



# Worthwhile Operational Guidelines & Suggestions

BROILER PROCESSING TIMELY INFORMATION – SEPTEMBER 2003

## PLANT VENTILATION\*

A good ventilation system is important to the production of wholesome meat and poultry products. Unless the quality of air entering the plant is controlled and the quality of air in the plant is maintained, products may become contaminated by dust, odors, smoke, fumes, and condensate. A poor ventilation system can serve as a vehicle for disseminating microorganisms. The establishment has the responsibility to ensure that the ventilation system:

- \* Provide enough ventilation for all areas of the plant, including processing, packaging, and welfare rooms to control condensation to the extent necessary to prevent creation of insanitary conditions and the adulteration of product.
- \* Promptly exhausts objectionable odors (e.g., ammonia), fumes (e.g., from gas forklifts), and odors (e.g., from grease traps, toilet rooms, and inedible tank rooms) to the outside so they don't accumulate and enter edible areas where they can be absorbed by exposed product.
- \* Provides air from the outside that is free of odors from animal holding and inedible areas, dust, fumes, and other airborne contaminants that can contaminate the product. If air is exhausted from the plant, air from somewhere else will replace it.

Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) does not expect the establishment to completely eliminate all odors, vapors, and condensation. However, plants must control the airborne contaminants such as odors, vapors and condensate (mists) to prevent adulteration of the environment that can lead to creation of insanitary conditions or the adulteration of product. An example of the Sanitation Performance Standards (SPS) ventilation failure to meet the requirements of this regulation is beaded condensate on the bottom of a refrigeration unit (not equipped with a drip pan) in an area where product is processed, handled or stored. Consumer Safety Inspectors (CSI) should use good judgment in making a compliance decision and might ask themselves the following questions:

- \* Are the conditions they observed creating an insanitary condition? **If the conditions are not creating an insanitary condition or adulterated product, there is no noncompliance.**
- \* Are the conditions they observed contaminating product? **If the product is contaminated, they might need to make a further assessment by seeking answers to more questions. If there is no food safety hazard associated with the product, the CSI should document the noncompliance using the SSOP procedure code. If there is a food hazard associated with the contaminated, the CSI should document the noncompliance using the appropriate HACCP procedure code.**

In regard to condensation, keep in mind that some forms of condensation are unavoidable and acceptable as long as the establishment controls the condensation to ensure that it does not create an insanitary condition or adulterate product.

\* **Source:** FSIS Food Safety Regulatory Essentials Sanitation notebook/training.



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