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Agriculture

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**Non-Hormone Treated Cattle (NHTC) Program
LS Program Guide 1 – General Requirements for Live Animal Production
April 30, 2001**

1. Scope

These requirements apply to all farms, ranches, and feedlots approved by AMS for the production and feeding of cattle without the use of hormonal growth promotants destined for certification by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) for export to the European Union (EU).

2. Reference documents

FSIS – Program for Certifying Non-Hormone Treated Beef to the European Union

MGC Branch Instruction 708 – Non-Hormone Treated Cattle Program

3. Definitions and acronyms

Supplier: Any farm, ranch, or feedlot responsible for the custody of program animals.

Audit: A systematic review of a supplier's program to determine compliance.

Internal audit: A regular, systematic review of a supplier's own program to determine compliance with NHTC program requirements.

Document: Any written policy, procedure, or record, in hardcopy or electronic format, used to define a supplier's program or demonstrate compliance.

NHTC: Non-hormone treated cattle

HGP: Hormonal growth promotant

4. Program requirements

4.1. Animals must not be administered HGPs at any time during their lifetime.

4.2. Animals must be identified at the earliest opportunity following birth with unique, individual identification.

4.3. Animals must be traceable to their farm or ranch of birth.

4.4. Animals may only be obtained from, and must be traceable to, approved sources that appear on the Official Listing of Approved Sources of Non-Hormone Treated Cattle posted on the USDA Internet website.

4.5. Animals must be traceable to a signed affidavit from each sale or transfer of custody.

4.6. All persons with responsibilities for program activities must have complete understanding of all program requirements relevant to their area of responsibility.

4.7. Complete records regarding non-hormone treated cattle and feeds must be maintained.

5. Program manual

The supplier shall prepare and maintain a program manual that contains, at a minimum:

- (a) a description of the legal status of the supplier;
- (b) the names and positions of persons with responsibilities for operation of the certified program;
- (c) the names of all persons authorized to sign affidavits attesting to the non-hormone treatment of animals;
- (d) maps and/or legal descriptions of specific locations where cattle are maintained;
- (e) clear, sequential, written operating policies and procedures or work instructions, specific to the farm or ranch seeking approval, that address all program requirements described in sections 6 - 17;
- (f) a list of all feeds and supplements and their sources;
- (g) a list of all animal health care products and their sources;
- (h) completed examples of all forms, tags, and labels used in the operation and management of the program;
- (i) a current master list or index of all written procedures and forms used in the supplier's program management.

6. Identification

6.1. Method of identification

The supplier shall develop and maintain written procedures for identifying animals by an individual animal number unique to the farm or ranch of birth.

6.1.1. Each animal must be identified with an eartag, clip, button, or similar permanent identification.

6.1.2. Identification must be easily observed and legible.

6.1.3. Identification must be mechanically printed, not easily altered, and designed for single use.

6.1.3.1. Identification must be serially numbered and show the name, logo, or unique acronym of the cattle supplier or a supporting association or service.

6.1.3.2. Numbering system must provide for enough digits to avoid repetition for at least 3 years.

6.1.3.3. Identification numbering sequences and ranch identifiers must be unique and controlled by the manufacturer.

6.1.3.4. Cattle suppliers must maintain and follow procedures for controlling and accounting for tags ordered and used.

6.1.4. Each animal's identification number must be listed in the supplier's records.

6.2. Each animal must be identified at the earliest opportunity following birth.

6.3. Transfer of identification

6.3.1. When applicable, the supplier must develop and maintain written procedures for changing identification method of cattle received from other approved sources. Procedures must provide for positive traceability of each animal to the farm or ranch of birth.

6.3.2. The supplier must maintain records of all changed identities as described in 15, Records.

- 6.4. Loss of identification
 - 6.4.1. The supplier shall develop and maintain written procedures for ensuring animals with lost eartags or other identification are correctly re-identified or excluded from the program.
7. Traceability
 - 7.1. The supplier shall develop and maintain written procedures for ensuring all animals are traceable to their farm or ranch of birth.
8. Control and segregation
 - 8.1. The supplier shall develop and maintain written procedures to ensure NHTC program animals are not commingled with animals that are fed hormonal growth promotants.
 - 8.1.1. NHTC program cattle must be maintained in separate pens from non-program cattle.
 - 8.1.2. NHTC program cattle pens and feed bunks may not be immediately adjacent to non-program cattle pens and feed bunks, whereby there is a risk of cross-contamination of feed during the feeding process.
 - 8.1.3. The supplier shall develop and maintain written procedures to be followed when NHTC program cattle become mixed with cattle fed hormonal growth promotants.
 - 8.2. The supplier shall develop and maintain written procedures to ensure feeds treated with hormonal growth promotants do not contaminate NHTC program cattle feed.
 - 8.2.1. If HGPs are used on the premises, the supplier shall develop and maintain written procedures for accounting for the acquisition, inventory, use, and disposal of all hormonal growth promotants used on the premises.
 - 8.2.2. If feeds containing HGPs are mixed or fed on the premises, the supplier must have procedures for preventing cross-contamination of feeds.
 - 8.3. Procedures must account for the final disposition of animals excluded from the program.
9. Affidavits
 - 9.1. The supplier shall develop and maintain written procedures for issuing and controlling the distribution of affidavits attesting to the non-hormone treatment of cattle. Affidavits must contain the same information as the appropriate sample affidavit provided by FSIS.
 - 9.2. The supplier shall develop and maintain written procedures for ensuring each animal identified on an affidavit is traceable to its farm or ranch of birth.
 - 9.3. A copy of a signed affidavit must accompany all cattle when custody is transferred. As an alternative, a copy of the affidavit may be faxed, mailed or otherwise transmitted to the destination location so that it is available for reference when the cattle are unloaded.
 - 9.4. Affidavits must include or be accompanied by a list of all animals by individual identification number covered by the affidavit. Multiple shipments of cattle may be included on a single affidavit, however, individual affidavits may only include cattle that were fed as a group and shipped on one day from a single location.
 - 9.5. Affidavits must be signed by a person listed in the approved program manual.
 - 9.6. The issuing party shall be responsible for retaining and controlling original signature copies of affidavits.
10. Inspection and testing
 - 10.1. Receiving inspection

The supplier shall establish and maintain written procedures for conducting necessary inspections to ensure animals received comply with all program requirements.

- 10.2. In-process inspection and testing
In programs where treated and non-treated feeds are processed using the same blending, storage, or transporting equipment, the supplier shall establish and maintain written procedures for periodically testing feed to verify that untreated feed is not contaminated by HGP-treated feed.
- 10.3. Final inspection
The supplier shall establish and maintain written procedures for ensuring all NHTC program requirements are met prior to transfer of custody.
- 10.4. Inspection and test records
The supplier shall develop and maintain written procedures for recording results of inspections used to determine or demonstrate program compliance.

11. Feeds and feeding

- 11.1. Rations
 - 11.1.1. The supplier shall maintain sufficient records of all rations fed to cattle to demonstrate program compliance.
 - 11.1.2. The supplier's records must clearly show the source and ingredients of any pre-mixed feed or supplements.
- 11.2. Testing
 - 11.2.1. When feed or supplements are obtained from sources that process feeds containing hormonal growth promotants, the supplier shall periodically test feeds to ensure procedures in place effectively prevent HGP-treated feeds from being fed to program animals. As an alternative, if the feed supplier has an additive-control program monitored by a state or Federal agency, livestock producers may obtain a certificate of compliance or letter of guarantee stating that the feed to be used for NHTC Program cattle is free of hormonal growth promotants.
 - 11.2.2. Testing procedures, if conducted, shall be proactive and designed to ensure program compliance.

12. Shipping

- 12.1. The supplier shall develop and maintain written procedures for controlling animals during shipment.
 - 12.1.1. Controls shall include secure transport and continuous traceability to affidavits.
 - 12.1.2. Controls shall ensure cattle are not commingled with cattle treated with hormonal growth promotants.
- 12.2. All sales, movements, or other transfers of cattle shall be recorded in the supplier's records.

13. Health program

- 13.1. The supplier shall develop and maintain a list of all medications, feed additives, or other substances used in their animal health care program.
- 13.2. The supplier's animal health care and feeding program shall be reviewed and approved in writing by a licensed veterinarian as to the exclusion of hormonal growth promotants.

14. Records

- 14.1. The supplier shall maintain records demonstrating compliance with program requirements.
- 14.2. The supplier shall maintain up-to-date records of all program cattle kept on the premises, including their location and program status. Records must account for
 - (a) births, purchases, or other acquisitions;
 - (b) deaths;
 - (c) cattle removed from the program due to disqualification, and
 - (d) sales or other transfers of custody or ownership.
- 14.3. Records may be hard copy or electronic format.
- 14.4. Records shall be retained for a period projected to be one year beyond the date of export of meat products to the EU. For each industry sector, the minimum requirement shall be:
 - (a) Cow/calf operations – 3 years from date of birth.
 - (b) Yearling stocker operations – 2 years from date of sale or transfer to feedlot.
 - (c) Feedlot operations – 18 months from date of slaughter.

15. Control of records

- 15.1. Records must be stored in a manner so as to prevent loss, damage, or alteration.
- 15.2. Records must be easily accessible and readily available.

16. Internal audits

- 16.1. The supplier shall develop and maintain written procedures for conducting semi-annual internal audits of operations and documentation to ensure all program requirements are met.
- 16.2. Records of internal audits shall be maintained.
- 16.3. Results of internal audits shall be reviewed by management and, when appropriate, used to improve supplier's policies and procedures.

17. Statistical techniques

When statistical techniques are used to determine or demonstrate program compliance, the basis for such techniques shall be defined.

Approved: Herbert C. Abraham Date: April 30, 2001
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