

MEAT AND POULTRY EQUIPMENT SANITARY DESIGN EVALUATION SERVICE

The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) Dairy Grading Branch offers many services on a voluntary, user fee basis that help provide assurance of wholesome and high-quality products. One of the voluntary services offered is a program to evaluate processing equipment used in the meat and poultry industries for sanitary design and fabrication.

Sanitary processing conditions are essential for the wholesome, high quality meat and poultry products consumers desire. The Dairy Grading Branch, Meat and Poultry Equipment Sanitary Design Evaluation Service, provides assurance to buyers that equipment designs and fabrication meet acceptable standards and can be effectively cleaned in order to produce wholesome, high quality meat and poultry products.

Due to the high cost of meat and poultry processing equipment or processes, fabricators and users need to protect their investment. The Meat and Poultry Equipment Sanitary Design Evaluation Service provides both the fabricators and users a means by which to ensure the completed equipment will meet the criteria in a nationally recognized standard prior to installation.

The production of wholesome, high quality meat and poultry products depends upon processing equipment which can be effectively cleaned and sanitized. Sanitary design requires the application of special materials and engineering techniques to ensure the products processed are protected at all times. Mechanical cleaning of equipment while fully assembled requires exacting sanitary design characteristics in order to be effective. Equipment which is to be manually cleaned requires easy to disassemble design features.

Evaluation

The Dairy Grading Branch utilizes nationally recognized criteria for design evaluations. Dairy Grading Branch evaluations utilize the standards developed by the NSF/3-A Joint Committee on Food Processing Equipment.

Criteria

These standards provide criteria for materials, design, fabrication and installation as appropriate.

How to Obtain An Evaluation

The Meat and Poultry Equipment Sanitary Design Evaluation Service is a voluntary inspection service available to meat and poultry equipment fabricators and users. To participate, an equipment fabricator or user has three options:

1. Design drawings may be submitted by mail for an evaluation,
2. The fabricator may bring design drawings to a joint meeting at the Dairy Grading Branch, Meat and Poultry Equipment Design Review Section offices in Washington, DC, or,
3. A Dairy Grading Branch specialist can travel to a site of the fabricator's choice to conduct the evaluation of both drawings and the actual equipment to be evaluated.

Equipment which meets all of the evaluation criteria within the appropriate standards developed by the NSF/3-A Joint Committee on Food Processing Equipment is issued a letter stating that the equipment complies with the standard. Upon request, a U. S. Department of Agriculture, Equipment Acceptance Certificate, can also be issued and the fabricator may also request to display an AMS official identification on the equipment or promotional materials.

Fees & Charges

All evaluations are provided on a user fee basis. The time to conduct the evaluation, prepare the report, and travel to and from an evaluation site are charged at the published hourly rates for Dairy Inspection and Grading Services. Travel expenses are also charged at the published per diem and travel reimbursement rates for official Federal travel.

For More Information

For more information about USDA Meat and Poultry Equipment Sanitary Design Evaluation Service, write to: USDA/AMS/Dairy Programs, Dairy Grading Branch, Room 612-Cotton Annex, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0291, or call the Dairy Grading Branch at 202-720-8307, fax 202-720-8581, or e-mail at First name.Last name@usda.gov (for example: Evan.Stachowicz@usda.gov).

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