

certification of eligibility promulgated at 7 CFR § 1260.530 as published in 51 FR 11557, 11559 (April 4, 1986) are eligible for certification. Those criteria are:

(a) For State organizations or associations:

(1) Total paid membership must be comprised of at least a majority of cattle producers or represent at least a majority of cattle producers in a State or unit.

(2) Membership must represent a substantial number of producers who produce a substantial number of cattle in such State or unit.

(3) There must be a history of stability and permanency.

(4) There must be a primary or overriding purpose of promoting the economic welfare of cattle producers.

(b) For organizations or associations representing importers, the determination by the Secretary as to the eligibility of importer organizations or associations to nominate members to the Board shall be based on applications containing the following information:

(1) The number and type of members represented (i.e., beef or cattle importers, etc.).

(2) Annual import volume in pounds of beef and beef products and/or the number of head of cattle.

(3) The stability and permanency of the importer organization or association.

(4) The number of years in existence.

(5) The names of the countries of origin for cattle, beef, or beef products imported.

All certified organizations and associations, including those which were previously certified in the States or units having vacant positions on the Board, will be notified simultaneously in writing of the beginning and ending dates of the established nomination period and will be provided with required nomination forms and background information sheets.

The names of qualified nominees received by the established due date will be submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture for consideration as appointees to the Board.

The information collection requirements referenced in this notice have been previously approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the provisions of 44 U.S.C., Chapter 35 and have been assigned OMB No. 0581-0093, except Board member nominee information sheets are assigned OMB No. 0505-0001.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 2901 *et seq.*

Dated: March 29, 1996.

Lon Hatamiya,

*Administrator.*

[FR Doc. 96-8304 Filed 4-3-96; 8:45 am]

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### Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

#### Forestry Research Advisory Council; Notice of Meeting

According to the Federal Advisory Committee Act of October 6, 1987, (Public Law 92-463, 86 Stat. 770-776) the U.S. Department of Agriculture announces the following meeting:

*Name:* Forestry Research Advisory Council.

*Date:* April 29-30, 1996.

*Time:* 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

*Place:* Governor's House Hotel, 17th Street and Rhode Island Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20036

*Type of Meeting:* Open to the public. Persons may participate in the meeting if time and space permit.

*Comments:* The public may file written comments before or after the meeting by contacting the person below.

*Purpose:* The council agenda will include: Results of the 7th American Forest Congress; 1995 Farm Bill Implications; National Science and Technology Council strategy; Government Performance and Results Act; science planning as it relates to forestry and natural resources; review of the Cooperative Forestry Research Program (McIntire-Stennis); and other current research issues.

*Contact Person for Agenda and More Information:* Dr. Ralph A. Otto, Natural Resources and Environment, Aerospace Center, Suite 329, Ag Box 2210, Washington, DC 20250-2210; telephone (202) 401-4555.

Dated: March 22, 1996.

B.H. Robinson,

*Administrator, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.*

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### Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 96-002N]

#### Notice of Policy Change; Achieving the Zero Tolerance Performance Standard for Beef Carcasses by Knife Trimming and Vacuuming With Hot Water or Steam; Use of Acceptable Carcass Interventions for Reducing Carcass Contamination Without Prior Agency Approval

**AGENCY:** Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is announcing

a change to its trim-only policy for removing fecal, ingesta, and milk contamination from beef carcasses. Currently, all feces, ingesta, and milk must be physically removed from beef carcasses by knife trimming. Under this new policy, FSIS will permit the use of vacuuming beef carcasses with hot water or steam as an alternative to the trim-only policy for removing fecal and ingesta contamination, when such contamination is less than one inch in its greatest dimension.

This notice also lists other carcass decontamination systems that may be used on beef carcasses during the dressing operation. These other interventions may not be used to remove fecal or ingesta contamination. They may be used in conjunction with knife trimming or vacuuming with hot water or steam. They may also be used without prior Agency approval.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. William James, Director, Slaughter Inspection Standards and Procedures Division, Science and Technology, Food Safety and Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250-3700; (202) 720-3219.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

Effective prevention and removal of fecal and ingesta contamination are among the most important steps establishments must take to ensure the safety of beef carcasses. Such contamination may harbor *Escherichia coli* O157:H7, *Salmonella*, and other enteric pathogens. Given the association of pathogens with feces and intestinal contents, minimizing the exposure of carcasses to fecal and ingesta contamination and prompt and complete removal of such contamination is critical to food safety.

FSIS has had a long-standing policy prohibiting visible feces or ingesta on inspected and passed beef carcasses. Following the 1993 outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 food poisoning in the Western United States, FSIS strictly enforced the knife trim-only policy for removing feces and ingesta contamination from beef carcasses.

Prior to the outbreak, warm and ambient temperature washes were sometimes permitted by inspectors to be used to remove small flecks of contaminants. However, inspection personnel did not always determine whether the source of the flecks on beef carcasses was fecal or ingesta contamination or another source, such as rail dust.

After the 1993 outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7, FSIS reiterated that trimming