

FSIS Responds to Petitions on “Meat” Labeling

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- As previously [reported](#), on February 9, 2018, the US Cattlemen’s Association filed a petition with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), requesting that the Agency limit the definition of “meat” and “beef” to products derived from animals born, raised and harvested in the traditional manner. The petition was meant to prevent these terms from being used for cell-cultured products.
- FSIS denied the petition on September 16, 2021. In [its response](#) FSIS discussed its denial in the context of both cell-cultured products and other products. For cultured products, the Agency stated that it intends to address the issues through the advanced notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) regarding the labeling of cell-cultured products that was [published](#) on September 3, 2021. For other products (such as plant-based alternatives to meat), FSIS pointed to a [2013 announcement](#) in which it said that it would not be adding new entries to its [Food Standard and Labeling Policy Book](#); therefore, FSIS indicated it could not now add the terms “meat” or “beef” as requested. Further, FSIS noted that this issue would fall in FDA’s jurisdiction as these products are not amenable to the Federal Meat Inspection Act or Poultry Products Inspection Act.
- Harvard’s Animal Law and Policy Program also [filed a petition](#) with FSIS requesting a labeling approach for cell-based meats and poultry that would not require new standards of identity and would not ban the use of common or usual meat or poultry terms or other product terms specified in current codified standards of identity. The petition asserts that FSIS should wait to establish speech restrictions until the Agency has a better understanding of the compositional and safety characteristics of finished cell-based meat products and until it has had the opportunity to review proposed labels.
- In FSIS’s September 16, 2021 [response](#) to Harvard Animal Law’s petition, the Agency stated that it intends to address the issues through the ANPR and that it is “actively expanding its knowledge of cell-based meat and poultry products so that it can effectively oversee the safety and labeling of such products.”

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