeling policy, data system enhancements, laboratory methods, foodborne illness investigations, recalls, and in-commerce oversight further demonstrate FSIS' coordinated efforts to safeguard public health, promote industry accountability, and strengthen consumer confidence.

2.1 Workforce Excellence & Public Health Impact

FSIS employees collectively bring a broad range of attributes and capabilities to advance the agency's food safety mission, with professions such as inspection; investigation; public health science, food safety technology, microbiology, chemistry, engineering, and mathematics; and various administrative and professional roles. More than 90 percent of the agency's workforce is dedicated to frontline inspection, including those in priority recruitment areas—Consumer Safety Inspectors and Public Health Veterinarians (PHVs).

Recruitment & Retention

To support stronger oversight and inspection, FSIS continued to implement targeted recruitment strategies and retention initiatives, including referral awards and signing bonuses for critical frontline positions. In 2025, the agency recruited 217 new employees to critical frontline positions and granted 17 awards to employees for referring candidates hired for these essential roles. FSIS continued to offer retention benefits for PHVs, including recruitment and retention bonuses for new PHVs; student loan repayment; and the PHV Continuing Education Program that helps offset the costs of State licensure requirements, board certifications, degree programs, and job-related learning. For 2025, FSIS reimbursed 112 PHVs to support their continuing education.

FSIS also offers a unique incentive to Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Students. The Adel A. Malak Scholarship program provides tuition assistance and on-the-job training to enrolled veterinary students to incentivize careers at FSIS. In addition to tuition assistance, the program offers a negotiable work schedule, pays for hours worked, and guarantees a job with FSIS upon successful completion. This scholarship program remains a key element of FSIS' recruitment strategy to attract and retain PHVs and compete with private industry as an employer of choice. In 2025, FSIS converted five Adel A. Malak veterinary scholars to career positions and onboarded eight new scholars. As part of the USDA Rural Veterinary Action Plan, FSIS committed to increasing tuition reimbursement and the number of veterinary students accepted into the scholarship program beginning in 2026.

Employee Engagement

FSIS prioritizes regular engagement with its workforce to ensure employees are informed, heard, and equipped to contribute to the agency’s food safety mission. Throughout the year, FSIS solicited and considered feedback from monthly employee town hall calls, surveys, and its employee feedback email inbox. By communicating frequently, providing ample feedback opportunities, and taking steps to implement meaningful changes, FSIS strives to embody a workplace where employees seek to build fulfilling careers to protect public health.

FSIS recognizes employee achievements in its weekly employee newsletter and LinkedIn account. These ongoing communication channels strengthen transparency, foster a culture of accountability, and help ensure that employees remain connected, informed, and empowered to carry out FSIS’ public health mission. By investing in recruitment, training, engagement, and retention, FSIS strengthened the capability and capacity of its frontline workforce to safeguard public health and fulfill the agency’s statutory requirements.

2.2 Modernizing Inspection Systems

FSIS continuously evaluated opportunities in 2025 to modernize inspection systems, ensuring agency activities remained meaningful to public health, were efficiently used resources, were practical for regulated establishments, and were grounded in science-based approaches to food safety. These efforts included rulemaking on a modernized inspection approach in swine and poultry establishments, removing outdated and unnecessary regulations, and applying insights from the Boar’s Head outbreak to strengthen *Listeria* control in RTE establishments. Collectively, these initiatives demonstrated FSIS’ commitment to refining its methods and tools to continue protecting consumers while furthering industry compliance.

Visual Post-Mortem Inspection in Swine Establishments

In August 2025, FSIS issued a proposal to amend post-mortem inspection requirements in swine slaughter establishments, specifically to remove mandatory lymph node incision and viscera palpation. FSIS determined these steps are not needed to ensure food safety and may even increase the risk of cross-contamination.

Line Speed Studies & Waiver Extensions

In March 2025, the Department announced FSIS would be extending waivers allowing swine and poultry establishments to maintain higher line speeds, ensuring they can meet demand without excessive government interference. USDA started to undergo rulemaking to formalize these line speed increases permanently, with updates expected in 2026.

FSIS Boar’s Head Report

In January 2025, FSIS issued a report summarizing initial findings and recommendations resulting from a large outbreak of *Lm* illnesses linked to RTE meat and poultry products produced at a Virginia Boar’s Head establishment. The report informed both policy updates and targeted operational improvements.

Through these ongoing initiatives, FSIS demonstrated its commitment to enhancing inspection systems in ways that maximize public health protection, optimize resource use, and maintain feasibility for regulated establishments, all while adhering to rigorous science-based standards.

2.3 Supporting Small & Very Small Establishments

USDA is committed to supporting the expansion of processing capacity and building a more resilient supply chain by supporting independent small and very small establishments. FSIS has multiple programs in place to provide resources for these smaller plants, such as direct outreach and guidance materials attuned to their unique needs.

In addition to monthly calls with all establishments, FSIS hosts a series of small plant roundtables each year to connect small business owners with USDA to promote understanding of food safety regulations and connect with the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service and USDA Rural Development for information on grants and funding opportunities. In 2025, FSIS hosted three regional roundtables in Ohio, Oklahoma, and South Dakota, with the option to attend virtually. The agency also hosted its third annual national roundtable in Florida with 60 in-person and 82 virtual attendees.

Launched in 2023, the small plant newsletter is distributed to all small and very small plants and highlights regulatory updates, knowledge articles, upcoming events, and frequently asked questions, all in one convenient and reliable resource. The FSIS Small Plant Help Desk and askFSIS continue to be available year-round to provide answers to technical, inspection-related questions that help to maintain effective policy understanding and implementation. In 2025, askFSIS responded to nearly 36,000 questions. Customers also viewed the agency's 821 publicly posted askFSIS Q&A's more than 600,000 times.

FSIS guidance materials help businesses of all sizes meet Federal regulations applicable to their establishments. While these documents are specially tailored for small and very small meat and poultry establishments, large establishments can also benefit from the information. This year, FSIS released seven new or updated guidance documents.

2.4 Labs & Sampling

FSIS laboratories operate 365 days a year, analyzing hundreds of product samples each day to identify potential hazards and threats to the food supply. In 2025, FSIS continued to strengthen its laboratory and sampling programs to support data-driven decision making and public health protection. Investments in laboratory capacity, including the operation of a new facility in Missouri, improved turnaround times for analyses and expanded the agency's ability to detect pathogens, allergens, and emerging hazards.

FSIS analyzed more than 109,000 samples submitted by inspectors. These samples were used to perform upwards of 460,000 tests for microbiological and chemical hazards, generating approximately 2.2 million individual test results in 2025. Using whole genome sequencing (WGS) and other characterization techniques, FSIS conducted microbiological characterization of nearly 12,900 bacterial isolates.

FSIS regularly evaluates its sampling programs to ensure they are meaningful to public health protection, provide the best available science and data to inform agency decisions, effectively utilize agency resources, and contribute to optimal workflow efficiencies. In 2025, the agency updated 10 laboratory methods to reflect the latest scientific advancements, enabling inspectors and scientists to identify risks more quickly and accurately. These method revisions expanded detection capabilities to include emerging hazards, reduced analysis time, and improved confidence in FSIS data.

The National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System (NARMS) is a national public health surveillance system that supports one-health focused environmental surveillance of potential sources of antimicrobial resistance. Through NARMS, FSIS, in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and State and local public health departments, tracks changes in antimicrobial susceptibility of select foodborne bacteria found in ill people, retail meats, and food animals. This year, FSIS collected and analyzed more than 5,400 intestinal and approximately 41,000 meat and poultry samples as part of this partnership.

2.5 Foodborne Illness, Investigations & Recalls

FSIS continuously monitors foodborne illnesses through coordination and data sharing among its partners, including FDA, CDC, and States. FSIS also uses its consumer complaint monitoring system, media reports, CDC PulseNet, and other data sources to conduct surveillance and investigate potential foodborne hazards associated with FSIS-regulated products. In 2025, FSIS received and evaluated more than 2,000 consumer complaints, 320 of which required additional investigations.

FSIS monitored 28 illness clusters potentially associated with FSIS-regulated products in 2025. The agency coordinated with CDC and other public health partners to investigate nine foodborne illness outbreaks possibly associated with FSIS-regulated products, representing 337 illnesses and 221 hospitalizations. Four of the nine outbreak investigations led to FSIS public communications because the investigations yielded specific or actionable information to share with the public.

There were 37 recalls in 2025: seven beef, eight poultry, seven pork, four Siluriformes fish, and 11 involving multiple species. More than 72 million pounds of meat and poultry products were recalled. Of the 37 total recalls, 33 were Class I (reasonable probability of serious, adverse health consequences or death), two were Class II (remote probability of adverse health consequences), and two were Class III (use of the product will not cause adverse health consequences). Eight recalls were due to extraneous material contamination; five were related to import violations; seven were due to undeclared allergens in the product; eight involved products produced without required inspection; six for possible microbiological contamination, specifically five for *Lm* and one for STEC; one for misbranding (undeclared species); one for nitrite levels in excess of the regulatory limit; and one for product inadvertently contaminated with a cleaning solution. Public Health Alerts (PHAs) are typically issued in lieu of a recall in situations when the product is no longer available to consumers in commerce but may still present a risk to human health. FSIS issued 27 PHAs: eight beef, seven poultry, five pork, and seven involving multiple species. Eight PHAs were due to undeclared allergens; seven were related to import violations; five were due to extraneous materials; four were due to *Lm* contamination; two for STEC; and one for product produced without required inspection.

2.6 PHIS

The Public Health Information System (PHIS) is a dynamic, comprehensive web-based system used to collect, consolidate, and analyze data pertaining to FSIS-regulated products. It is used by industry to conduct daily activities, such as viewing data, viewing reports, submitting export applications, appealing noncompliance records, and reporting adulterated product, among many other capabilities. PHIS integrates FSIS data sources to support a comprehensive, timely, and reliable data-driven approach to FSIS inspection. These data are readily available to FSIS field personnel conducting inspections, public health risk evaluations, and FSAs, as well as other FSIS employees who support these activities. Through improved data quality, reporting, management controls, and use, PHIS has enabled FSIS to communicate inspection data more effectively internally and with industry.

SECTION 3: State Food Safety & Inspection Programs

States may inspect meat or poultry products through the State MPI cooperative agreement after demonstrating that they enforce requirements “at least equal to” those imposed under the FMIA, PPIA, and HMSA. Of the 30 States with State MPI programs, 10 participated in the Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program in 2025, allowing 177 participating establishments to sell products across state lines. When it benefits FSIS, the agency may enter into a separate TA cooperative agreement with a state for the State MPI program to perform inspection or other regulatory activities on its behalf. By the end of 2025, FSIS had TA cooperative agreements with 12 State MPI programs.

SECTION 4: International Food Safety & Inspection Program

FSIS ensures that all meat, poultry, and egg products available to Americans, whether sourced domestically or from foreign countries, is safe. In 2025, FSIS oversaw imports from 33 countries and verified exports to countries that accept U.S. product around the globe. These efforts safeguarded consumers while supporting market access for U.S. products abroad.

4.1 U.S. Imports

In 2025, FSIS verified that imported meat, poultry, and egg products met U.S. food safety standards through foreign system equivalence determinations, onsite audits, and reinspection at U.S. points-of-entry. All commercial shipments of imported products were subject to FSIS reinspection to confirm proper labeling, wholesomeness, and compliance with FSIS import requirements.

During 2025, importers presented more than 6.5 billion pounds of meat and poultry products and approximately 5.8 million pounds of egg products to FSIS for reinspection at U.S. points-of-entry. The tables below provide detailed 2025 import statistics for meat, poultry, and egg products.

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES OF IMPORTED MEAT AND POULTRY PRODUCTS

Table FSIS-13 INSPECTION ACTIVITIES OF IMPORTED MEAT AND POULTRY PRODUCTS

	Total Product Presented for Routine Reinspection (Pounds) ⁴	Product Subjected to Additional TOIs (Pounds) ^{5,6}	Total Product Refused Entry (Pounds)	Refused Product Rectified (Pounds) ⁷	Total Accepted (Pounds) ⁸
2025					
TOTAL⁹	6,479,493,289	499,662,625	49,248,666	40,374,828	6,470,619,451

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES OF IMPORTED EGG PRODUCTS

Table FSIS-14 INSPECTION ACTIVITIES OF IMPORTED EGG PRODUCTS

	Total Product Presented for Routine Reinspection (Pounds) ⁴	Product Subjected to Additional TOIs (Pounds) ^{5,6}	Total Product Refused Entry (Pounds)	Refused Product Rectified (Pounds) ⁷	Total Accepted (Pounds) ⁸
2025					
TOTAL	5,759,131	1,776,529	138,457	132,913	5,753,587

FSIS conducts regular equivalence reviews and audits of foreign countries' food safety inspection systems and point-of-entry reinspection of all shipments of FSIS-regulated product prior to entering

U.S. commerce. In 2025, FSIS provided equivalence-related feedback to 37 eligible countries. In 2025, FSIS completed equivalence verification audits in 16 countries.

FSIS maintains updates in the PHIS import module for the 37 countries deemed equivalent and for the more than 30 countries seeking equivalence. In 2025, FSIS made 336 updates for countries eligible to export to the United States. This included adding new eligible foreign establishments or delisting those foreign establishments no longer eligible. FSIS continued to electronically exchange data on import applications with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

4.2 U.S. Exports

FSIS plays a critical role in supporting U.S. agricultural trade by ensuring that meat, poultry, and egg products exported from the United States meet all applicable domestic food safety standards as well as the requirements of importing countries, territories, and customs unions. The agency verifies compliance through its PHIS Export Module, establishment certifications, and product-specific requirements negotiated with international partners. Close coordination with foreign governments

⁴ Routine reinspection includes the Certification and Label Verification TOIs, as well as verification of product condition and identification of shipping damage.

⁵ Abbreviation: TOI, Type of Inspection.

⁶ This column is a subset of the total product presented and identifies the amount of product subjected to more in depth physical or laboratory TOIs, in addition to the routine reinspection TOIs (Certification and Label Verification).

⁷ Refused Product Rectified is the pounds of product that were initially refused entry but were subsequently brought into compliance and accepted. Issues amenable to rectification include labeling and certification.

⁸ Total Accepted includes all products that were initially inspected and passed plus product that was initially refused entry but later rectified.

⁹ Data include Siluriformes fish and fish products.

helps maintain confidence in the safety and quality of U.S. products, safeguard public health, and preserve access to global markets.

During 2025, FSIS certified the export of more than 8 billion pounds of U.S. meat and poultry products and approximately 20 million pounds of egg products to international markets. FSIS also expanded the PHIS Export Module to four additional countries and territories, for a total of 153 partners generating digitally signed export certificates in PHIS since the transition began in 2018. FSIS issued more than 347,000 electronic export certificates in PHIS in 2025.

In addition to increasing document security, these digitization efforts have expedited export certificate turnaround times and augmented the agency's ability to track exports, identify trends, and facilitate recalls when needed. FSIS implemented an electronic certification, or "eCert," data exchange with Chile to receive import eCert in 2025 and continued multiple technical engagements with Korea to advance progress on both export and import eCert exchange. FSIS also initiated an eCert technical engagement with Mexico for both export and import eCert exchange.

The agency regularly updates the export library, reviewing and approving approximately 6,300 export library updates in 2025. FSIS also reviewed approximately 900 applications from federally inspected establishments that want to export product to foreign countries and require official FSIS certification for eligibility.

In 2025, FSIS coordinated eight onsite audits conducted by foreign governments in the United States. The agency also supported eight onsite foreign establishment visits. By facilitating these audits and engagements, FSIS provides foreign food safety authorities with assurance that the FSIS inspection system consistently verifies safe, high-quality products for consumers worldwide.

4.3 International Engagement

FSIS reviews requests to return exported products to identify possible food defense and food safety concerns. As necessary, FSIS coordinates reinspection of shipments to ensure returning products are safe before entering U.S. commerce. In 2025, FSIS processed applications to return more than 500 shipments of exported meat, poultry, and egg products weighing approximately 23 million pounds.

Throughout 2025, FSIS held bilateral technical meetings with 35 countries and trading partners. The agency also undertook proactive outreach with international partners and organizations to clarify FSIS food safety policies, strategies, and import criteria, and to facilitate compliance with foreign countries' import conditions and other international obligations. In 2025, FSIS hosted or participated in 217 engagements on U.S. exports, foreign country equivalence requirements, and international coordination. These meetings strengthen relationships with trading partners by fostering mutual understanding of inspection systems and regulatory frameworks.

FSIS' participation in international food safety forums ensures U.S. food safety standards and science-based, risk-focused approaches are represented. In 2025, FSIS participated in international food safety organizations such as *Codex Alimentarius* and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum. FSIS continued to serve as a delegate or alternate delegate on six *Codex* committees, including Food Hygiene; Food Import and Export Certification and Inspection Systems; Contaminants in Food; Food Labeling; Pesticide Residues; and Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods. FSIS continued to chair the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene, leading discussions among 51 member countries, one member organization, and 11 observers.

FSIS worked with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) in developing international trade agreements and ongoing nonbinding agreements, including Trade and Investment Framework Agreements, to ensure consistency with U.S. regulations and food safety practices. In 2025, FSIS provided technical assistance to USTR with bilateral trade negotiations with 40 countries.

Together, FSIS' import and export programs ensure that all meat, poultry, and egg products entering and leaving the United States meet rigorous food safety standards. These coordinated efforts demonstrate the agency's commitment to fostering strong international collaboration on food safety.

SECTION 5: Public Health Data Communication Infrastructure System

Protecting public health requires the ability to make decisions based on real-time data, including during food safety emergencies. FSIS has enhanced this system to streamline data collection, support daily reporting, optimize resource management, and deliver secure, adaptable, and on-demand IT services. These capabilities ensure that data generated from inspection and laboratory activities can be quickly translated into actionable insights, enabling managers and program administrators to make informed decisions quickly and effectively, strengthening the agency's capacity to protect consumers.

In 2025, FSIS reached a major milestone by completing the full transition of all agency applications into the cloud. Case management systems such as AssuranceNet and NetFleet were also modernized to improve data accuracy, enable cross-system analytics, and streamline workflows. Retiring older, outdated analytics tools saved the agency approximately \$2 million in 2025.

Collectively, these advancements form a robust, future-ready infrastructure that improves operational efficiency, strengthens public health decision-making, and positions FSIS to readily adapt to emerging technology and unexpected challenges. The agency will continue to enhance the security, reliability, integrity and availability of its systems, maintaining near-constant uptime to support its field operations, laboratories, investigations, and emergency response.

SECTION 6: Cross-Cutting Accomplishments

FSIS advances public health through initiatives that span multiple areas of the agency's work. These cross-cutting efforts enhance the agency's data transparency; engage stakeholders across industry and consumer groups; leverage collaboration with Federal, State, and local partners; integrate cutting-edge research; and promote safe consumer practices. By addressing issues that cross traditional program boundaries, FSIS ensures its actions are coordinated and efficient to reinforce the effectiveness of its mission.

6.1 Data

FSIS uses data at every level of agency functioning to inform decisions, regulations, policies, outreach, and education materials. Prioritizing transparency and data sharing, FSIS has over 50 datasets that are publicly available on its website. Of these, 18 are updated on an annual basis, and the other 32 are updated at minimum on a quarterly basis, including sampling and testing reports, inspection task data (e.g., humane handling), and import data. Effective and efficient information flow is essential to stakeholder understanding and confidence in agency actions and decisions.

In 2025, FSIS advanced its commitment to transparency by modernizing how it shares laboratory testing data with the public. Establishment-specific sampling and testing datasets were updated to include additional variables, giving stakeholders richer information for analysis, modeling, and visualization. These datasets were published in an open, non-proprietary JavaScript Object Notation, or "JSON," format, consistent with the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018. 2025 updates to the RTE and egg product sampling datasets incorporated results from expanded testing, including non-*Lm Listeria* species from the FSIS' enhanced *Listeria* testing.

6.2 Stakeholder Engagement

In 2025, FSIS engaged extensively with stakeholders across industry, consumer groups, State and local partners, and the research community to inform its policies, programs, and regulatory approaches. In addition to its regular outreach to small and very small establishments (see Section 2.3), the agency held 10 meetings with industry groups, 10 with consumer representatives, and hosted 12 all-establishment town halls. FSIS leadership participated in a range of events, including 35

public-facing speaking engagements at industry conferences, association meetings, and events involving consumer organizations. Key topics included emerging food safety risks, regulatory priorities, and continued implementation of science-based practices.

Engagement and input from stakeholders are critical for program improvements. These interactions help FSIS ensure that its actions are practical, effective, and responsive to the needs of both the public and the regulated community, while also fostering transparency, trust, and collaboration across the food safety system.

6.3 Collaboration with Federal Public Health Partners

FSIS works closely with a wide range of partners—including Federal, State, local, Tribal, and territorial agencies, as well as industry, consumer groups, and research organizations—to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of food safety outcomes. Collaboration through working groups and formal partnerships enables the agency to strengthen prevention and response to foodborne illness, advance science-based initiatives, and support shared public health goals.

FSIS collaborates extensively with FDA and CDC on cross-disciplinary food safety priorities. This collaboration includes outreach to retailers on pathogen control and traceback technologies, cross-promotion of consumer food safety information via FoodSafety.gov and social media, and participation in specialized working groups. Key areas of partnership include foodborne outbreak surveillance, management, and response. These topics bring together laboratorians, epidemiologists, and environmental health professionals working at Federal, State, and local levels.

Through the Genomics for Food and Feed Safety (Gen-FS) consortium, FSIS collaborates with CDC, FDA, the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and the National Institutes of Health to harmonize WGS approaches for pathogen detection, characterization, and source identification. Gen-FS has strengthened FSIS' ability to identify outbreaks, alert the public, and detect gaps in food safety systems. In 2025, Gen-FS completed metadata updates for more than 100,000 bacterial isolates (13,000 from FSIS) shared on the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) pathogen detection database. Beginning in 2026, all *Salmonella* isolates uploaded to NCBI will be analyzed for a set of 60 virulence markers. Gen-FS also coordinated a WGS proficiency test for 70 Federal and State public health laboratories.

The agencies also coordinate through FoodNet, which helps public health officials better understand the epidemiology of common foodborne illnesses through active surveillance, population-based studies, and laboratory surveys. FSIS also collaborates on outbreak surveillance using CDC's PulseNet and the NCBI database, which rely on WGS to detect, characterize, and link pathogens across humans, food, and animals. These collaborations allow FSIS to rapidly identify outbreaks, trace sources, and implement preventive measures.

Additionally, FSIS and FDA coordinate on emerging contaminants and regulatory priorities, such as heavy metals and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or "PFAS." This involves coordinating sampling and testing plans, developing harmonized analytical methods, and close coordination during investigations.

6.4 Research & Studies

While FSIS is not a research funding organization, it recognizes the importance of scientific endeavors that may advance food safety related to the agency's mission. FSIS annually updates its list of research priorities and data gaps based on laboratory data, field findings, and outbreak information.

FSIS continued to work with ARS to address research needs, including projects related to *Salmonella* and *Lm*. In 2025, FSIS implemented a more rapid method for *Lm* into its laboratories based on ARS research. This method saves time and resources while maintaining sensitivity, specificity, and accuracy of results. FSIS also continued to work with ARS on improving *Salmonella* detection methods based on virulence factors. Avian influenza testing continued in 2025. FSIS laboratories tested dairy

cow muscle tissue, which resulted in only one positive sample, detected at a very low level, out of 837 tested, and the meat did not enter the food supply.

FSIS also continued its food safety fellowship program with the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE). In September 2025, the two ORISE fellows selected by the agency graduated from the fellowship program. The fellowship program is integral to strengthening partnerships with academia and mentoring the next generation of food safety scientists.

Regarding the agency's work related to safe handling instructions (SHI) on product labels, FSIS released the Consumer Labeling Research Final Report in May 2025. The report outlined the results of consumer responses to potential revisions to the SHI label. This study added to an extensive body of research commissioned by FSIS on the SHI label.

6.5 Consumer Education

FSIS' actions to protect public health extend to consumers through strategic outreach and education activities. FSIS disseminates educational resources through its website and social media platforms, including X, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. These tools allow FSIS to provide real-time updates on policies, research, and recalls; share information and resources to improve consumer understanding and daily practices; and advance public knowledge and trust by providing examples of the different ways FSIS carries out its mission.

Meanwhile, FSIS customer service representatives on the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline receive and respond to inquiries from consumers about how to keep their food safe. FSIS hotline representatives respond to inquiries through a toll-free phone number, email, and self-service information database through AskUSDA. During 2025, FSIS responded to nearly 10,000 inquiries, and more than 7.3 million customers accessed the self-service resource database.

In July, FSIS conducted six days of consumer education outreach at the first annual USDA Great American Farmers Market, hosting one of the event's most popular booths and engaging with over 1,500 visitors. The agency's life-size mascots—Thermy the Food Thermometer, Sally *Salmonella*, and Ernie *E. Coli*—drew steady crowds of attendees of all ages eager to take photos and spin the food safety trivia wheel. The line was consistently longer than most other attractions, and FSIS' volunteers kept visitors moving through while maintaining a positive family-friendly atmosphere. Participants left with increased awareness of safe food-handling practices and branded giveaways promoting the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline to extend the reach of consumer education beyond the event.

Throughout the year FSIS continued to proactively pitch media outlets to share vital food safety information. Annual food events, holidays, and emergency situations such as power outages and natural disasters continued to spark consumer inquiries, FoodKeeper app downloads, and food thermometer requests. In advance of hurricane and severe storm season, FSIS proactively shared 117,000 educational materials about keeping food safe during power outages with more than 400 different partners and organizations, including food banks; locations of the USDA Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; non-profits; and religious affiliates.

In 2025, FSIS continued to enhance communication of key information and analyses among FSIS employees, consumers, industry, government partners, and other stakeholders. Through its weekly *Constituent Update* newsletter, FSIS highlighted policy, programmatic, and consumer education updates relevant to 60,000 subscribers that include industry, consumers, academia, and the media.