

USDA Rejections of Imported Meat, Poultry, Egg Products and Catfish

August 2016

As a result of Freedom of Information Act requests filed by Food & Water Watch, USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has released statistics related to rejections of imported shipments of meat, poultry, siluriformes fish (catfish), and egg products dating from January 1, 2015 to June 10, 2016. During this period, nearly 30,000 shipments, totaling more than 69 million pounds, were rejected by FSIS inspectors.

While most of the rejections were for paperwork anomalies and for damage caused to packaging in transit, nearly 64 million pounds of imported product were rejected for serious food safety violations. Serious violations result if products are from plants or countries that are not allowed to export to the United States, if there are problems with the product's labels or if the product fails physical inspection for defects and adulteration or laboratory analysis for chemical/drug residues or pathogens.¹

These rejections were generated by fewer than 70 FSIS import inspectors posted at U.S. ports of entry.

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the volume of imported product under FSIS jurisdiction due to the reduction of domestic meat processing caused by the severe drought in the west and southwest. For example, in FY 2013, the U.S. imported 3.1 billion pounds of meat and poultry products; in FY 2015, that shot up to 4.4 billion pounds – a 42 percent increase. Some countries have adopted privatized inspection systems that have led to greater scrutiny of their meat and poultry products by FSIS import inspectors at ports-of-entry. Another factor in the increase in imports are new equivalency determinations that qualified new countries to export their meat and poultry products to the United States. Most recently, FSIS has assumed responsibility of inspecting domestic and imported siluriformes and catfish products. Since that inspection program started earlier this year, FSIS has already intercepted unsafe imported catfish and has overseen the recalls of imported and domestic products.

Since FSIS recently announced that it intends to post on its website more of the microbiological testing data it collects for domestic establishments, Food & Water Watch has asked FSIS to post the import rejections on a monthly basis just as the Food and Drug Administration does for the all of the products – including food – that fall under its jurisdiction. Since the volume of imported food that U.S. consumers eat each year is increasing, FSIS should make information available on the safety records for those countries that export to the U.S. In the interim, Food & Water Watch will continue to file Freedom of Information Act requests and post the results on our website.

¹ See FSIS Directive 9900.8, Section IV. www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/e262834a-80f7-4502-bf1d-1a79b03899cd/9900.2.pdf?MOD=AJPERES

Table 1. Total Number of Rejections and Pounds Rejected for All Reasons

(January 1, 2015 — June 10, 2016)

Country	Total Number of Rejections	Total Pounds Rejected
Argentina	4	69,226
Australia	18,453	21,491,526
Austria	9	21,104
Brazil	613	3,046,673
Canada	710	7,337,135
Chile	301	4,187,864
Costa Rica	60	1,037,100
Croatia	1	13
Denmark	195	1,437,055
Finland	4	165,095
France	2	349
Germany	6	31,842
Honduras	2	84,000
Hungary	10	54,730
Iceland	7	7,191
Ireland	193	1,214,760
Israel	90	155,702
Italy	108	461,356
Japan	39	20,363
Mexico	385	4,478,632
Netherlands	237	2,695,640
New Zealand	6,618	7,822,334
Nicaragua	101	1,609,888
Northern Ireland	28	258,804
Poland	478	1,856,381
South Korea	3	12,860
Spain	202	1,840,336
United Kingdom	100	790,716
Uruguay	1,029	7,373,452
Vietnam	1	39,600
Grand Total	29,989	69,601,727

Table 2. Total Pounds Rejected for Serious Violations by Species and Violation Type

(January 1, 2015 — June 10, 2016)

Country/Violation/Species	2015	2016
Argentina — Total	69,095	0
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Beef	69,095	
Australia — Total	11,690,444	6,720,590
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Beef	6,782,119	3,173,853
Goat	1,238,546	507,367
Lamb	2,717,130	2,309,726
Mutton	756,436	553,693
Ostrich		1,758
Veal	196,213	174,193
Austria — Total	13,650	2,652
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Pork	13,650	2,652
Brazil — Total	2,187,330	590,176
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Beef	2,027,872	535,066
Pork	159,458	55,110
Canada — Total	3,887,218	3,318,886
Failed Laboratory Analyses		
Beef		60
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Beef	734,180	478,227
Chicken	581,902	463,326
Duck	41,204	6,825
Pork	2,289,478	2,271,641
Turkey	184,855	84,396
Veal	55,599	14,411
Chile — Total	2,420,559	1,704,459
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Beef	267,788	148,698
Chicken	1,975,264	1,230,803
Lamb	111,292	45
Pork	13,228	71,335
Turkey	52,987	253,578
Costa Rica — Total	432,159	522,421
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Beef	432,159	522,421
Denmark — Total	881,367	406,059
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Pork	881,367	406,059
Finland — Total	165,051	
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Pork	165,051	

**Table 2. (cont.) Total Pounds Rejected for
Serious Violations by Species and Violation Type**
(January 1, 2015 — June 10, 2016)

Country/Violation/Species	2015	2016
France — Total	332	
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Pork	332	
Germany — Total		31,815
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Pork		31,815
Honduras — Total	84,000	
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Beef	84,000	
Hungary — Total		54,730
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Pork		54,730
Iceland — Total	6,332	
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Lamb	6,332	
Ireland — Total	550,145	650,828
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Beef	309,502	398,342
Pork	240,643	252,486
Israel — Total	33,485	119,724
Failed Laboratory Analyses		
Turkey	76	
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Chicken	26,092	119,391
Turkey	7,317	333
Italy — Total	400,386	60,295
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Pork	400,386	60,295
Japan — Total	19,589	96
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Beef	19,589	96
Mexico — Total	1,042,194	3,301,212
Failed Laboratory Analyses		
Beef	33	
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Beef	917,720	2,858,592
Chicken		35,349
Pork	67,150	374,244
Turkey	57,291	33,027
Netherlands — Total	2,334,862	321,861
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Chicken	2,186,136	84,376
Pork	148,726	237,485

**Table 2. (cont.) Total Pounds Rejected for
Serious Violations by Species and Violation Type**
(January 1, 2015 — June 10, 2016)

Country/Violation/Species	2015	2016
New Zealand — Total	4,449,346	2,252,808
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Beef	3,503,318	1,396,743
Goat	48,195	
Lamb	444,259	745,080
Mutton	209,681	11,279
Veal	243,893	99,706
Nicaragua — Total	930,178	648,704
Failed Laboratory Analyses		
Beef	126,000	
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Beef	804,178	648,704
Northern Ireland — Total	36,798	55,000
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Pork	36,798	55,000
Poland — Total	1,049,351	632,412
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Pork	1,049,351	632,412
South Korea — Total		12,672
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Chicken		12,672
Spain — Total	814,086	973,521
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Pork	814,086	973,521
United Kingdom — Total	351,308	420,896
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Pork	351,308	420,896
Uruguay — Total	1,979,818	5,139,146
Failed Laboratory Analyses		
Beef	97,538	226,476
Serious Food Safety Violations		
Beef	1,882,280	4,912,670
Vietnam — Total		39,600
Failed Laboratory Analyses		
Catfish		39,600
Grand Total, All Countries, All Species	35,829,083	27,980,563

**Table 3. Number of Rejections
for Non-Hazardous Reasons**
(January 1, 2015 — June 10, 2016)

Country	Total
Argentina	2
Australia	16,761
Austria	2
Brazil	520
Canada	67
Chile	164
Costa Rica	19
Croatia	1
Denmark	136
Finland	1
France	1
Germany	1
Iceland	4
Ireland	102
Israel	52
Italy	10
Japan	1
Mexico	115
Netherlands	143
New Zealand	6,225
Nicaragua	32
Northern Ireland	24
South Korea	2
Poland	374
Spain	67
United Kingdom	73
Uruguay	558
Grand Total	25,457

Table 5. Pounds of Meat Rejected by Country and Species for Serious Violations

(January 1, 2015 — June 10, 2016)

	Beef	Chicken	Duck	Goat	Lamb	Mutton	Ostrich	Pork	Turkey	Veal	Catfish	Grand Total
Argentina	69,226											69,226
Australia	12,715,103			1,849,824	5,144,443	1,397,254	1,758			383,144		21,491,526
Austria								21,104				21,104
Brazil	2,774,240							272,433				3,046,673
Canada	1,218,091	1,047,820	49,404					4,682,239	269,251	70,330		7,337,135
Chile	418,286	3,253,115			112,401	91		91,599	312,372			4,187,864
Costa Rica	1,037,100											1,037,100
Croatia								13				13
Denmark								1,437,055				1,437,055
Finland								165,095				165,095
France								349				349
Germany								31,842				31,842
Honduras	84,000											84,000
Hungary								54,730				54,730
Iceland					7,191							7,191
Ireland	711,547							503,213				1,214,760
Israel		147,797							7,905			155,702
Italy								461,356				461,356
Japan	20,363											20,363
Mexico	3,849,501	61,227						477,586	90,318			4,478,632
Netherlands		2,295,193						400,447				2,695,640
New Zealand	5,883,216			50,713	1,262,728	234,392				391,285		7,822,334
Nicaragua	1,609,888											1,609,888
Northern Ireland								258,804				258,804
Poland								1,856,381				1,856,381
South Korea		12,860										12,860
Spain								1,840,336				1,840,336
United Kingdom								790,716				790,716
Uruguay	7,373,452											7,373,452
Vietnam											39,600	39,600
Grand Total	37,764,013	6,818,012	49,404	1,900,537	6,526,763	1,631,737	1,758	13,345,298	679,846	844,759	39,600	69,601,727