



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and Inspection Service

ANNUAL PLAN

FISCAL YEAR 2021



Protecting Public Health and Preventing
Foodborne Illness

Message From the Administrator	ii
Acronyms and Abbreviations	iii
Introduction	iv
Agency Performance Management and Governance	v
Goal 1: Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health	1
Goal 2: Modernize Inspection Systems, Policies, and the Use of Scientific Approaches	4
Goal 3: Achieve Operational Excellence	6
Result 16: Enhance Collaboration With Our Partners	9



I am excited to publish the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Annual Plan of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). This Annual Plan builds upon the last four years of accomplishments under the Food Safety and Inspection Service Strategic Plan 2017-2021. Fiscal Year 2020 brought unprecedented challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, but FSIS personnel in the field, laboratories, human resources offices in Minneapolis, policy development offices in Omaha, and headquarters have continued to advance our strategic goals while ensuring the safety of meat, poultry, and processed egg products.

FSIS is a science-based, data-driven organization focused on our public health mission. In FY 2021, we will continue our progress toward improving the quality and analysis of external and internal data and information technology (IT) systems.

Major initiatives include improvements to the Label Submission and Approval System, expansion of the Public Health Information System (PHIS) export component, and upgrades to the IT infrastructure at FSIS field laboratories. Strengthening data-driven decision making by improving FSIS internal assessment and analytics capability is another priority, and to that end, we will develop new, interactive data visualizations to evaluate and disseminate data.

Sample analysis at our three field service laboratories has always been a critical part of how inspection program personnel verify food safety requirements. We will modernize both sample collection processes and laboratory methods and procedures, while expanding pathogen testing programs in FSIS-regulated products. In FY 2021, we will continue to assess food safety performance standards in establishments that slaughter and process meat and poultry products by proposing new pathogen-reduction performance standards for Salmonella in pork and Campylobacter in poultry, and implementing new pathogen-reduction performance standards for Salmonella in beef.

With a focus on delivering excellent customer service to promote food safety, we will implement targeted outreach programs to small and very small establishments, international partners, and consumers. The Agency will fully utilize Direct-Hire Authority and implement retention incentive programs for certain hard to fill in-plant positions and improve training opportunities and programs for current employees.

As we close out the Food Safety and Inspection Service Strategic Plan 2017-2021, we will continue to adapt to the new realities and lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the food and agriculture sector and remain focused on our strategic goals by regularly monitoring the results and measures outlined in this annual plan. I look forward to working together to advance these goals and to collaborating across diverse sectors of the Agency to fulfill our mission of protecting public health.

Paul Kiecker

Administrator, Food Safety and Inspection Service

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AP	Annual Plan
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
CAP	Cooperative Agreement Program
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CFP	Conference for Food Protection
DJE	Dual Jurisdiction Establishment
eCert	Electronic Certification
E. coli	<i>Escherichia coli</i>
EG	Enterprise Governance
EEO/CR	Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights
EWA	Early Warning Alert
FDA	U.S. Food and Drug Administration
FERN	Food Emergency Response Network
FSA	Food Safety Assessment
FSIS	Food Safety and Inspection Service
FY	Fiscal Year
Gen-FS	Genomics for Food and Feed Safety
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
IT	Information Technology
IFSAC	Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration
<i>Lm</i>	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>
LSAS	Label Submission and Approval System
MPI	Meat and Poultry Inspection
NACMCF	National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods
NACMPI	National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection
NARMS	National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System for Enteric Bacteria
NSSE	National Special Security Events
OPM	U.S. Office of Personnel Management
PHIS	Public Health Information System
PHR	Public Health Regulation
PHRE	Public Health Risk Evaluation
PHV	Public Health Veterinarian
RPA	Robotic Process Automation
RTE	Ready-to-Eat
SP	Strategic Plan
STEC	Shiga toxin-producing <i>Escherichia coli</i>
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WGS	Whole Genome Sequencing

FSIS is the public health agency in USDA whose mission is to ensure the safety of the Nation’s commercial supply of meat, poultry, and processed egg products. FSIS ensures food safety through the authorities of the Federal Meat Inspection Act,¹ the Poultry Products Inspection Act,² and the Egg Products Inspection Act,³ as well as humane animal handling through the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act⁴. FSIS employs approximately 9,000 workers who collectively conduct a broad range of food safety activities to achieve FSIS’ overall vision -- that everyone’s food is safe.

FSIS employees are highly trained, motivated, and skilled professionals working as “one team with one purpose.” FSIS activities contribute to the USDA Strategic Plan FY 2018-2022 Goal 7, Objective 7.1, “Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health,” and FY 2021 marks the fifth and final year of the Food Safety and Inspection Service Strategic Plan 2017-2021. The goals, outcomes, and objectives set forth in the Food Safety and Inspection Service Strategic Plan 2017-2021 directly align with the Agency’s annual plans and provide an integrated framework for understanding how FSIS fulfills our mission and addresses 21st century public health challenges.

Vision: Everyone’s food is safe		
Mission: Protecting the public’s health by ensuring the safety of meat, poultry, and egg products		
OUTCOME	OBJECTIVE	
<p>GOAL 1 Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health</p>	<p>1.1 - Prevent Contamination</p> <p>1.2 - Limit Illness From Regulated Products</p>	<p>1.1.1 - Drive Compliance With Food Safety Statutes and Regulations</p> <p>1.1.2 - Strengthen Sampling Programs</p> <p>1.1.3 - Ensure Establishments Are Meeting Pathogen Reduction Performance Standards</p> <p>1.1.4 - Promote Food Defense Practices</p> <p>1.2.1 - Improve Food Safety at In Commerce Facilities</p> <p>1.2.2 - Enhance Response to Foodborne Illness Outbreaks and Adulteration Events</p> <p>1.2.3 - Increase Public Awareness of Recalls, Foodborne Illness, and Safe Food Handling Practices</p> 
<p>GOAL 2 Modernize Inspection Systems, Policies, and the Use of Scientific Approaches</p>	<p>2.1 - Improve Food Safety and Humane Handling Practices Through Adoption of Innovative Approaches</p> <p>2.2 - Enhance Access to Complete and Accurate Information to Inform Decisions</p>	<p>2.1.1 - Modernize Scientific Techniques and Inspection Procedures</p> <p>2.1.2 - Increase Adoption of Humane Handling Best Practices</p> <p>2.2.1 - Improve the Reliability, Access, and Timely Collection and Distribution of Information</p> 
<p>GOAL 3 Achieve Operational Excellence</p>	<p>3.1 - Maintain A Well-Trained and Engaged Workforce</p> <p>3.2 - Improve Processes and Services</p>	<p>3.1.1 - Improve Recruitment and Retention for Mission Critical Positions</p> <p>3.1.2 - Enhance Training and Development Opportunities Across Competency Areas</p> <p>3.1.3 - Ensure Equal Opportunity and a Diverse and Inclusive Environment</p> <p>3.2.1 - Enhance Efficiency and Effectiveness of Key Business Processes and Systems</p> <p>3.2.2 - Improve Service Delivery</p> 
<p>ACCOUNTABLE • COLLABORATIVE • EMPOWERED • SOLUTIONS-ORIENTED</p>		

¹ Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA, P.L. 90-492).

² Poultry Products Inspection Act (PPIA, P.L. 90-492).

³ Egg Products Inspection Act (EPIA, P.L. 91-597).

⁴ Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (HMSA, P.L. 85-765).

FSIS will implement this FY 2021 Annual Plan by utilizing its performance management framework, which includes monitoring and reporting processes supported by the Agency's enterprise governance (EG) process. FSIS fosters a performance-based environment with executives and senior staff assigned to regularly track and monitor progress, ensure FSIS meets intended targets, and make timely and necessary adjustments to key activities or approaches. FSIS uses its EG process to present public health and other mission-related topics to executive leadership, particularly those topics that cut across programs and/or have Agency-wide implications, for the purpose of collaborative decision making and implementation. All new investments, major projects, proposed policy initiatives, and major changes to existing policies go through the EG process.

Three governance boards regularly meet to deliberate and, along with their associated workgroups and committees, provide key analysis, evaluation, and recommendations regarding program enhancements to support data-driven decision making. To this end, the Agency is continuing to focus on compliance with the [Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018](#) and the Office of Management and Budget's Circular No. A-123, [Management's Responsibility for Enterprise Risk Management and Internal Control](#) to enhance evaluation and enterprise risk management capabilities to better inform decisions regarding Agency performance and risks that may impact the mission. Linking strategic initiatives, metrics, and desired outcomes to data and analytics will foster a more productive, results-driven environment and accelerate and advance the use of modern analytics.



GOAL 1: Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health

For FY 2021, efforts under Goal 1 will continue to focus on activities performed by FSIS inspection program personnel across the United States who verify industry compliance with applicable food safety regulatory requirements, which extends to both imported and domestically produced food products. Key areas of emphasis to drive compliance and reduce the risk of contaminated FSIS-regulated product will include:

- Verifying that regulated establishments have developed and implemented food safety systems that reduce food safety hazards or prevent them from occurring through conducting Public Health Risk Evaluations (PHRE) and Food Safety Assessments (FSA);
- Ensuring an effective international equivalence process for determining initial equivalence and verifying ongoing equivalence through document review, onsite audits, and point-of-entry product reinspection;
- Reviewing State Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) Programs;
- Educating small and very small establishments and other domestic stakeholders about food safety requirements through enhanced outreach; and
- Continuing to deploy innovative approaches to develop and deliver outreach regarding technical, scientific, and regulatory compliance information to small and very small establishments.

In addition, FSIS has developed an internal international outreach and technical consultation plan that will help continue to ensure the safety of imported FSIS-regulated products and facilitate effective foreign country equivalence. Outreach plays a major role in ensuring the safe international trade of meat, poultry, and processed egg products, and FSIS looks to implement outreach activities in its international outreach and technical consultation plan in FY 2021.

FSIS will also continue to expand its sampling programs to better address gaps in testing for pathogens and will use pathogen-reduction performance standards to assess the food safety performance of regulated establishments that slaughter and process meat and poultry products. Other planned activities include:

- Expanding non-O157 Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) testing beyond beef manufacturing trimmings to ground beef and other raw ground beef components;
- Implementing new pathogen-reduction performance standards for *Salmonella* in raw ground beef and beef manufacturing trimmings;
- Proposing new *Salmonella* standards for raw comminuted pork and intact or non-intact pork cuts;
- Proposing new *Campylobacter* standards for young chicken and turkey carcasses and for chicken parts;
- Implementing new *Campylobacter* standards for comminuted chicken; and
- Publishing new guidelines on the destruction of *Salmonella* and other pathogens in ready-to-eat (RTE) products and the control of pathogen growth in heat-treated RTE and not-ready-to-eat products during cooling and hot-holding (stabilization).

GOAL 1: Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health

In FY 2021, FSIS will implement the Interagency Retail *Listeria monocytogenes (Lm)* Action Plan based on findings from focus group sessions, including developing outreach materials to encourage retail delicatessens (delis) to follow FSIS recommendations for mitigating contamination with *Lm*. FSIS will also continue to assess the extent to which retail delis are following FSIS recommendations for handling RTE meat and poultry products to mitigate contamination with *Lm*. Other planned activities include monitoring compliance with the grinding log recordkeeping requirements and conducting targeted outreach to retail industry organizations that can share information with their members.

FSIS will continue to collaborate with partners and stakeholders to promote food safety in food recovery efforts, including outreach to food banks, and to provide information on food donation via askFSIS. This aligns with the USDA/ Environmental Protection Agency goal of a 50-percent reduction in food waste by 2030 to improve overall food security and conserve natural resources. In addition, the Agency will use experience from the COVID-19 response to add a food safety section on food recovery to the FSIS [Retail Guidance](#) webpage. Lastly, FSIS will continue to increase public awareness of recalls, foodborne illness, policies, and safe food-handling practices through a broad range of communication channels to empower consumers to make safe decisions about handling, cooking, and storing their food.

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE	SP/AP PERFORMANCE MEASURE	FY 2021 TARGET	EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Objective 1.1.1: Drive Compliance with Food Safety Statutes and Regulations	(SP) 1.1.1.1: % of establishments scheduled for a PHRE due to public health risk determinants other than performance standards.	1.09%	FSIS will continue to perform PHREs and FSAs based on public health risk determinants. FSIS will develop internal reports that will help monitor the progress of the measure and trends of specific public health risk determinants.
	(SP) 1.1.1.3: # of engagements with foreign countries where the international outreach and technical consultation plan is implemented.	80	FSIS has become increasingly aware of the significance outreach can play to ensure the safe international trade of meat, poultry, and processed egg products. Using the FY 2020 international outreach and technical consultation plan, FSIS will continue to implement outreach activities by conducting a minimum of 80 technical engagements with foreign countries.
	(AP) 1-1: # of international audits conducted based on FY 2021 schedule.	16	FSIS plans to conduct at least 16 international equivalence verification audits.
	(AP) 1-2: # of planned onsite State MPI Program system audits completed.	12	FSIS plans to conduct at least 12 onsite State equivalence verification audits.
	(AP) 1-3: % of planned State MPI laboratory audits and reviews of State self-assessments completed.	96%	FSIS will continue to provide oversight of laboratories conducting State MPI food testing. Oversight is accomplished through completion of onsite laboratory audits and off-site records reviews, covering analytic methods and supporting documentation.

GOAL 1: Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE	SP/AP PERFORMANCE MEASURE	FY 2021 TARGET	EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Objective 1.1.2 – Strengthen Sampling Programs	(SP) 1.1.2.1: % of eligible poultry establishments that are categorized.	88%	In FY 2020, the percentage of categorized establishments increased from 72% overall to more than 86% overall, a 14% improvement in the percentage, and the percentage of chicken parts establishments categorized increased from 62% to more than 86%, which is a 24% improvement. FSIS intends to continue improving upon this rate of categorization in FY 2021.
Objective 1.1.3 - Ensure Establishments Are Meeting Pathogen-Reduction Performance Standards	(SP) 1.1.3.1: % of establishments that meet pathogen-reduction performance standards.	88%	FSIS will continue to use pathogen-reduction performance standards to assess the food safety performance of establishments that slaughter and process poultry products.
Objective 1.1.4 - Promote Food Defense Practices	(SP) 1.1.4.1: % of establishments that maintain food defense practices.	85%	FSIS will continue to promote Agency preparedness, as well as that of the regulated industry, to drive enhanced capabilities and capacities to respond to and recover from threats and hazards of greatest risk. The Agency will also update critical food defense policies and resources, as needed.
	(AP) 1-4: # of surveillance testing samples performed at Food Emergency Response Network's (FERN) Cooperative Agreement Program (CAP) laboratories.	4,000	The FERN CAP laboratories will continue to perform targeted food defense surveillance testing of FSIS regulated food by analyzing retail samples for various chemical, biological, and radiological agents. This testing program enables the FERN CAP laboratories to strengthen their readiness capabilities in response to a food defense event affecting FSIS regulated products.
Objective 1.2.1 - Improve Food Safety at In-Commerce Facilities	(SP) 1.2.1.1a: % of retailers following all eight of the most important FSIS Deli <i>Lm</i> guidelines.	64%	FSIS will implement the Interagency Retail <i>Lm</i> Action Plan based on findings from focus group sessions, such as creating outreach materials to encourage retail delis to follow FSIS recommendations for mitigating contamination of <i>Lm</i> and revisiting some of the guidelines, taking new studies into
	(SP) 1.2.1.1b: % of retailers following the majority of the 33 recommendations in the FSIS Deli <i>Lm</i> guidelines.	92%	FSIS will continue to assess the recommendations being followed for handling RTE meat and poultry products to mitigate contamination with <i>Lm</i> . These recommendations cover product handling; cleaning and sanitizing; facility and equipment controls; and employee practices.
	(AP) 1-5: % of surveillance activities that are conducted at the highest risk firms.	71%	Building on improvements from FY 2020, FSIS will continue to maintain the rate of surveillance activities conducted at Tier 1 (warehouses and distributors) and high and medium "risk" firms based on compliance history.
Objective 1.2.2 - Enhance Response to Foodborne Illness Outbreaks and Adulteration Events	(SP) 1.2.2.1: % of State partners that indicate that they routinely notify FSIS of illness outbreaks that may be associated with FSIS-regulated products.	83%	FSIS will conduct its annual Foodborne Illness Outbreak Investigation Survey of State and Territorial Public Health Partners. As in past years, FSIS will use the results of this survey to inform FSIS outreach efforts to strengthen collaborative outbreak investigations.
Objective 1.2.3 - Increase Public Awareness of Recalls, Foodborne Illness, and Safe Food-Handling Practices	(SP) 1.2.3.1: % increase in public awareness of safe food-handling guidance and recalls through communications channels. ⁵	1%	FSIS will increase public awareness of safe food-handling guidance and recalls through simple, easy-to-understand communications using diverse tools including the web, social media, proactive outreach, and the Meat and Poultry Hotline.
	(SP) 1.2.3.2: % of total yearly outreach target from all communications channels is based on safe food-handling behaviors research. ⁶	40%	Consumer research will continue to be the backbone of FSIS' communications. Insights from recent research will be incorporated into consumer engagement and additional research will be conducted.

⁵ This indexed measure includes weighted metrics primarily of impressions, including direct connections, website traffic, application downloads, event participation, physical and digital educational material distribution, social media engagement, media impressions, and emails distributed. The percentage represents more than 50 million weighted impressions as its target for FY 2021.

⁶ This measure is a subset of the index measure used in 1.2.3.1. This measure tracks the component of our overall public outreach that applies the lessons learned from consumer research to improve our messages (40 percent of measure 1.2.3.1).

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

In FY 2021, Goal 2 efforts will focus on continuing the Agency's modernization efforts. Specifically, FSIS will continue implementation of the Modernization of Swine Slaughter Inspection regulations and begin implementation of the Egg Products Inspection regulations. The Modernization of Swine Slaughter Inspection regulations created a new inspection system for market hog slaughter establishments that provides additional flexibility and allows inspectors to focus on verification activities related to food safety. The Egg Products Inspection Regulations will require egg product plants to develop Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) systems and meet sanitation requirements consistent with meat and poultry regulations.

FSIS will continue to modernize labeling evaluation and approval procedures to minimize label turnaround time. This will be achieved by:

- Expanding the categories of labels that can be approved generically through rulemaking;
- Deploying innovative approaches to improve the label evaluation process; and
- Making improvements to the Label Submission and Approval System (LSAS).

In addition, FSIS will prioritize modernization of the PHIS Import and Export Modules by:

- Including higher-volume countries;
- Enhancing the export component's functionality for government-to-government electronic certification (eCert); and
- Increasing the number of countries that can electronically submit inspection certification data using PHIS' government-to-government eCert functionality for import reinspection.

In FY 2021, FSIS will continue to modernize sample collection processes, and laboratory methods and procedures.

Activities will include:

- Evaluating alternatives to the N60 destructive sample collection for beef;
- Evaluating alternatives to carcass swabbing method for turkeys;
- Piloting long-read whole genome sequencing (WGS) for further characterization of microbial isolates;
- Modernizing the *Campylobacter* enrichment and screening methodology;
- Evaluating *Campylobacter* enumeration technologies;
- Extending per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances method to additional species including pork, poultry, and Siluriformes fish;
- Expanding analytical capabilities to include allergens; and
- Expanding the Accredited Laboratory Program to include microbiological and chemical methods of analyses.

Lastly, FSIS will continue to improve access to data. FSIS will finalize a new website design that centralizes its public data sets to improve customer experience and will also continue to publish new and update existing establishment-specific datasets. In addition, FSIS will continue to use and develop data visualizations that improve FSIS' analysis and assessment of establishment performance, as well as strengthen data-driven decision making and response to emerging public health and food safety concerns.

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

Table 2. Goal 2 SP and AP Performance Measures, Targets, and Expected Accomplishments for FY 2021

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE	SP/AP PERFORMANCE MEASURE	FY 2021 TARGET	EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Objective 2.1.1 - Modernize Scientific Techniques and Inspection Procedures	(SP) 2.1.1.2: % of establishments whose Public Health Regulation (PHR) noncompliance rate decreases below the early warning cut point 120 days after receiving an Early Warning Alert (EWA).	74%	The Agency will continue to monitor the percentage of establishments whose PHR noncompliance rate decreases below the early warning cut point 120 days after receiving an EWA. FSIS will utilize existing data to assess individual establishment performance over time.
	(AP) 2-1: Expand WGS technologies to analyze additional isolates to complement existing capabilities.	43	Prior to FY 2021, the Agency relied on WGS technology that limited the amount of detailed information about virulence and antimicrobial resistance. FSIS will leverage newer WGS technology to significantly and more effectively identify and differentiate microbial isolates that can cause illness. In FY 2021, FSIS will analyze at least 43 isolates using the newer long read sequencing technology.
	(AP) 2-2: # of days to evaluate a label, from improved outreach and LSAS enhancement methods.	10	FSIS will continue to modernize its labeling evaluation and processing system. FSIS intends to begin rulemaking to expand the categories of labels that can be generically approved. To improve the label evaluation process, FSIS will continue to provide label tips in the Constituent Update and conduct outreach through webinars and presentations on new labeling policies. Improvements to LSAS will continue to ensure there is optimum use by internal and external users.
	(AP) 2-3a: # of countries added to the PHIS export module.	60	FSIS will continue to increase the number of countries for which import and export information is processed electronically.
	(AP) 2-3b: # of agreements signed with other countries for exchanging electronic certificates.	1	In addition, FSIS will work with countries to increase the number of signed agreements for exchanging electronic certificates.
Objective 2.1.2 - Increase Adoption of Humane Handling Best Practices	(SP) 2.1.2.2: % of all eligible slaughter establishments that District Veterinary Medical Specialists visit and perform outreach or verification activities.	70%	In FY 2021, FSIS will continue implementing its FY 2020 education and outreach plan on humane handling best practices, which was enhanced to focus on small and very small establishments.
Objective 2.2.1 - Improve the Reliability, Access, and Timely Collection and Distribution of Information	(SP) 2.2.1.1: # of master FSIS datasets developed and available for use by FSIS analysts.	2	FSIS plans to develop master datasets to allow for more consistency in reporting and analyses by FSIS analysts. These datasets will combine information from multiple data sources and tables within FSIS to ensure that all analysts are using the same core data to conduct analyses.
	(SP) 2.2.1.2: % of employees that have online access to FSIS-approved systems.	100%	FSIS plans to complete the deployment of laptops to employees without them and will also continue its efforts for more employees to gain online access to FSIS-approved systems.
	(SP) 2.2.1.3: # of establishment-specific or other FSIS datasets made publicly available (one new data set per quarter).	4	FSIS will build on its library of establishment-specific datasets and add four more datasets. Sharing these data on an ongoing basis facilitates transparency and allows FSIS to better engage with its stakeholders.

Goal 3: Achieve Operational Excellence

In FY 2021, FSIS will focus on optimizing the full scope of the Agency's capabilities for providing high-quality services to its customers. FSIS will expand the use of the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Direct-Hire Authority to achieve a target frontline occupations fill rate of 97% by the end of FY 2021. The Agency will offer a comprehensive suite of incentives to attract and retain veterinarian talent for in-plant public health veterinarian (PHV) positions. Mission-critical classroom-based scientific and technical training of entry-level employees, as well as those promoted into inspection and enforcement occupations, will be transformed into a virtual format. The Agency will continue to develop and implement a consistent new employee orientation process focused on USDA FSIS program areas. Through the delivery of mandatory training, the Agency will also continue to educate the workforce on equal employment opportunity and civil rights (EEO/CR).

In support of USDA's IT Modernization objectives, FSIS will consolidate cybersecurity and end-user services, such as the IT Help Desk, with the Department; migrate critical applications to the cloud; extend online access to all FSIS users; and upgrade the IT infrastructure at FSIS laboratories. The Agency will continue to deliver innovative, effective, and efficient acquisition solutions. FSIS will significantly reduce contract processing time by promoting a shared understanding of procurement lead times, requirements, and roles/responsibilities through customer education and one-on-one consultations. Building upon progress achieved in FY 2020, FSIS will continue to implement budget and financial management system enhancements and optimize its internal controls. FSIS will continue to improve upon the Office of the Inspector General and Government Accountability Office audit recommendation closure rate. The Agency will do this by building upon a robust and transparent budgeting process and leveraging the Agency's governance infrastructure. The Agency will also introduce new Robotic Process Automation (RPA) capabilities, which will improve efficiency for administrative processes. By fully leveraging RPA capabilities, the Agency will make informed, data-driven decisions in support of its mission, effectively steward taxpayer resources, and further strengthen our accountability.

Table 3. Goal 3 SP and AP Performance Measures, Targets, and Expected Accomplishments for FY 2021

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE	SP/AP PERFORMANCE MEASURE	FY 2021 TARGET	EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Objective 3.1.1 - Improve Recruitment and Retention for Mission-Critical Positions	(SP) 3.1.1.1: % of mission-critical frontline positions that are filled.	97%	FSIS will expand and continue the use of OPM's Direct-Hire Authorities to increase the frontline occupations fill rate to 97%.
	(SP) 3.1.1.2: % of employees that remain at FSIS for 2 years or more.	95%	This measure focuses on nine Mission-Critical Occupations. ⁷ The Agency will use existing human resource flexibilities, as well as leverage use of in-plant PHV retention incentives, to achieve its employee retention goal of 95%.
	(AP) 3-1: % of PHVs remaining with FSIS for > 2 years after acquiring a recruitment incentive.	85%	FSIS will maximize the use of OPM-approved recruitment and retention incentives and other initiatives to increase recruitment of veterinarians that will remain with FSIS for more than 2 years. FSIS will consistently evaluate the effectiveness of retention incentives and PHV job satisfaction to achieve long-term success in PHV retention. FSIS will explore the ability to utilize creative outreach initiatives to target veterinarians with career aspirations in food safety and increase awareness of career opportunities with FSIS.

⁷ Mission-Critical Occupations include the following series: 0110 (Economist), 0201 (Human Resources Management), 0511 (Auditing), 0696 (Consumer Safety), 0701 (Veterinary Medical Science), 1102 (Contracting), 1862 (Consumer Safety Inspection), 1863 (Food Inspection), and 2210 (Information Technology Management).

Goal 3: Achieve Operational Excellence

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE	SP/AP PERFORMANCE MEASURE	FY 2021 TARGET	EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS	
Objective 3.1.2 - Enhance Training and Development Opportunities Across Competency Areas	(SP) 3.1.2.1: % increase in knowledge gained in key occupations within 180 days.	85%	FSIS will analyze training results and measure training outcomes. FSIS will also analyze test results, employee responses to training, and FSIS' annual surveys to advance content development, strengthen training delivery, and measure outcomes.	
	Objective 3.1.3 - Ensure Equal Opportunity and a Diverse and Inclusive Environment	(SP) 3.1.3.1a: % of Alternative Dispute Resolution acceptance rate for informal EEO complaints.	52%	FSIS will promote the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program through conflict management training, presentations, and webinars. EEO counselors will provide an overview of the Agency's ADR program in the course of processing complaints and offer ADR as a means of resolving complaints at the earliest stage possible.
		(SP) 3.1.3.1b: % of Alternative Dispute Resolution acceptance rate for formal EEO complaints.	46%	The Agency will also assess the workforce's awareness of the ADR program through annual compliance assistance, review, and evaluations of program areas and districts. Employees will be surveyed and asked questions regarding their familiarity with the ADR program. Survey results will be used to determine whether additional actions will be required to promote the ADR program.
		(SP) 3.1.3.2: % of employees who complete mandatory EEO/CR training that satisfy competency requirements.	84%	The Agency will continue to educate the workforce on EEO/CR through mandatory training. To assess employees' proficiency with the core concepts, knowledge check questions will be included in the training.
	(SP) 3.1.3.3: % increase in FSIS' FEVS employee engagement survey index to 70%.	70%	FSIS will further develop and implement a consistent orientation process for newly hired employees. The process will focus on FSIS, USDA, administrative functions and systems, and benefits, which should contribute to increased employee engagement.	
Objective 3.2.1 - Enhance Efficiency and Effectiveness of Key Business Processes and Systems	(SP) 3.2.1.1: % of defined process times met for hiring, procurement, and IT.	80%	In FY 2021, the average time to hire from tentative offer to entry on duty will be reduced to 74 days, a 10% reduction from the prior 3-year baseline average. The Agency will reduce processing time for at least 80% of contracts in the FY 2021 cycle. FSIS Procurement will leverage the Department's program management support contract to assist program areas on the development of program requirements that must be included in the contract solicitation. The team will ensure the quality and timeliness of procurement actions, develop tailored plans to communicate effectively with internal customers, and proactively manage the workflow. This initiative will strengthen FSIS' ability to acquire critical resources to support Agency priorities. For FY 2021, the Agency will meet or exceed IT project completion deadlines by 90% or greater.	
	(AP) 3-2: % of reviews conducted of Agency enterprise governance-approved projects to ensure they are operating within their authorized budget and are on track in meeting project goals and milestones.	100%	The Enterprise Investment Board will conduct periodic reviews of the Agency's EG-approved projects. This coordinated approach will promote sound fiscal stewardship and accountability for the Agency's funds. Through the governance process, the Agency will monitor the progress to ensure that project milestones are met and implement corrective actions to bring projects back on track, if needed.	
	(AP) 3-3: % of grievances and unfair labor practices complaints processed in accordance with the Labor-Management Agreement.	95%	The FSIS Office of Human Resources/Labor and Employee Relations Division will leverage the alignment of specialists to districts to be able to more rapidly investigate the incidents giving rise to grievances, allowing for more expeditious responses. Specialists will prioritize grievance and unfair labor practice investigations immediately upon receipt. In addition, FSIS will be more proactive in asking the union for mutual agreement to extend timelines in cases that require more investigation or coordination.	

Goal 3: Achieve Operational Excellence

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE	SP/AP PERFORMANCE MEASURE	FY 2021 TARGET	EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Objective 3.2.2 - Improve Service Delivery	(SP) 3.2.2.1: % of client satisfaction with key FSIS services.	80%	FSIS will analyze data from its annual customer service survey to inform investment decisions regarding potential future enhancements to customer service. FSIS will also use survey data on employee preferences related to training course access and delivery to strengthen customer satisfaction.

Result 16: Enhance Collaboration With Our Partners

FSIS collaborates with a multitude of partners to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of food safety outcomes. FSIS engages with Federal, State, Tribal, territorial, and local agencies and stakeholders at meetings, conferences, and in working groups with the goal of improving prevention and response to foodborne illness and protecting public health. Each year, FSIS builds on its successes from existing partnerships and in initiating new relationships to further its strategic goals to prevent foodborne illness; protect public health; and modernize inspection systems, policies, and the use of scientific approaches. FSIS has highlighted 12 of the collaborations the Agency will be focusing on for FY 2021 below. A complete list of the Agency's partnerships is provided in the [Food Safety and Inspection Service FY 2020 Annual Plan](#).

Conference for Food Protection (CFP):

The CFP is a non-profit organization created to provide a formal process for representatives from the food industry, government, academia, and consumer organizations to identify and address emerging problems associated with food safety and formulate recommendations. Though the conference has no formal regulatory authority, it significantly influences food safety guidance, model laws, and regulations among all government agencies and minimizes disparate interpretations and implementation. FSIS will continue to participate on CFP committees and collaborate with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to address recommended Food Code policy changes related to meat and poultry products.

Consumer Research and Education Initiatives:

Collaborative consumer education efforts, conducted in coordination with the FDA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Partnership for Food Safety Education, are key to reducing foodborne illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths nationally. FSIS works with these partners to educate the public with information on food handling best practices and food safety risks to empower them to make safe decisions about handling, cooking, and storing food. Consumer research is the backbone of this educational outreach. FSIS uses research to assess how consumers handle food and identify gaps and emerging opportunities for improved educational outreach. This research is conducted in close coordination with external partners to ensure all involved gain the knowledge required to reduce foodborne illnesses. In FY 2021, FSIS will continue this research partnership by testing the Partnership for Food Safety Education's "Safe Recipes Style Guide," which was first developed in 2019. This style guide provides easy edits to any recipe to improve food safety practices. In FY 2021, FSIS will test if a celebrity endorsement, used strategically with food safety instructions in recipes, can make an even greater impact on the public's execution of these key safe food handling recommendations.

Food Emergency Response Network (FERN):

In 2004, Homeland Security Presidential Directive 9 (HSPD-9) established FERN under the joint oversight of FSIS and the FDA. FERN is a network of food testing laboratories consisting of more than 160 Federal, State, local, and Tribal laboratories jointly administered by FSIS and FDA. Its members have the capability to test for microbiological, chemical, and radiological contaminants in foods. The network has worked to increase the food defense capabilities of food testing laboratories by training, method development, and method validation programs delivered through cooperative agreements.

Result 16: Enhance Collaboration With Our Partners

The network has worked to protect the food system through targeted surveillance activities associated with imported foods, the school lunch program, retail samples, and National Special Security Events (NSSE).⁸

In FY 2021, FSIS intends to complete the following:

- Work with State partners to support targeted food defense analysis of FSIS regulated commodities sampled at retail establishments in 11 States (4,500-5,000 samples annually).
- Participate in three expected NSSEs.
- Conduct eight proficiency tests with partner laboratories.⁹
- Upgrade the FERN portal, through a cooperative agreement with the State of Minnesota, to enhance communication with State food testing laboratories, to continue to standardize reporting of food testing results, and to maintain up-to-date information on the capability and capacity of food testing within the FERN network.
- Collaborate with States and FDA to maximize intelligence information and effectively prioritize threats.
- Add FSIS-regulated matrices to the new multi-lab validated *Clostridium botulinum* method. A multi-laboratory extension study will be developed to extend the validated method into additional FSIS-regulated products. States will perform the laboratory validation work, which will be overseen by the FERN National Program Office and the FERN Methods Coordinating Committee, a collaboration between FSIS, FDA, CDC, and States.

FSIS-FDA Dual Jurisdiction Establishments Workgroup:

In 2018, USDA and FDA entered into a formal agreement to increase regulatory and operational efficiency and improve program effectiveness through enhanced collaboration and coordination on areas of mutual interest. FSIS and FDA established an interagency Dual Jurisdiction Establishments (DJE) Workgroup to bring greater clarity and consistency to jurisdictional decisions under FSIS' and FDA's respective authorities, and to identify and potentially reduce the regulatory burden on establishments subject to the dual regulatory requirements. In FY 2021, FSIS, in collaboration with FDA, will work to identify similar FDA and FSIS products and pilot a concept for utilizing a FSIS-style HACCP plan for these products. The results of this pilot will be used to further develop and refine the crosswalk tool.

Human Food Produced Using Animal Cell Culture Technology:

In FY 2019, the USDA's Office of Food Safety and FDA entered into a formal agreement on the regulatory oversight of human food produced using animal cell culture technology and established three workgroups to refine regulatory frameworks and develop more exact specifications, including (1) premarket food safety assessments by FDA, (2) inspections and the transition of oversight from FDA to FSIS during the cell harvest stage, and (3) labeling oversight by FSIS. In FY 2021, FSIS will publish an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) to request comments pertaining to the labeling of meat and poultry products comprised of or containing cultured cells derived from animals subject to the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA; 21 U.S.C. 601 et. seq.) or the Poultry Products Inspection Act (PPIA; 21 U.S.C. 451 et seq.). Issues raised in the comments submitted in response to this ANPR will inform future rulemaking to establish labeling requirements for these products. Additionally, FDA will be publishing a Request for Information to solicit comments on the labeling of cell-cultured seafood. The comments will be reviewed by FSIS and FDA, in developing the joint principles for the labeling of all cell-cultured food products.

⁸ Through the FERN program, FSIS utilizes State food testing laboratories to perform food defense testing on FSIS products at NSSE. Planning includes input from other Federal agencies including the FDA, Secret Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and public health officials from the State in which the event is being held.

⁹ Through the FERN program, proficiency samples are offered to State food testing laboratories for both food safety and food defense purposes. Planning is carried out between FSIS, FDA, and CDC.

Interagency Collaboration on Genomics for Food and Feed Safety (Gen-FS):

Gen-FS is an interagency group with agency leaders and scientists from FDA, CDC, FSIS, USDA Agricultural Research Service, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS), and the National Center for Biotechnology Information at the National Institutes of Health. The collaboration's primary objective is to coordinate, strengthen, and lead WGS efforts among Federal and State partners. In FY 2021, FSIS and Gen-FS partners plan to continue developing databases for *Salmonella* virulence and pathogenicity genes that will be incorporated into the publicly available analytic tool, [AMRFinderPlus](#). AMRFinderPlus is the online tool that lists virulence and antimicrobial resistance genes identified in each genetic sequence. Through this effort, FSIS hopes to develop a conceptual framework for risk ranking *Salmonella* genotypes. FSIS will continue participating in the following Gen-FS subgroups: biomarkers, metadata, standards, harmonization, and training. Additionally, scientists from FSIS serve as the co-leads for the Biomarkers and Metadata subgroups.

Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration (IFSAC):

Federal agencies and food safety experts rely on foodborne illness source attribution to inform strategic planning and risk-based decision making, estimate benefits of interventions, and evaluate the impact of interventions. Since 2011, CDC, FDA, and FSIS have collaborated via IFSAC, a working group that coordinates analyses from these three Federal agencies on attribution. IFSAC analysts enhance estimates of the sources of foodborne illness by developing sound analytical methods that bring together data from CDC, FDA, and FSIS. In FY 2021, IFSAC will continue to improve the methodology for illness attribution and will release an updated Annual Report on Foodborne Illness Source Attribution Estimates for *Salmonella*, *E. coli* O157, *Lm*, and *Campylobacter* using multi-year outbreak surveillance data.

Interagency Retail *Lm* Action Plan, Enhancing Outreach on the Control of *Listeria monocytogenes* in Retail Delicatessens:

FSIS convened a retail workgroup to develop an interagency retail *Lm* action plan to guide outreach to support the control of *Lm* at retail delicatessens in response to a recommendation from the National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection (NACMPI) to FSIS. FSIS, in collaboration with FDA and CDC, convened focus groups of retailers and State and local agencies in FY 2019 to gather input on the access to and usefulness of Federal outreach and other sources of information to support sanitation and safe handling of RTE foods at retail to mitigate the risk of listeriosis. In FY 2021, the retail workgroup will implement the project action plan to respond to focus group results. This plan includes putting all retail-related guidance in one place on the FSIS website and working with public health partners, such as the FDA, to share this webpage with retail stakeholders.

National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF):

NACMCF provides impartial, scientific advice, and/or peer reviews to Federal food safety agencies for use in the development of an integrated national food safety systems approach that assures the safety of domestic, imported, and exported foods. The committee reports to the Secretary of Agriculture through the Under Secretary for Food Safety and to the Secretary of Health and Human Services through the Assistant Secretary for Health. In FY 2021, FSIS will support NACMCF as the Committee recruits nine new members (half of the membership) for official appointment by the Secretary.

Result 16: Enhance Collaboration With Our Partners

FSIS also plans to support NACMCF in convening a plenary session. In this meeting, NACMCF will adopt reports and recommendations under the current Committee work charges and consider approving new Committee work charges.

National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection (NACMPI):

NACMPI advises the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture on matters affecting Federal and State inspection program activities, including food safety policies that will contribute to USDA's regulatory policy development.

In FY 2021, FSIS plans to announce Committee vacancies in the *Federal Register* and enhance its recruitment efforts to attract diverse candidates within consumer groups, the meat and poultry industry, academic institutions, the public health community, State departments of agriculture, and other organizations. FSIS is also planning to appoint new members, develop new charges, and hold a public meeting.

National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System for Enteric Bacteria (NARMS):

NARMS is a collaboration among State and local public health departments, CDC, FDA, and FSIS. This national public health surveillance system tracks changes in the antimicrobial susceptibility of certain enteric (intestinal) bacteria found in ill people (CDC), retail meats (FDA), and food animals (FSIS) in the United States. FSIS contributes two sources of antimicrobial susceptibility data to the NARMS program: non-food product and food product. The FSIS NARMS non-food product data come from cecal content samples from young chickens, young turkeys, dairy cattle, beef cattle, market hogs, sows, veal, sheep, goats, and lambs. FSIS NARMS antimicrobial susceptibility testing is conducted on *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*), and *Enterococcus* that are isolated from those cecal samples. NARMS antimicrobial susceptibility testing is conducted on *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* that are isolated from food product samples.

In FY 2021, NARMS surveillance will continue collecting antimicrobial susceptibility data from *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, *E. coli*, and *Enterococcus* isolated from animal cecal content and food products, as well as the expansion activities that were introduced in FY 2020. In FY 2021, FSIS will publish a NARMS multi-year (2014-2019) report to summarize FSIS-specific findings. The NARMS multiagency team will also publish the Integrated Report, which includes data from all the participating agencies in a single report. The NARMS biannual public meeting is scheduled for the first quarter of FY 2021.

Preharvest Food Safety:

The goal of the One Health Partner Farm to Fork Food Safety Working Group is to enhance communication and collaboration among industry, animal, and public health officials along the farm-to-fork continuum. Participants represent USDA (FSIS and APHIS), CDC, State departments of public health and agriculture, and livestock and poultry industries. The overarching goal is to improve food safety -- specifically, to reduce pathogen transmission between animals and humans. In FY 2021, the annual meeting will be held to build upon the successes of the previous year and to discuss experiences regarding pre-harvest assessments conducted by industry during FY 2020. In addition, FSIS will work collaboratively with APHIS to create an online learning module on preharvest food safety targeted toward private practice veterinarians. The module will be housed on APHIS' National Veterinary Accreditation Program website and will provide credit towards veterinary accreditation for licensed veterinarians.



fsis.usda.gov



[@USDAFoodSafety](https://twitter.com/USDAFoodSafety)



[USDAFoodSafety](https://www.youtube.com/USDAFoodSafety)



[@FoodSafety.gov](https://www.facebook.com/FoodSafety.gov)



[USDA-FSIS](https://www.linkedin.com/company/USDA-FSIS)

FSIS CORE VALUES

ACCOUNTABLE

FSIS holds itself accountable in fulfilling its regulatory mission and in serving the public interest.

COLLABORATIVE

FSIS actively promotes and encourages collaboration within our Agency and with our partners to prevent illness and protect public health.

EMPOWERED

FSIS employees are empowered with the necessary training, tools, and approaches they need to make and carry out informed decisions that protect public health and promote food safety.

SOLUTIONS-ORIENTED

FSIS is committed to deploying effective, evidence-based solutions to ensure that the Nation's food supply is safe.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, USDA, its Mission Areas, agencies, staff offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language) should contact the responsible Mission Area, agency, or staff office; the USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY); or the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online at <https://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/ad-3027>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

(1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C.
20250-9410; or

(2) Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
(3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

January 2021