Worthwhile Operational Guidelines & Suggestions

NEW POUlTRY INSPECTION SYSTEM (NPIS)

Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) of USDA recently published the Final Rule: Modernization of Poultry Slaughter Inspection on Federal Register (9 CFR Parts 381 and 500; Vol.79, No.12, 2014). With his rule FSIS is establishing a new (but initially voluntary) inspection system for poultry slaughter facilities. The NPIS basically represents an evolution of the HIMP (HACCP-Based Inspection Models Project) and is designed to facilitate pathogen reduction in poultry products. Key elements of the NPIS include:

1. Requiring that establishment personnel sort carcasses and remove unacceptable carcasses and parts before the birds are presented to the FSIS carcass inspector,
2. Shifting resources to conduct more offline inspection activities,
3. Assigning one offline verification inspector per line per shift and to reduce the number of online inspectors to one per evisceration line,
4. Replacing the Finished Product Standards (FPS), with a requirement that establishments maintain records to document that the products resulting from their slaughter operations meet the definition of ready-to-cook (RTC) poultry,
5. Authorizing broiler slaughter establishments to operate at a maximum line speed of 140 birds per minute, provided that they maintain process control. Under the NPIS, there will be one online carcass inspector at a fixed location just prior to the chiller and one offline verification inspector (VI) assigned to each evisceration line. Verification inspectors will also perform offline activities in addition to carcass verification checks, such as verifying compliance with sanitation standard operating procedures (SOPs), sanitation performance standards (SPS), and HACCP regulatory requirements, and ensuring that the establishment is meeting all regulatory requirements and is effectively preventing contamination by enteric pathogens and fecal material throughout the entire slaughter and dressing process. NPIS will also require sampling and analysis for microorganisms at the pre- and post-chill points in the process to monitor process control for enteric pathogens and maintain daily records sufficient to document the implementation and monitoring of these procedures. Finally, FSIS is removing the prescriptive time and temperature parameters from the chilling requirements for RTC poultry and instead is requiring that establishments incorporate procedures for chilling poultry into their HACCP systems. The good news is that under the NPIS, processors will have direct control of the carcass sorting process and therefore will have the flexibility to implement and assess the technologies they think are beneficial to their operations.