

Informal resolution process for red meat carcasses rejected at post mortem inspection

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Please note that this informal resolution review arrangement is not a requirement in law. The FSA has agreed to enter this voluntary arrangement and reserve the right to review its application periodically.

Important

This procedure will be trialled for a year. After that, a decision will be made to retain, modify or withdraw this procedure.

Process aim

This procedure has been developed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in conjunction with meat industry representatives to provide food business operators (FBOs) with access to an informal and voluntary resolution process when the decision has been made not to apply a health mark following ante mortem and post-mortem inspection ("inspection result decision"), and the FBO is in disagreement.

For consideration

Where a review is requested, the final decision regarding the fitness of a carcass continues to rest with the Official Veterinarian (OV) attending on the day the animal was processed.

An FBO may request a review of the initial OV inspection result decision by an FSA veterinarian who is also a qualified OV (we will refer to this veterinarian as FSA Vet for the purposes of this document and to avoid confusion between the OV at the plant and the FSA OV).

Notwithstanding the request for a review, where the OV considers that it is reasonable to take action to eliminate or contain any risks to human or animal health, or to animal welfare, the OV retains the right to take such action.

Where an FBO disagrees with the inspection result decision, an FBO is not required to request an informal review and may challenge the inspection result decision through the usual legal routes.

Considering that requesting an informal review will inevitably delay the OV in reaching a final decision, FBOs should ensure that fully functional and lockable facilities are available for the hygienic refrigerated storage of detained meat before requesting an informal review.

The process of requesting an informal review

1. Where an FBO does not agree with the OV's inspection result decision, they must first discuss their concerns directly with the OV. Consideration must be given to allowing carcasses to set, perhaps allowing overnight refrigeration before initiating this procedure (e.g. oedema in older cattle).
2. Following the discussion, if agreement cannot be reached, the FBO should notify the OV of their intention to request an informal review both verbally and in writing. The FBO, or a representative appointed by the FBO, should complete Part 1 of the form set out in Annex I and email it to the OV. This notification should take place within the agreed OV working hours of the day when the inspection result decision was made. The Head of Operational Delivery (HOD) should be copied into this email notification.
3. The OV should gather photographic and video evidence. Photographs and videos should have an accurate date and time stamp and preferably be taken within 24 hours of the slaughter of the animal.
4. After the FBO contacts the regional HOD (see point 2), the HOD will appoint an FSA Vet, to provide a review at the earliest opportunity, in preparation for the receipt of the documentation for review.
5. After the OV has gathered evidence, they should complete Part 2 of Annex I and submit it to the HOD no later than close of play on the next working day after the FBO has initiated this procedure. The FBO initiates this procedure when they complete step 2 of this process.
6. The HOD will submit Annex I to the FSA Vet as soon as reasonably practicable but will use reasonable endeavours to do so on the same day it is received. The FSA Vet should provide their review, including details of their rationale, as soon as reasonably practicable and return Annex I after completing Part 3 to the HOD and the OV.
7. The FSA Vet should discuss with the OV the content of Annex I if necessary and may visit the establishment to inspect the carcass and body parts if required to reach their opinion.
8. As soon as reasonably practicable after receiving the completed Part 3 of Annex I, the OV will consider the views of the FSA Vet. The OV will then complete Part 4 of Annex I, setting out the final decision. They will communicate this final decision to the FBO in writing, by emailing all completed parts of Annex I to the FBO and the HOD as soon as reasonably possible.
9. If the review outcome agrees with the OV's decision, that the carcass and body parts are unfit for human consumption, the carcass and associated material will be declared unfit and the FBO must dispose of all material as the appropriate category of ABP.
10. If the review outcome identifies further evidence or issues which may point to a different conclusion, after considering all the factors and evidence, the final decision on the fitness of the carcass and body parts will rest with the OV.
11. All involved in the procedure are expected to act in good faith.
12. Annex II includes a process flow diagram for further clarification.

Cost implications

There will not be any cost for the work of the FSA Vet during the trial period. Once this period is over, this position will be reviewed.

Annex I: Slaughterhouse FBO requesting a review of an OV inspection result decision form

You can download or print this section using the buttons at the top of this page.

PART 1 – FBO notification to the OV. Requesting an informal review

Establishment details

Approval number:	
Establishment approval name:	
Full establishment address:	
Name of the establishment operator/FBO representative making the request:	
Operator position:	
Operator/FBO representative email address:	
Operator/FBO representative phone number:	
Date:	

Description and identification of the carcass under dispute

Species:	
Identification details:	
Number of carcasses:	
Date of birth/age:	
Date and time of slaughter:	
Kill number(s):	
Is the carcass(es) in the detention chiller?	
Have all body parts been retained?	

Details of the concern

Please, provide details of your disagreement with the OV's inspection result decision:	
What do you believe is the right decision and why:	

Note to the FBO: Once completed, please email to the OV and HOD within the agreed OV working hours of the day when the inspection result decision was made regarding the carcass.

PART 2– OV documentary evidence to support the inspection result decision

OV details

OV name:	
OV email address:	
OV phone number:	
Date:	

Details of the Decision

Were there any details of significance in the animal's FCI (e.g. pathologies, veterinary treatments) if so, please specify:	
Were there any antemortem inspection findings of significance, if so, please specify:	
Please, provide details of your findings and inspection result decision:	

Photographic and video evidence

Number	Image & Description (Body part/organ description)
1	
2	
3	
4	
6	
7	

Continue as required.

Note to the OV: Once completed, please email to the HOD no later than close of play next working day after the FBO has initiated this procedure.

PART 3– Review

FSA Vet details

FSA Vet name:	
Position:	
email address:	
Document received (date):	Review results issued (date):

After reviewing the information contained in this document and having considered the OV inspection result decision, please provide the outcome of your review in the following table. Your views will be considered by the OV before making a final decision.

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Note to the FSA Vet: Once completed, please return to the HOD and the OV as soon as reasonably possible.

PART 4– OV final decision

After reviewing the views provided, my final decision is as follows:

Final decision:	
OV name:	Date:

Note to the OV: Once completed, please return to the FBO and to the HOD as soon as reasonably possible.

[Back to top](#)