

## NEW SWINE INSPECTION SYSTEM: AN OVERVIEW

The Meat Institute supports the New Swine Inspection System (NSIS), which is an improvement from current inspection that will stimulate food safety innovation. The current inspection system predates milestone advancements in the industry, including modern animal raising systems, reduced prevalence of swine disease, improved process and equipment design, and implementing Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP). Given these advancements, NSIS greater opportunities for innovation.

In addition, maximum inspection rates were originally put in place to define the number of FSIS online inspectors required to inspect carcasses based on the number of carcasses an individual could reasonably evaluate in a period of time. Animal disease prevalence is much lower than when these limits were set. Innovations in animal housing, genetics, and processing have since been implemented, improving livestock conditions at presentation and line speeds have not been reevaluated since these improvements.

The pilot plants have not operated at speeds significantly faster than the current maximum.[1] Line speeds are adjusted in all plants to optimize efficiencies without jeopardizing worker safety, animal welfare, food safety, or quality. Line speeds depend on many factors, such as livestock conditions, staffing, equipment capabilities, and food safety controls.

The Meat Institute applauds FSIS's efforts to modernize the swine slaughter inspection system because a statistically valid, scientifically based approach to food safety will improve food safety and better protect public health.

### What tasks will the industry take responsibility for?

Plant workers would take on manual sorting activities currently done by entry level FSIS workers. After plant sorting activities, FSIS would still inspect 100% of live animals before slaughter and carcasses just after slaughter. FSIS would have authority to take control if a plant improperly sorts.

### Will there be less FSIS inspection?

Although there would be less entry level FSIS employees at the plant because the company is performing the manual sorting activities, there would be additional higher level FSIS staff verifying food safety and animal welfare.

### Can plants run as fast as they want?

Not now and not under the new system. NSIS comes with new, additional requirements, such as monitoring to ensure process control. Plants would only run at speeds that maintain worker safety animal welfare, food safety, and quality. FSIS would constantly verify process control.

### Is the new system safe for workers?

Yes. FSIS' preliminary comparative analysis from 2002 to 2010 shows that HIMP establishments had lower mean injury rates than non-HIMP establishments. [2]

The most valuable asset at any plant is the employees, which is why plants are committed to continuously evaluate worker safety. Plants modify processes, implement innovative equipment, or create additional job positions to ensure each worker's load is manageable.

The meat industry as a whole has continued to reduce injuries, at an all-time low rate of 5.3 total recordable cases per 100 full-time workers per year. By way of comparison, the injury rate for ambulance services is 7.8 and frozen cake, pie, and pastry manufacturing is 7.3. [3] The Meat Institute agrees that the priority is to do everything in your power to reduce injuries.

### How does this stimulate innovation?

Inspection under NSIS would be more efficient, allowing FSIS to make better use of agency resources and conduct more offline activities to ensure food safety and animal welfare.

Plants will have the flexibility to reconfigure the slaughter floor, currently limited by stringent regulations on FSIS inspection locations and station sizes. Plants could also use technological advancements and innovative techniques to make presentation and inspection more efficient.

### References

[1] 83 *Federal Register* 4796.

[2] 83 *Federal Register* 4796.

[3] Incident rate – detailed industry level <https://www.bls.gov/web/osh.supptoc.htm>