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FOOD SAFETY CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION  
Meat Inspection Service  
MONTPELIER, VT  
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# MIS DIRECTIVE

6100.3  
Revision 2

10/01/23

## ANTE-MORTEM AND POST-MORTEM POULTRY INSPECTION

### I. PURPOSE

A. This directive instructs the Inspector-in-Charge (IIC) and offline and online inspection program personnel (IPP) on how to perform ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection of poultry and how to inspect the conditions under which the birds are processed. It also instructs IICs on how to make post-mortem dispositions for some poultry diseases and how to document these dispositions in the Public Health Information System (PHIS). This directive has been updated to clarify duties for the IIC, to update instructions on avian leukosis dispositions, and to remove previous instructions on worker safety hazards.

B. With the exception of instructions in Sections IV (Ante-mortem Inspection) and VI (Diseases and Conditions—Supplemental Information), which apply to IPP in all official poultry slaughter establishments, this directive is for IPP at establishments that do not operate under the New Poultry Inspection System (NPIS).

### KEY POINTS:

- *Describes the ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection procedures for poultry*
- *Provides supplemental information regarding diseases and conditions, including “Woody Breast” and “White Striping”*
- *Explains how IPP inspect airsacculitis salvage operations*
- *Sets out how IICs verify evisceration line speed process control and assess additional factors that may have an impact on the ability of IPP to perform proper inspection procedures*
- *Provides the documentation procedures for findings made during post-mortem poultry inspection, including the Animal Disposition Reporting (ADR) function in PHIS*
- *Provides updated instructions and regulations for avian leukosis dispositions*

## II. CANCELLATIONS

FSIS Directive 6100.3, *Ante-Mortem and Post-Mortem Poultry Inspection*, Rev.1, 11/12/19

## III. BACKGROUND

A. Under the Poultry Products Inspection Act (PPIA), VAAFM IPP are to perform ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection of poultry to prevent the entry into commerce of adulterated products. Products that are not adulterated qualify to bear the mark of inspection.

B. On August 17, 2023, FSIS published the final rule *Condemnation of Poultry Carcasses Affected With Any Form of Avian Leukosis Complex; Recission* ([88 FR 55909](#)), which amended the poultry products inspection regulations to rescind several regulations related to the inspection and condemnation of poultry carcasses affected with any of the forms of avian leukosis complex. Specifically, the rule rescinded 9 CFR 381.82, which required condemnation of poultry carcasses affected with one or more of the forms of the avian leukosis complex; and revised 9 CFR 381.87 to provide that any organ or other carcass part affected with tumors may be trimmed and that the unaffected parts of the carcass may be inspected and passed. The rule became effective on September 18, 2023.

C. Per 6 V.S.A. § 3305 (8), the federal meat inspection regulations and federal poultry inspection regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Title 9, Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 3, 9 CFR §§ 300.1 et seq., together with any amendments, supplements, or revisions thereto, are adopted, for the State meat inspection program to operate in an 'equal to' status.

## IV. ANTE-MORTEM INSPECTION

**NOTE:** This section applies to all poultry slaughter establishments, including the NPIS.

A. IPP are to perform ante-mortem inspection on the day of slaughter (9 CFR 381.70(a)) by observing poultry in coops or batteries before or after removal from the truck. When performing ante-mortem inspection, IPP are to observe:

1. The overall condition of the birds, including the head, with attention to the eyes; the legs; and the body of the birds; and
2. Whether there are any unusual swellings or any other abnormalities on the birds.

B. Signs of disease that IPP may observe on ante-mortem inspection include an abnormal number of moribund birds, swelling about the head and eyes, edema of the wattles, gasping and sneezing, off-colored feces, diarrhea, skin lesions, lameness, torticollis (e.g., wry neck), and bone or joint enlargement. IPP are to notify the IIC when they observe multiple birds exhibiting these signs of disease that may indicate disease conditions throughout the flock. IICs are to consult with a Veterinary Medical Officer (VMO), if the IIC is not a VMO and has questions about the appropriate disposition.

C. IICs are to designate as "VT Suspect" any birds that on ante-mortem inspection do not clearly show, but the IIC suspects, may have any disease or condition that, under 9 CFR part 381, may cause condemnation of part or the entire carcass on post-mortem inspection (9 CFR 381.72(a)). IICs are to verify that the establishment:

1. Segregates birds identified as suspects on ante-mortem inspection and slaughters the segregated birds separately; and
2. Releases poultry for treatment only under the control of the appropriate State officials. IICs are to notify the Office and follow the instructions in [FSIS Directive 6000.1](#), *Responsibilities Related to Foreign Animal Diseases (FADs) and Reportable Conditions*, when they suspect that birds are affected with a reportable or foreign animal disease (9 CFR 381.73).

D. IICs are to:

1. Condemn on ante-mortem inspection any birds with diseases or conditions that, under 9 CFR 381.71(a), warrant such action;
2. Verify that the establishment does not allow birds condemned on ante-mortem inspection to enter the official establishment for slaughter, and that the birds are disposed of as provided in 9 CFR 381.95;
3. Verify that birds that are dead-on-arrivals (DOAs) are identified, counted, and weighed, and the number is reported on FSIS Form 9061-2, Poultry Condemnation Certificate, and ensure that the number is recorded in the ADR function in PHIS;
4. Verify that DOAs:
  - a. Are not dressed nor conveyed into any department of the official establishment where poultry products are prepared or held; and
  - b. Are removed by the establishment through their live-hang sorting activities to prevent them from entering the slaughter operation. An infrequent occurrence of a DOA reaching post-mortem inspection might not be grounds for a noncompliance record (NR); however, if there is evidence of ongoing failure of the establishment to properly handle DOAs then noncompliance exists; and
5. Discuss DOA concerns in the weekly meeting with plant management and document as part of meeting minutes. If a trend of incidents continues and VAAFM determines that the establishment lacks process controls to prevent DOAs from being hung on the shackle line and entering the slaughter operation, IICs are to document an NR for systemic failure, under the Sanitation Performance Standards (SPS) verification task, citing 9 CFR 416.4(d), with additional reference to 9 CFR 381.71(a) within the text of the SPS NR. The IIC is to add a directed SPS task to document noncompliance, if a routine task is not available.

## V. POST-MORTEM INSPECTION

**NOTE:** This section is for IPP at establishments that do not operate under the NPIS. Online post-mortem inspection procedures for NPIS are described separately in [FSIS Directive 6500.1](#).

A. Online IPP are to perform the following procedures during post-mortem inspection:

1. Observe the overall condition of the carcass and look for evidence of an abnormal physiologic state that would indicate septicemia or toxemia (Sep/Tox). This includes evidence of systemic changes caused by bacteria or toxins in the blood that effect the whole carcass, such as:

- a. Unusual dark red, pale, or blue skin or meat color;
- b. Drying out of the skin that indicates dehydration; and
- c. Shrunken appearance that indicates muscle wasting. The keel bone may stick out from beneath the skin between the breast muscles.

If IPP observe only dark skin or meat, small carcasses, or slight dehydration, and the rest of the carcass, including the viscera appears normal, this would not indicate Sep/Tox.

2. Observe the exposed hock joints for inflammation, exudate, or swelling that indicates synovitis (inflammation of the hock joint) (9 CFR 381.86);
3. Reflect the flap (pulling the cut skin and muscle back) from the opening cut and observe the inner surfaces of the carcass for:
  - a. Yellow scabbed areas between the skin and subcutaneous tissue of the flaps that could indicate inflammatory process (IP) (9 CFR 381.86);
  - b. Exudate in, or cloudiness of, the air sacs that could indicate airsacculitis (9 CFR 381.84);
  - c. Tissue masses or abnormal appearing tissue that could indicate tumors (9 CFR 381.87); and
  - d. Swollen, reddened, congested kidneys that could indicate infection or Sep/Tox (9 CFR 381.83).
4. Examine the viscera for:
  - a. Gross enlargement or mottling of the spleen or liver that may indicate leukosis (9 CFR 381.87);
  - b. Yellow or pale exudate on the heart and lungs that may indicate airsacculitis; and
  - c. Hemorrhage, congestion, and swelling of the viscera, including the intestines if available, that may indicate Sep/Tox.
5. Observe the carcass exterior looking for:
  - a. Yellow, crusty skin lesions indicative of IP;
  - b. Emaciation (wasted condition), a prominent keel bone, and dark skin and muscle indicative of Sep/Tox;
  - c. Skin lesions such as keratoacanthomas (see Section [VI](#). D. below), or dermal forms of leukosis (9 CFR 381.87);
  - d. Breast muscle having a white or cooked appearance indicative of overscald (9 CFR 381.92); and

- e. Cherry red to purple skin on the carcass and neck that may indicate a cadaver or bird not bled out properly (9 CFR 381.90).
6. Instruct the “inspector’s helper”, if necessary, on disposition of abnormal or diseased carcasses (such as hang back, trim, salvage, or condemn); and
7. Instruct the “inspector’s helper” on hanging back carcasses with associated viscera at the designated location on the inspection stand for further correlation with the IIC when necessary.

B. IICs examine carcasses for post-mortem dispositions and correlate with IPP to ensure appropriate dispositions for carcasses and parts. To accomplish this critical role to protect public health, IICs are to:

1. Conduct a thorough and complete post-mortem examination of carcasses or parts that are held for their final examination. IICs are to use a consistent, systematic approach to examine the carcasses;
2. Include the viscera in the carcass examinations, when the viscera is available. IICs determine the specific examination procedures; however, they are to note that it is helpful to use a consistent method for every examination to not omit or overlook post-mortem lesions that may affect the disposition;
3. Seek diagnostic assistance by submitting tissue samples to the Pathology Branch at the Eastern laboratory per [FSIS Directive 10,230.6](#), *Submitting Tissue Specimens for Pathological or Diagnostic Microbiological Evaluation to the Laboratory*, when IICs would like this additional information. IICs are to consider the laboratory’s report within the context of ante-mortem and post-mortem findings;
4. Consult with a Veterinary Medical Officer (VMO), if the IIC is not a VMO and has questions about the appropriate disposition; and

**NOTE:** Final dispositions of poultry carcasses and visceral organs with diseases and other conditions are to be based on grossly visible lesions that the IICs can observe. While microscopic findings derived from histopathology can provide additional information on flock conditions, a final disposition on carcasses and visceral organs is usually not to be based exclusively on these laboratory reports when they are available. When necessary, the IICs combines the organoleptic inspection information with available laboratory information in making a diagnosis and disposition per [FSIS Directive 10,230.6](#).

5. Correlate with IPP during work unit meetings and when questions arise to review pathological lesions and explain accurate dispositions that are based on regulatory requirements (show, explain, discuss, and answer questions).

**NOTE:** IICs may use the Poultry Post-Mortem information in the [Multi-Species Disposition Guide for PHV’s](#) or the [Poultry Carcass Disposition](#) information for correlation. This information can be found in IPP Help.

## VI. DISEASES AND CONDITIONS – SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

**NOTE:** This section applies to all poultry slaughter establishments, including the NPIS.

A. This section provides disposition information for poultry conditions either not found in 9 CFR part 381 or supplemental information for conditions that are in the poultry regulations. Ascites, occult vaccine lesions, and keratoacanthomas are conditions not specifically described in 9 CFR part 381. If any of these conditions have progressed to systemic involvement, the carcass and viscera are to be condemned for Sep/Tox. IICs have regulatory authority under 9 CFR 381.80 to make disposition decisions on carcasses, organs, or other parts not specifically covered by regulations in 9 CFR 381.81 through 381.93.

B. Ascites: Broiler ascites is an abnormal condition occurring in young, rapidly-growing chickens. Rapid growth (resulting from nutritional and genetic improvements by the industry) may cause an increase in the oxygen demands on the chicken. The higher oxygen demand placed on the cardiopulmonary system of the chicken under stress leads to right heart failure and the subsequent accumulation of clear to amber fluid around the heart. The right heart failure may force the ascitic fluid into the abdominal cavity. Fluid is present in the body cavity at post-mortem in varying amounts. Ascitic fluid in the thoracic cavity may prevent inspection of the interclavicular air sac space. The liver may also present with a ground-glass appearance because of the deposition of fibrin on the surface. IPP are to:

1. Condemn carcasses with any amount of ascitic fluid present in the body cavity that also has signs of Sep/Tox (9 CFR 381.83) or other disease conditions, including inflammatory lesions, tumors, or other degenerative conditions;
2. Condemn carcasses with any amount of ascitic fluid present in the body cavity that prevents visualization of the interclavicular space; and
3. In non-NPIS establishments, instruct the “inspector’s helper” to record condemned birds under the Other category on [FSIS Form 6000-16](#), Poultry Inspection - Lot Tally Sheet (See Section X. for completing the documentation on the Lot Tally Sheet).

C. Occult Vaccination Lesions: Occult (obscured or concealed) vaccination lesions found in mature fowl are tissue responses to vaccines that laying hens receive at 10-14 weeks of age. Vaccines are administered in the muscle tissue of the breast, leg, wing, or tail, or subcutaneously in the dermis of the inguinal fold, neck, or wing web. Vaccine lesions may cause a reddened or inflamed area around the injection site, or a more severe lesion extending into the surrounding tissue. Offline IPP are to:

1. Verify that establishments slaughtering mature fowl in which occult post-vaccination lesions occur have considered vaccine lesions in their hazard analysis (9 CFR 417.2(a));
2. Verify that, if an establishment determines that vaccine lesions are a food safety hazard reasonably likely to occur in their process, they have established a Critical Control Point (CCP) and met the other requirements of 9 CFR 417.2(c);

- a. If an establishment determines that vaccine lesions are a food safety hazard reasonably likely to occur and has established a CCP, then offline IPP are to verify HACCP regulatory requirements for that CCP when they perform the routine HACCP verification task. Offline IPP are to initiate a directed HACCP task to verify establishment handling of vaccination lesions, if online IPP notify them that the establishment's process is under questionable control; or
- b. If the establishment has considered vaccine lesions not reasonably likely to occur because they have a prerequisite program in place to assure removal of the lesions, then offline IPP are to verify the effectiveness of the prerequisite program by following the instructions in [FSIS Directive 5000.1](#), *Verifying an Establishment's Food Safety System*.

D. Keratoacanthomas: Avian keratoacanthomas, previously known as "dermal squamous cell carcinomas," are lesions found in the skin of young chickens that arise from the feather follicle epithelium. At slaughter, the lesions may present as concave (curved surface), pitted areas up to ~2 cm in width. Avian keratoacanthomas are not a disease of public health significance.

1. IPP are to condemn carcasses with large coalescing (joining together) lesions (9 CFR 381.87).
2. Offline IPP are to verify that the establishment trims the few, small lesions found on carcasses.

E. Tumors:

1. Tumors, which includes those caused by avian leukosis complex (also referred to as avian leukosis), may be trimmed from any affected organ or other part of a carcass where there is no evidence of metastasis or that the general condition of the carcass has not been affected by the size, position, or nature of the tumor. IPP are to pass trimmed carcasses otherwise found to be not adulterated as human food (9 CFR 381.87).
2. IPP are to condemn any organ or other part of a carcass, which is affected by a tumor where there is evidence of metastasis. IPP are to condemn the carcass when the general condition of the carcass has been affected by the size, position, or nature of the tumor (9 CFR 381.87).

F. Cadavers:

1. Cadavers are poultry that die from causes other than slaughter or are not physiologically dead because of ineffective slaughter before they enter the scald vat and drown. Carcasses of poultry that die from drowning may exhibit signs of incomplete exsanguination (bleed-out), resulting in an unwholesome carcass. The skin of the carcass or neck is cherry red to purple. (9 CFR 381.90).
2. IPP are to condemn as a cadaver the carcasses meeting the cadaver criteria above and instruct the "inspector's helper" to record condemned birds under the Cadaver category on FSIS Form 6000-16, (See Section X. for completing the documentation on the Lot Tally Sheet).

- a. Cadavers can be differentiated from birds found DOA at the establishment. A DOA carcass presented at post-mortem will typically be purplish in color, the viscera will be congested, and, depending on how long the bird has been dead, the viscera and carcass may exhibit signs of decomposition. Evidence of decomposition may include friable (soft and tears easily) visceral organs, carcass discoloration, and off-condition odor.
- b. A DOA carcass creates insanitary conditions because it is adulterated and not intended for human food. However, these carcasses die from causes other than slaughter BEFORE entering the slaughter operation, and therefore, they differ from carcasses incompletely bled out due to missing or incomplete neck cuts.
- c. IPP are to condemn DOA carcasses and notify offline inspection personnel who are to then verify establishment controls to prevent DOAs from entering the establishment (See Section [IV. C.](#) and 9 CFR 381.71). Offline IPP are to issue an NR when there is evidence of ongoing failure to prevent DOAs from entering slaughter operations.
- d. Any DOA condemned at post-mortem inspection is to be recorded as a cadaver on FSIS Form 6000-16.

G. Overscalded Carcasses: Cooking through or into the deep pectoral breast muscle of a poultry carcass in the poultry scald occurs in an overscald carcass. It is important for IPP to differentiate an overscald carcass from a hardscald carcass. Cooking of the most superficial surface of the superficial pectoral (breast) muscle occurs in a hardscald carcass and produces only a whitening of that surface. IPP are to:

1. Condemn carcasses cooked in the poultry scald to the level of the deep pectoral muscle (9 CFR 381.92); or
2. Pass carcasses where the scald only produced a whitening of the superficial pectoral muscle.

H. Poultry Liver Dispositions: IPP are to condemn livers (9 CFR 381.78(a)) with any of the following conditions:

1. Fatty degeneration characterized by visible, well defined light spots. IPP are to consider livers with a yellow color throughout or in two or more places, resulting from excessive fat deposits (fatty infiltration), as wholesome. Fat birds, especially fowl and occasionally fryers, commonly have the uniform yellow colored liver;
2. Hemorrhages (excessive blood loss into the liver from the blood vessels that may appear as blood clots) or extensive petechiae (small perfectly round purplish red spots). IPP are to consider the typical "paint brush" appearance as being insignificant;
3. Inflammation and necrosis;
4. Cirrhosis, tumor, and cyst. IPP are to condemn livers with any tumors, one large cyst or several small cysts;
5. Discoloration caused by gall bladder or bile duct abnormalities or post-mortem changes;



or

6. A specific disease (for example, chronic viral hepatitis).

I. Poultry Kidney Dispositions:

1. IPP are to condemn kidneys (9 CFR 381.78(a)) when:
  - a. Renal (kidney) pathology, including tumors, are present; or
  - b. Airsacculitis is present specifically in the abdominal air sac membranes making the kidneys an affected tissue, and the posterior (back) part of the carcass is salvaged for airsacculitis per 9 CFR 381.84;
2. In non-NPIS establishments, online IPP are to instruct the “inspector’s helper” to mark the birds for removal of the kidneys. Offline IPP are to verify removal of the kidneys by the establishment.
3. Hepatic (liver) or splenic (spleen) pathology which IPP determine is localized and visibly limited to the affected organ require only the affected visceral organ is condemned. Localized pathology of the liver or spleen does not require simultaneous condemnation of the kidneys unless the kidneys are also affected by visible pathological changes.
4. IPP are to retain the carcass for IIC disposition when they have a question as to whether the carcass is condemnable per 9 CFR 381.77.

J. “Woody Breast” and “White Striping”:

1. Signs of inflammation that may accompany “Woody Breast” muscle abnormalities can feature:
  - a. Swollen or firm breast muscles;
  - b. Scattered, small, pinpoint blood spots or patches (hemorrhages) of varying severity on surface of muscles, especially at the top or shoulder end of the breast fillet;
  - c. Thick, gelatinous, often blood-stained fluid and presence of deteriorated muscle tissue; and
  - d. One or both sides of the breast may be affected.
2. Inflammatory tissues are adulterated since they are unwholesome and unfit for human food thus establishments are required to remove them by trimming, as required for other trim defects. Breast muscle changes that do not exhibit active inflammatory signs, for example “White Striping” only, are considered a quality issue and do not necessarily require removal by trimming. White striping of breast muscles is not consistently associated with inflammation or fibrosis.
3. If IPP have questions about identifying and trimming inflammatory tissue, they are to consult with the IIC.

4. If IPP observe inflammatory tissue associated with “Woody Breast” in further processing, for example at deboning or packaging, IPP are to determine whether the product lot is usable. IPP are to make this determination based on the entire lot and not on individual defects within a product lot. Products fail examination per 9 CFR 381.145(b) if defects are severe or numerous enough to affect the usability of the product. This is because there is not a zero tolerance for trimmable defects.
5. After considering any findings and making a determination that the process is out of control, IPP are to issue an NR using the PHIS Other Inspection Requirements task, to document that the establishment is producing product with inflammatory tissue that is not useable and is adulterated because it is unwholesome and unfit for human food citing 9 CFR 381.1.
6. In an establishment that receives raw poultry with a high incidence of inflammatory tissues associated with “Woody Breast”, which IPP have determined to be adulterated, IPP are to follow instructions in [FSIS Directive 8140.1](#), *Receipt of Adulterated or Misbranded Product*.
7. In slaughter operations, offline IPP are to verify removal of inflammatory tissues according to Finished Product Standards (FPS) testing regulations (9 CFR 381.76) for Streamlined Inspection System (SIS) and New Line Speed (NELS), or according to [FSIS Directive 6500.1 in NPIS establishments](#). Under Traditional Inspection, trim is controlled at the point of post-mortem inspection by the post-mortem inspector.

**NOTE:** Online post-mortem inspectors are not responsible for ripping skin or palpating carcasses to visualize or detect inflammation or fibrosis associated with “Woody Breast”. VAAFM offline personnel in a slaughter establishment evaluate the effectiveness of any establishment sorting activities or a salvage program related to these conditions.

## **VII. AIRSACCULITIS SALVAGE OPERATIONS**

**NOTE:** This section is for IPP at establishments that do not operate under the NPIS.

A. 9 CFR 381.84 requires that establishments completely remove and condemn tissues affected with airsacculitis, including exudates, in carcasses not condemned. In addition, 9 CFR 381.84 requires condemnation of the whole carcass if there is evidence of extensive involvement of the air sacs, or if there is systemic change to the carcass. Establishments may have procedures in place to salvage carcasses by ensuring the removal of all affected tissues and exudates in a sanitary manner. Salvaged carcasses are subject to reinspection per 9 CFR 381.76(b)(3)(iii)(c).

B. When establishments do not have airsacculitis programs, the online inspector is to condemn airsacculitis affected carcasses and instruct the “inspector’s helper” to record condemned birds under the airsacculitis category on the FSIS Form 6000-16. The IIC is to note in the “Remarks” section of FSIS Form 9061-2 that the establishment does not have a salvage program for airsacculitis.

C. When establishments have airsacculitis salvage programs but choose not to salvage all affected carcasses, the inspector is to continue to identify birds eligible for salvage.

1. Establishments may regulate the flow of product by sending the affected carcasses to salvage or by disposing of salvageable carcasses and marking those carcasses as “plant rejects” on FSIS Form 6000-16.
2. When the specific production is extensively affected with airsacculitis, establishments with a salvage program may elect to suspend airsacculitis salvage for the entire specific production. When the establishment notifies the IIC that it has suspended salvage operations for the specific production, the IIC is to instruct the online inspection team to condemn birds with airsacculitis lesions and to instruct the “inspector’s helper” to record these condemned birds under the airsacculitis category on FSIS Form 6000-16.
3. The IIC is to note in the “Remarks” section of FSIS Form 9061-2 that the salvage operation was suspended by the establishment for the duration of the affected specific production.

**NOTE:** The establishment determines the size of the specific production, e.g., a lot, a portion of a lot, a house, an hour’s production, or a day’s production.

### **VIII. IIC AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EVISCERATION PROCESS CONTROL AND LINE SPEED**

**NOTE:** This section is for IPP at establishments that do not operate under the NPIS.

A. IICs are authorized to adjust evisceration line speeds, as necessary, since the maximum processing line speeds are only allowed under optimal conditions. ([9 CFR 381.76\(b\)\(3\)\(iii\)\(b\)](#) contains the regulations for proper presentation for each type of slaughter system and [9 CFR 381.76\(b\)\(3\)\(ii\)\(a\)](#) for line speed based on health of each flock and the manner in which birds are being presented to the inspector).

B. To determine whether the establishment maintains optimal conditions to dress carcasses at its operational line speed and meets the line speed regulatory requirements, IICs are to:

1. Perform presentation checks or otherwise assess presentation, including line speed checks, as often as necessary to assess process control and the ability of IPP to perform bird-by-bird inspection, as required by the PPIA and the regulations, for pathology, contamination, and presentation;

**NOTE:** Presentation logs for the various evisceration systems (FSIS Forms 6510-10, 6510-11, 6510-12) are available on the [Inside FSIS](#), FSIS Forms menu. Users need an e-authentication account to access these forms.

2. Assess as quickly as possible the presentation and health status of the flock when online IPP report potential problems with presentation or an increase in carcass contamination rate or in the pathology of the birds;
3. Assess opening cuts – carcasses should be adequately opened to readily reveal the inner carcass surfaces when inspectors reflect the abdominal flaps. If evisceration equipment is not designed for larger carcasses, i.e., the shackle distance is too small for

bird size, inadequate opening cuts may hinder efficient inspection;

4. If the establishment slaughters large or heavy birds or birds with inconsistent sizes or weights, determine whether online carcass inspectors assigned to young chicken establishments can perform proper inspection in the time available, when inspectors report that they are routinely using two hands to reflect the fat flaps or are having difficulty in observing the inside cavity; and

**NOTE:** The inspection procedure for automated equipment systems (e.g., Meyn, Nutech) is observing the viscera and using two hands to reflect fat flaps. Therefore, using two hands to reflect the flaps does not necessarily mean inspectors are having difficulty observing the cavity. However, that does not mean that line speed cannot be reduced in establishments using automated equipment if inspectors need more time for proper inspection. Using both hands to reflect the fat flaps of birds slaughtered in SIS and NELS establishments is a stronger indication of difficulty in observing the inside cavity, since proper inspection requires one hand to reflect the flap and one hand to manipulate the viscera. For additional information on heavy, young chickens, see Section VIII. E. below.

5. Measure the maximum allowed line speed using physical methods. The maximum allowed line speed is a whole number. Any line speed measurement resulting in a fraction is to be rounded up to the next highest whole number.

C. IICs are to assess whether inspectors can adequately inspect each carcass at the line speed the establishment operates and reduce line speeds as necessary to ensure that online IPP can perform post-mortem inspection of each poultry carcass. The IIC, if not a (VMO), is to consult with a VMO when line speed or presentation concerns are related to the health status of the flock. If in the judgment of the IIC a carcass-by-carcass inspection cannot be adequately performed, the IIC is to reduce the line speed to a speed at which IPP can perform the proper inspection procedures. These conditions may include the following:

1. A flock or specific production has a high number of carcasses with disease or other conditions;
2. Loss of process control that results in an excessive number of contaminated carcasses being presented to online IPP;
3. Carcasses are not appropriately presented to online IPP;
4. The class of poultry requires additional inspection time; or
5. The size or weight of the carcasses requires additional inspection time, for example when an establishment slaughters heavy young chickens.

#### D. Line Speed Adjustments

1. IICs are to reduce the line speed, in accordance with presentation standards for the applicable inspection system, until online IPP can adequately perform the post-mortem procedures within the time available.
  - a. For SIS-based systems (35 birds per minute (BPM) per inspector; this includes Meyn, Nutech equipment), the IIC is to reduce the line speed in 10% increments

until inspection can be adequately performed within the time available.

- b. For NELS-based systems (30 1/3 BPM per inspector), the IIC is to reduce the line speed in 10 BPM increments until inspection can be adequately performed within the time available. For example, if the evisceration line has 3 online inspection stations, the maximum line speed is 91 BPM and IICs would first reduce the line speed to 81 BPM.
2. IICs are to increase the line speed in the same manner once conditions have improved.
    - a. For SIS-based systems (35 BPM per inspector), the IIC is to increase the line speed in 10% increments until the regulatory line speed is reached or inspection can be adequately performed within the time available.
    - b. For NELS-based systems (30 1/3 BPM per inspector), the IIC is to increase the line speed in 10 BPM increments until the regulatory line speed is reached or inspection can be adequately performed within the time available.

#### E. Heavy Young Chickens

1. Less than optimal conditions for post-mortem inspection include heavy young chicken carcasses with ample fat deposits under the abdominal flaps, possibly with accompanying presentation errors, such as inadequate opening cuts. Line speed reductions are to be based on whether online inspectors have the amount of time they need to adequately perform inspection procedures, which is affected by the following factors:
  - a. Carcass size – IPP may require additional time for inspection of heavy young chicken carcasses (average weight over 6 pounds) because such carcasses may have more fat on the abdominal flaps than smaller carcasses, which could obstruct visualization of the abdominal cavity, or because the increased size of these birds may mean that more time and the use of both hands is needed to view these larger, heavier carcasses.
  - b. IICs are to determine whether to classify young chickens as heavy.
  - c. To designate a heavier weight flock (average weight over 6 pounds), IICs may randomly select and weigh 10 birds per specific production at the establishment's transfer station. If the average weight of the 10 young chickens exceeds 6 pounds, IICs are to define the specific production as heavy young chickens and set the line speed accordingly. IICs are to use this procedure of reducing the line speed if the online inspection program personnel are routinely using both hands to reflect the flaps of the birds.
  - d. IICs are not to automatically reduce line speeds based only on bird weight or size unless there is a documented history of numerous and repetitive line speed reductions for this issue on Memoranda of Interview (MOI) (see G. 2. below). IICs are to consider whether the establishment's evisceration equipment and system is adequate to present heavy young chickens for post-mortem inspection in a manner that would not need additional inspection time.

#### F. Missing or No Viscera Carcasses

1. If a carcass has at least one major visceral part (heart, liver, or spleen) present, IPP can make a disposition based on inspection of that part and the carcass.
2. If the establishment presents a carcass with no viscera (some visceral parts present, but all three major organs are missing, or no viscera entirely), and IPP determine that they are unable to make a disposition, IPP are to retain the carcass for the IIC.
  - a. If IPP begin to observe no viscera carcasses presented with a disease condition or abnormality in the specific production that requires the presence of the viscera for IPP to make a disposition, then IPP are to retain the carcasses and notify the IIC.
  - b. IICs are to assess the specific production, if necessary. If no disease condition is present that would prevent IPP from making a disposition on the “no viscera” carcasses, then the IIC is to direct IPP to continue with post-mortem inspection on that specific production. If a condition is present that influences the disposition determination of the “no viscera” carcass, the IIC is to direct IPP to hang back the “no viscera” carcasses for final disposition by the IIC. IICs may also conduct a presentation check.

#### G. IICs (or Designees) are to Document a Reduction of Line Speed:

1. On an NR when the maximum allowed line speed is exceeded, or when the allowable number of presentation errors that call for an immediate reduction in line speed is reached. In the NR, the IIC is to describe findings that support the reduction in line speed and cite the appropriate regulations (9 CFR 381.76, 381.67, 381.68, and 381.65) using the PHIS Other Inspection Requirements task; or
2. On an MOI when other conditions, such as bird size, require a reduction in line speed. In the MOI the IIC is to describe findings that support both the reduction in line speed and the line speed reduction required to allow inspection to be adequately performed within the time available. The IIC is to provide a copy to the establishment and inform its management that if a history of multiple and repetitive MOIs on this issue develops, the line speed will automatically be reduced to that documented for young chickens of the same or similar size.

H. Light quality at the post-mortem inspection station: The ability to see carcass interior surfaces depends on the quality and positioning of lighting. Although establishments may meet regulatory lighting requirements (9 CFR 381.36, minimum of 200-footcandles of shadow-free lighting with a color rendering index of 85), optimum positioning of the light to see inside the carcass becomes more critical when operating at high line speeds.

- I. IICs are to regularly observe the performance of each inspector who performs post-mortem inspection to ensure uniform inspection procedures; they are also to regularly correlate with inspectors concerning appropriate Agency standards for carcass dispositions and inspection decisions.

## **IX. ONLINE IPP AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROCESS CONTROL AND SAFETY**

**NOTE:** This section is for IPP at establishments that do not operate under the NPIS.

A. Online inspectors have authority to stop the line; however, they do not have the authority to slow line speeds.

B. In order to ensure their safety and health, online inspectors are to stop the line for hazards needing immediate intervention. Such hazards include, but are not limited to, preventing injury because of a malfunction of automated shackles, saws, or other equipment or because of accidental splashing of bile or fluid in the eyes. VAAFM inspectors are to stop the line if establishment employees report that an imminent danger is present.

C. Online inspectors assigned to a poultry slaughter establishment are to:

1. Notify the IIC or offline IPP if they:
  - a. Detect trends of increasing contamination, pathology, disease, or improper presentation; or
  - b. Believe that the chickens are heavy young chickens (exceeding 6 pounds at the transfer station) and that inspection cannot be adequately performed within the time available, because they are routinely using both hands to reflect the fat flaps of birds and thus having difficulty observing the inside cavity; and
2. Stop the line at times needing immediate intervention to prevent the production of adulterated or unwholesome product. For example:
  - a. If numerous birds in a row are presented that have excessive contamination or disease conditions, or if there is improper presentation at the inspection station, IPP are to stop the line until the immediate situation is corrected.
  - b. If the occurrence of contaminated or diseased birds is occasional, the online inspector is to direct the inspector's helper to "hang back" the carcass without stopping the line.
  - c. Stop the line when an online inspector's ability to conduct a complete post-mortem inspection is being impeded by the establishment helper or other personnel.

## **X. POULTRY POST-MORTEM DOCUMENTATION**

**NOTE:** This section is for IPP at establishments that do not operate under the NPIS.

A. The IIC or designee is to complete the appropriate sections of [FSIS Form 6000-16](#), Poultry Inspection – Lot Tally Sheet. This Form is available in the Inside FSIS Forms Library. Users need an e-authentication account to access this form. The information to enter on these forms includes:

1. Inspection date;
2. Shift of inspection;
3. Establishment number;
4. Specific production (lot number);
5. Class of poultry; and
6. Name of the FSIS online inspector. The name can be written in or applied by computer stamp; a signature is not necessary.

B. Online IPP are to:

1. Give FSIS Form 6000-16 to the “inspector’s helper” at the beginning of each shift;
2. Instruct the “inspector’s helper” in recording carcass condemnations on FSIS Form 6000-16 as an accurate record of the incidence of diseases encountered during post-mortem inspection; and
3. Ensure that the offline IPP receive FSIS Form 6000-16 at the end of the shift.

C. Offline IPP are to:

1. Total the condemnations for each category of condemned birds from FSIS Form 6000-16 of the online IPP;
2. Record on FSIS Form 6000-16 plant reject totals received from establishment personnel during the shift. Plant rejects are carcasses rejected or disposed of by the establishment before inspection or at re-inspection; and
3. Transfer the totals to the ADR section of PHIS. IPP can find tutorials on how to enter animal disposition information in PHIS in the IPP Help, PHIS Help function, under [PHIS Domestic Tutorials](#).

D. Entering Animal Disposition and Poultry Class Information in PHIS

1. IPP are to enter the poultry class information for each lot. The establishment provides the Poultry Lot Information, which IPP enter in the appropriate data fields. The establishment is required to furnish VAAFMM accurate information needed for the animal disposition data and poultry class information (9 CFR 381.180(a)). This information includes the total number of live birds and their total live weight per specific production lot and the total pounds condemned at ante-mortem inspection related to DOAs. The establishment needs to also supply the total weight in pounds of carcasses and of parts condemned during post-mortem slaughter and the total weight in pounds of chilled or frozen product from that specific production. The establishment usually provides this information on FSIS Form 6510-7, *Poultry Lot Information*; however, the establishment could use another method.



- The poultry class information includes *Dead on Arrival (weight) (DOA)* and *Ante-mortem condemned not including DOAs (weight)*. IPP are to enter the weight of the birds VAAFM condemns on ante-mortem inspection in the *Ante-mortem condemned not including DOAs (Weight)* field; see Screen Shot 1.

Screen Shot 1

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**A New Poultry Record**

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Sub-Class\* :

Lot Number\* :

Head Count:

Weight Reported  Weight Not Reported

Live Weight:	<input type="text"/>	lbs.	Dead on Arrival (Weight):	<input type="text"/>	lbs.
Certified Chilled Weight:	<input type="text"/>	lbs.	Ante-mortem condemned not including DOAs (Weight):	<input type="text"/>	lbs.
Certified Frozen Weight:	<input type="text"/>	lbs.	Post-mortem Condemned Carcass NYD (Weight):	<input type="text"/>	lbs.
Dead on Arrival (Head Count):	<input type="text"/>		Ante-mortem condemned not including DOAs (Head Count):	<input type="text"/>	
Post-mortem Condemned Parts (Weight):	<input type="text"/>	lbs.	Post-mortem Condemned (Head Count):	<input type="text"/>	

- In establishments not using NPIS, the *Miscellaneous* field in the Post-mortem Carcass Condemnation Details grid is activated. IPP are to use this field for reporting the number of carcasses condemned for reasons that do not correspond with the other categories listed in the condemnation causes grid. Ascites is an example of a condition that is to be reported in the *Miscellaneous* field.

E. Poultry Condemnation Certificate, FSIS Form 9061-2

- PHIS automatically generates FSIS Form 9061-2 (8/11/16) from the poultry class and condemnation information. IPP can view and print a condemnation certificate after they enter the ADR data as depicted in Screen Shot 2 below.

Screen Shot 2

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE  
INSPECTION OPERATIONS

### POULTRY CONDEMNATION CERTIFICATE

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Provide original and one copy to Plant Management, one copy to Grower, and one copy to Establishment file.

1. DATE INSPECTED	2. PLANT NO.	3. CLASS OF POULTRY	4. NO. HEAD IN LOT*	5. LOT NO(S) (As stated by plant management)	
08/25/2016	P-000	Young Chicken	40000	1234	
<b>ANTE-MORTEM INSPECTION</b>		CONDEMNED ON ANTE-MORTEM INSPECTION		DEAD ON ARRIVAL	
		6. NO. HEAD *	7. WEIGHT *	8. NO. HEAD *	9. WEIGHT *
		0	0.00 lbs.	100	500.00 lbs.
<b>POST-MORTEM INSPECTION</b>		CONDEMNED ON POST-MORTEM INSPECTION			
		10. CARCASSES (NYD) *	11. PARTS *	12. TOTAL NO. HEAD CONDEMNED/DISPOSED OF **	
		600.00 lbs.	200.00 lbs.	135	
CONDEMNATION CAUSE	NO. HEAD CONDEMNED	CONDEMNATION CAUSE	NO. HEAD CONDEMNED	CONDEMNATION CAUSE	NO. HEAD CONDEMNED
Tuberculosis	0	Bruises	12	Inflammatory Process (IP)	12
Leukosis	0	Cadavers	0	No Viscera (NV)	0
Septicaemia and Toxemia	70	Contamination	3	Plant Rejects	20
Synovitis	0	Overscald	0	Miscellaneous	3
Tumors	0	Airsacculitis	15		

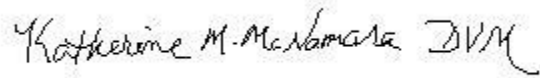
13. REMARKS: The condition affecting this lot of poultry was characterized by the following gross-lesions:

2. When the establishment requests a condemnation certificate, IICs, or their designees, are to:
  - a. Print three copies of FSIS Form 9061-2 from the ADR section of PHIS.
  - b. The establishment and the IIC, or their designee, are to sign all three forms;
  - c. Retain one copy after establishment management signs the form and retain the copy for the current fiscal year plus one additional fiscal year; and
  - d. Give the remaining two copies of the form to the establishment.

**XII. QUESTIONS**

Refer questions regarding this directive to your supervisor, or if needed to the Office of Policy and Program Development through [askFSIS](#) or by telephone at 1-800-233-3935. When submitting a question, complete the [web form](#) and select General Inspection Policy for the inquiry type.

**NOTE:** Refer to [FSIS Directive 5620.1](#), *Using askFSIS*, for additional information on submitting questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine M. McNamara DVM". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "K" and "M".

Katherine M. McNamara, DVM  
Assistant State Veterinarian  
Meat Inspection Service