



Temporary Operational Instruction

Action note: 2025-10-15 – Informal Resolution Process

Purpose

This action note is to inform operational staff of a new temporary operational instruction relating to a procedure that has been developed 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.

Background

This procedure has been developed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in conjunction with meat industry representatives. The intention of this procedure is to provide FBOs with an informal resolution process, if they wish to use it, without preventing the FBO from challenging the inspection result decision through the usual legal routes. This procedure will be trialled for a year. After which, a decision will be made to retain,

review or withdraw this procedure. This informal resolution 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.

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

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

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.

Procedure

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.

A process flow for the procedure, is set out in **Annex II** below.

Front line staff are required to note the following action

OVs and Official Auxiliaries (OAs) are required to familiarise themselves with this process.

Note the contents of the action note, ensuring it is read by all front-line staff.

Where necessary, print a copy for the plant file.

Distribution

This action note will be:

- uploaded to the [Temporary Operational Instruction Folder held in the MOC area of SharePoint](#) (accessible only on an official FSA device)
- logged on the [Temporary Operational Instruction tracker](#) (accessible only on an official FSA device)
- published alongside the [MOC chapters on food.gov.uk](#)

The action note will remain live until either incorporated into the MOC or revoked.

Annex I

Slaughterhouse FBO requesting a review of an OV inspection result decision form.

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	
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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

Image Number	Image & Description
1	Body part/organ... - Description...
2	Body part/organ... - Description...
3	Body part/organ... - Description...
4	Body part/organ... - Description...
5	

	Body part/organ... - Description...
6	Body part/organ... - Description...
7	Body part/organ... - Description...

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 below the outcome of your review. 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 practicable.

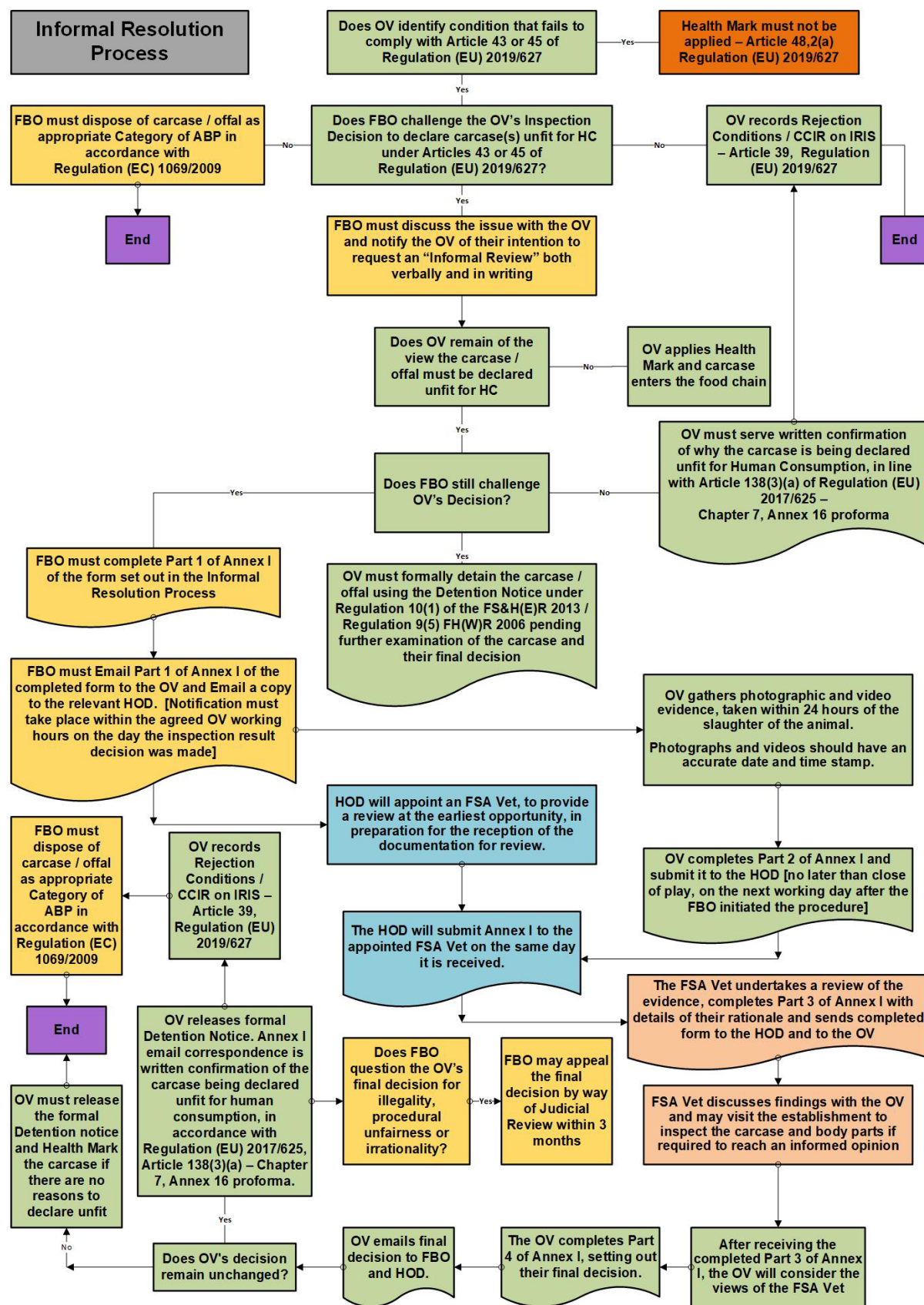
PART 4– OV final decision

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.

Annex II



Action note drafted by and date	Action note agreed by and date	Published and date
JR 9/10/2025	RPM 10/10/2025	21/10/2025