INTERNATIONAL EQUIVALENCE

Update to NACMPI Recommendations from 2008

National Advisory Committee on
Meat and Poultry Inspection
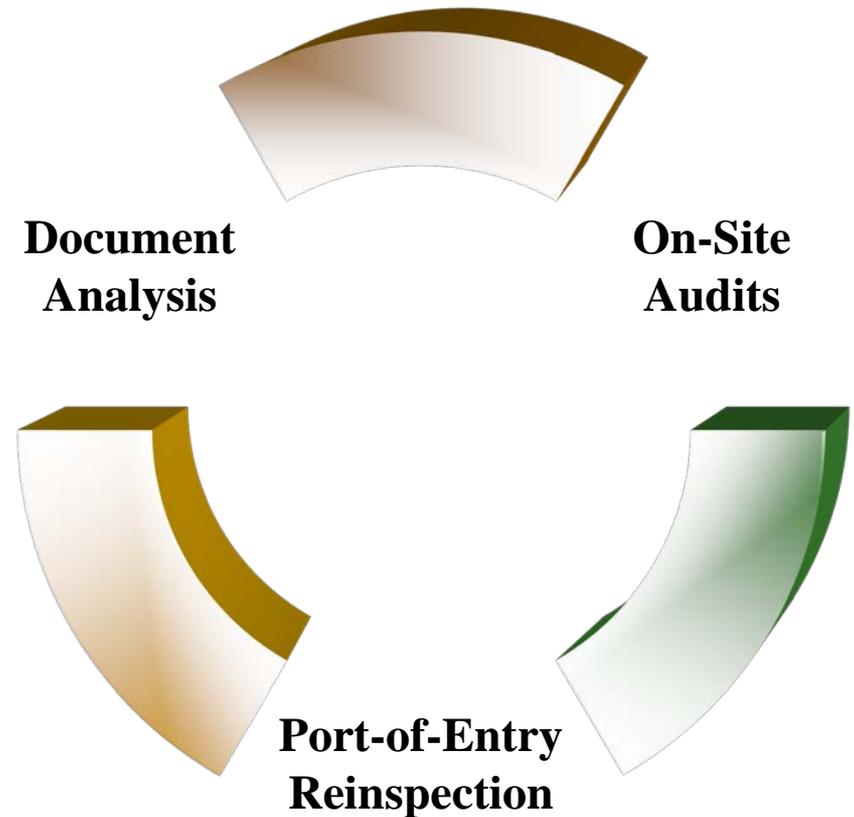
January 16, 2013

NACMPI Meeting-2008

FSIS requested guidance on whether:

- elements of the "triad of protection" should be changed

- regulatory information and compliance history from foreign countries should affect audits and re-inspection activities at port-of-entry

- the scope and frequency of on-site audits and POE re-inspections should be adjusted based on the capability of a country to share useful regulatory information and compliance history.

NACMPI RECOMMENDATIONS

- FSIS should maintain its three-part approach to equivalence

- FSIS should direct Agency resources according to the relative risks and historical compliance presented by each foreign food regulatory system
  - Developed a performance-based approach for determining scope and frequency of its on-site audits and POE inspections

Document Analysis

On-Site Audits

Port-of-Entry Reinspection

NACMPI RECOMMENDATIONS

- FSIS should standardize its methods for collecting information from foreign governments

  - Developed the Self-Reporting Tool

    Designed to assist countries in providing detailed information regarding all aspects of their food safety inspection system, comprised of 6 components:

    - Government Oversight
    - Statutory Authority and Food Safety Regulations
    - Sanitation Controls
    - HACCP Systems
    - Chemical Residue Control Programs, and
    - Microbiological Testing Programs

NACMPI RECOMMENDATIONS

Specific elements incorporated into on-going verification activities are important to the success of the three-tiered approach:

- Document reviews
  - Assessment of the exporting country's on-going ability and willingness to share data, as well as the quality of data

- Audits
  - Standardized application of the audit criteria and an historical evaluation of the exporting country's on-site audit outcomes

- POE re-inspections
  - Targeted sampling of high-risk product and high-risk imports

NEW APPROACH-STATUS

- *Federal Register* notice (pending)

  - FSIS is planning to publish a *Federal Register* notice describing the new methodology it is employing to conduct ongoing equivalence verifications of the regulatory systems of countries that export meat, poultry, or processed egg products to the United States. In summary, FSIS continues to use a three-part approach that includes: (1) document reviews, (2) on-site system audits, and (3) port-of-entry (POE) reinspections. FSIS determines the scope and frequency of on-site systems audits and POE reinspections through analysis of the results of its document reviews and an assessment of a country's performance. This performance-based approach allows FSIS to direct its resources to foreign food regulatory systems that pose greater risk to public health compared to others; make its international program more consistent with its domestic inspection system; and improve the linkage between POE reinspections and on-site audits. As a result, FSIS is able to effectively prevent unsafe imports from entering this country.

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