



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

1400 Independence
Avenue, SW,
Washington, D.C.
20250

Dr. Brooke Miller
President
U.S. Cattlemen's Association
5355 Highway 1806
Mandan, ND 58554

September 16, 2021

Dear Dr. Miller:

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has reviewed your petition dated February 9, 2018 (Petition Number 18-01). The petition requests that FSIS limit the definition of “meat” and “beef” to products derived from animals born, raised, and harvested in the traditional manner. This action would, as the petition notes, effectively prohibit the labels of products made using animal cell culture technology (hereinafter, “cultured” products) or derived from non-animal sources, such as plant-based products, from displaying the terms “meat” or “beef.” The petition requests that FSIS add these suggested definitions to FSIS' Food Standards and Labeling Policy Book (“Policy Book”). FSIS received and analyzed over 6000 public comments on your petition.

Furthermore, in October 2018, your petition was discussed at a public meeting hosted by FSIS and FDA on the potential hazards, oversight considerations, and labeling of cultured food products derived from livestock and poultry tissue (83 FR 46476). FSIS received over 300 comments on the public meeting, many of which were concerned with the issues raised in your petition as they pertain to the labeling of cultured meat and poultry products.

Regarding cultured products, FSIS intends to address the issues raised in your petition through the advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) published on September 3, 2021, which is discussed below. The ANPR, which includes a discussion of your petition, requests comments that will help inform the development of labeling requirements for meat and poultry products comprised of or containing cultured cells derived from animals subject to the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) or Poultry Products Inspection Act (PPIA). FSIS, therefore, encourages you to submit comments on the ANPR and any subsequent rulemaking related to this matter.

As it pertains to other types of products, FSIS has decided to deny your petition. On November 7, 2013, FSIS announced that it will not add any new entries to the Policy Book (78 FR 66826, November 7, 2013). Thus, FSIS cannot add entries for the terms “meat” or “beef” to the Policy Book, as requested. Moreover, FSIS does not have jurisdiction to regulate the labeling of products derived from sources that are not amenable to the FMIA or PPIA, such as plant-based products. The U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) regulates the labeling of such products under the Federal Food, Drug, & Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 343(a)).

Dr. Miller
Page 2

When FSIS is made aware that a non-animal product is being labeled as “meat” or “beef,” FSIS refers such information to FDA.

In accordance with our petition regulations, we have posted your petition on the FSIS website (9 CFR 392.6). We intend to post this letter, which serves as our official final response to your petition, as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matthew Michael".

Matthew Michael
Director
Regulations Development Staff
Office of Policy and Program Development