Meeting the Requirements for State Meat Inspection:

SSOP and HACCP Basics

For additional information on how to develop SSOP's and a HACCP plan, contact:

Louisiana Department of Agriculture Meat & Poultry Inspection Program at: 225-922-1358 or visit the LDAF website at http://www.ldaf.state.la.us/animal-health/.
FSIS Strategic Initiatives Partnerships and Outreach Staff at: 202-690-6520 or visit the FSIS website: http://www.fsis.usda.gov

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In Partnership with: United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety Inspection Service

Developing Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOP)

Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs) are written descriptions of the procedures that a meat or poultry processor uses to prevent contamination or adulteration of their product. These include the actual procedures they perform to clean their equipment, utensils and facilities and other procedures they use to insure their product is not contaminated. Meat and poultry processors under Federal or State inspection must meet the specific requirements for SSOP's outlined in Federal Law. These requirements can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations at 9 CFR 416.11 through 416.17 (See regulations found at the end of this section).

Basic Requirements

All SSOP's must meet certain basic requirements. The written procedures must:

- Contain all of the procedures the establishment will use daily to prevent product contamination before they begin producing product (preoperational procedures) and address, at a minimum, the cleaning of food contact surfaces of facilities, equipment, and utensils
- Contain all of the procedures they use daily to prevent product contamination while they are producing product (operational procedures)
- Specify the frequency with which each procedure is to be performed and identify the employee or position responsible for insuring the procedures are performed correctly and at the correct frequency.
- Be signed and dated by the individual with overall authority on-site or a higher-level official of the establishment. This signature means that the establishment will implement the SSOP's as written and will maintain the SSOP's to meet regulatory requirements.

These written procedures must cover the entire establishment and all shifts of operation. Before a meat or poultry processor can begin processing under inspection, they must have SSOP's that meet the basic regulatory requirements. More details on the basic requirements are described below.

1. Preoperational procedures: The document must identify which of their procedures are performed before operations begin. In other words, it must be clear in the written description of the procedures which ones will be performed daily before operations. These are the procedures the establishment will use on a daily basis to prevent product contamination or adulteration before they start processing. These procedures must be described and address the cleaning of food contact surfaces of facilities, equipment, and utensils.

Examples of pre-operational procedures:

•Cleaning and sanitizing the meat slicer before using it

•Daily monitoring of cleanliness by observing each piece of equipment to be used that day before it is used in operations to ensure it is clean

2. Operational procedures: The document must identify which procedures are performed during operations on a daily basis to prevent product contamination or adulteration.

Examples of operational procedures:
- *Employees will wash their hands during production as necessary to prevent product contamination.*
- *Pest and rodent controls will be in place each day.*

3. The written document must also identify WHO is responsible for making sure that these procedures are performed as stated in the document. This may be one or more than one person.

Example: Joe Green, the owner of Green's Meat Shop, is responsible for insuring the SSOP's are implemented as stated.

4. Recordkeeping: The establishment must identify and maintain records that document the implementation and monitoring of the SSOP and any corrective actions taken. This is commonly done in the form of a chart used to record monitoring of each procedure on a daily basis.

5. Dated Signature: The individual with overall authority on-site or a higher level official of the establishment must sign and date the SSOP (a) When they first begin using it and (b) anytime changes are made to it. Many facilities use signature log pages to meet this requirement.

Examples of good questions to ask to determine if your SSOPs meet the basic requirements!

- *Have I identified and described the procedures I will use to ensure product is not contaminated before I operate each day?*
- *Have I identified and described the procedures I will use to ensure that product is not contaminated during operations each day?*
- *Have I identified who is responsible for ensuring that the SSOPs are implemented as they should be?*
- *Have I identified a frequency for performing each procedure described in my SSOP?*
- *Do I have an adequate recordkeeping system to document that I have implemented and monitored these procedures?*
- *Have I signed and dated the SSOP? If I make changes, have I signed and dated the SSOP to reflect that changes have been made?*

Because no system is perfect, sanitation problems can occur. If a problem occurs, product may become contaminated or adulterated. Any time product has been contaminated or adulterated or direct product contact surfaces are unclean, the establishment must take appropriate corrective actions and document them!

These actions must include:

1. Ensuring the appropriate handling of affected product (if necessary)
    a. If product has been contaminated, it may need to be disposed of. In some situations, it may be reprocessed.
    b. In some cases, product has not been affected. For instance, if a monitor checks a piece of equipment for cleanliness before it is used for processing and finds a dirty spot, no product has been affected as the equipment had not been used yet.

2. Restoring sanitary conditions a. The operation must take any measures necessary to correct the problem.

3. Preventing recurrence a. The operation must identify actions they will take to prevent it from happening in the future.

There are many ways to document corrective actions; however, any documentation needs to include the three items identified above.

A written corrective action might look like:

Date	Problem identified	Handling of product	How sanitary conditions have been restored	Preventive measures	Initials of employee responsible
6/15/2020	Rust on the saw blade during preoperational monitoring	No product affected, equipment not in use yet	The rusty saw blade was removed and replaced with a new one	Blades will be inspected for rust and changed on a regular basis.	DG

Implementing and Monitoring the Written SSOP

The establishment is responsible for developing written procedures that are adequate to prevent direct contamination of product during their operations. They must also perform these procedures as written. Monitoring of these procedures is also required to ensure that the procedures are adequate and performed as written. If the establishment writes a procedure in its SSOP, it must implement that procedure and monitor it at least daily. They must document their monitoring procedures as a means of providing evidence that the procedures were adequate and performed as written.

> *In short, the establishment must do what they say they are going to do, then monitor and document it!*

Many facilities use daily sanitation logs to record the results of their daily monitoring procedures. There are many acceptable forms of documenting the monitoring procedures. All records must be initialed and dated daily by the employee responsible for implementing and monitoring the SSOP's. Each facility should use a form of documentation that accurately represents the monitoring procedures they use in their operation.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of the SSOP

To meet the regulatory requirements, the establishment must routinely evaluate the effectiveness of the SSOPs in preventing direct contamination of product. This means that the establishment must review their procedures on a regular basis to be certain that they are effective. The establishment should also routinely review their SSOP monitoring records to determine if there are trends occurring that may indicate the SSOP needs revising. If monitoring records indicate certain pieces of equipment are found to be dirty frequently or certain personnel are not following procedures correctly, the procedures in the SSOP need to be changed to address these issues. Also, if changes are made in the facilities, equipment, utensils, operations, or personnel, the SSOP must be revised to keep it effective. Remember, the SSOP must be signed and dated when any modification is made.

Records Retention

The daily SSOP records and corrective actions must be kept on-site for 48 hours and must be maintained for at least 6 months. After the initial 48 hours, records may be kept off-site provided that they can be retrieved for inspection personnel within 24 hours of the request.

Annie Oakley‘s Wild Meats - Establishment LA 27

Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures

Owner: Annie Oakley

This SSOP is for a very small plant that slaughters and processes beef for wholesale distribution.

Pre-operational

All food contact surfaces of the facility, equipment, and utensils on the kill floor and processing room will be cleaned daily after production by rinsing, soaping, and sanitizing. All cleaning will be monitored daily by the owner or designee before production begins the next day. Records will be kept on the SSOP Checklist.

Operational

Every day, all equipment and surfaces on the kill floor and processing room will be kept as sanitary as necessary to prevent contamination or adulteration of the carcasses/product.

Every day, all employees will follow hygienic practices to keep themselves from contaminating or adulterating the carcasses/products. These actions will be monitored by the owner or designee once per day and recorded on the SSOP checklist.

Corrective actions taken during pre-operational sanitation inspection or during operations will be written on the back of the SSOP checklist as necessary.

Annie Oakley 6-15-2020

***Note: This is a very basic example of a written SSOP that meets the regulatory requirements. Depending on the operation, other things may need to be added to the SSOP to adequately describe the appropriate procedures. These documents must be tailored specifically for each operation as each business operates differently.*

Example Sanitation Records

Processing Department Sanitation Checklist

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri.
Preoperational Sanitation Check Date:					
1. Stuffing tables					
2. Wrapping table					
3. Cutting table with boards					
4. Grinder plates and knives					
5. Meat lugs and tubs					
6. Mixer					
7. Stuffer, stuffing horns					
8. Tumbler					
9. Product sink					
10. Smokehouse racks					
11. Smokesticks					
12. Smokehouses					
13. Hand tools					
Initials					
Operational Sanitation Check					
1. Employees washed hands as necessary and used gloves when required.					
2. All persons are wearing a clean apron and hair cover. Gloves worn as needed.					
3. Condemned containers are emptied when necessary.					
4. All meat dropped on the floor is condemned or trimmed and reconditioned prior to its use if feasible.					
Initials					

Note: The date is recorded each day.

Each area or piece of equipment is monitored for cleanliness before operations each day.

Note: Initials of person implementing preoperational SSOP's are recorded in this row each day

Each operational sanitation item is monitored and documented at least once per day during operations.

Note: Initials of person implementing operational SSOP's are recorded in this row each day

Corrective Actions are to be noted on the back of this form

The establishment has provided for a recordkeeping system to record corrective actions by writing them on the back of the form.

Note: The results of daily monitoring are indicated for each section each day using the symbols in the key.

Key:
√ = Found acceptable
- = Not in use
X = Not acceptable

SSOP
PRE-OPERATIONAL CHECK LIST

INDICATES ACCEPTABLE ✔
INDICATES DEFICIENCY X

INITIAL →						INITIAL →					
Date →						Date →					
	M	T	W	T	F		M	T	W	T	F
Processing Room # 1						Processing Room # 1					
Cook Room						Cook Room					
Processing Room # 2						Processing Room # 2					
Mixing Room						Mixing Room					
Packing Room						Packing Room					
Chill Cooler						Chill Cooler					
Clean Room						Clean Room					
Raw Cooler						Raw Cooler					
Metal						Metal					

SSOP
OPERATIONAL CHECK LIST

INDICATES ACCEPTABLE ✔
INDICATES DEFICIENCY X

INITIAL →						INITIAL →					
Date →						Date →					
	M	T	W	T	F		M	T	W	T	F
Processing Room # 1						Processing Room # 1					
Cook Room						Cook Room					
Processing Room # 2						Processing Room # 2					
Mixing Room						Mixing Room					
Packing Room						Packing Room					
Chill Cooler						Chill Cooler					
Clean Room						Clean Room					
Raw Cooler						Raw Cooler					
Employee Hygiene						Employee Hygiene					
Other: Allergen						Other: Allergen					
Other: Species						Other: Species					

SSOP Questions and Answers

What are preoperational procedures?

These are the procedures a processor performs before they begin production each day to ensure that their product will not be contaminated by equipment, utensils or facilities that have not been cleaned adequately.

What are operational procedures?

These are the procedures a processor performs during operations each day to ensure that their product will not be contaminated. Contamination or adulteration can occur when people handle the meat products or any equipment, utensils or facilities in contact with the meat product.

How frequently do these procedures need to be monitored?

The performance of these procedures needs to be monitored on a daily basis at a minimum. Do SSOP monitoring records need to be signed? No, but the monitoring records need to be initialed and dated by the person responsible for implementing and monitoring the SSOP‘s for that establishment.

Who needs to sign and date the SSOP‘s?

The individual with overall authority on-site or a higher level official must sign and date the SSOP‘s. This needs to be done at the time they are first put into action and anytime modifications are made after that.

Can SSOP‘s be maintained on a computer?

Yes, SSOP‘s may be maintained on computers as long as the establishment has adequate controls in place to ensure the integrity of the electronic data. This may include passwords, electronic signatures or other means of securing the data entered for SSOP monitoring.

How long do I need to keep my SSOP records around?

All SSOP records must be kept on-site for at least 48 hours following their completion. After 48 hours, they may be kept off-site; however, the establishment needs to keep them for at least 6 months. Off-site records need to be made available to inspection personnel within 24 hours of a request.

Can I just use the procedures from a sample plan to write my SSOP?

Every operation is different and the procedures for each operation‘s SSOP need to accurately reflect the actual procedures performed in the plant. Remember, each operation is responsible for doing what they said they would do in their written procedures. Some procedures from other SSOP‘s may be similar and can easily be tailored to your operation but many are different. Sample plans can be good examples for how to write procedures but each plant needs to write their procedures to accurately reflect their operation!

9 CFR 416.11-17 - SANITATION STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES – SSOP's

§ 416.11 General rules

Each official establishment shall develop, implement, and maintain written standard operating procedures for sanitation (Sanitation SOP's) in accordance with the requirements of this part.

§ 416.12 Development of Sanitation SOP's

(**a**) The Sanitation SOP's shall describe all **procedures** an official establishment will conduct daily, **before and during operations**, sufficient to prevent direct contamination or adulteration of product(s).

(**b**) The Sanitation SOP's shall be **signed and dated** by the individual with overall authority on-site or a higher level official of the establishment. This signature shall signify that the establishment will implement the Sanitation SOP's as specified and will maintain the Sanitation SOP's in accordance with the requirements of this part. The Sanitation SOP's shall be signed and dated upon initially implementing the Sanitation SOP's and upon any modification to the Sanitation SOP's.

(**c**) Procedures in the Sanitation SOP's that are to be conducted **prior to operations** shall be identified as such, and shall address, at a minimum, the **cleaning of food contact** surfaces of facilities, equipment, and utensils.

(**d**) The Sanitation SOP's shall specify the **frequency** with which each procedure in the Sanitation SOP's is to be conducted and identify the establishment employee(s) responsible for the implementation and maintenance of such procedure(s).

§ 416.13 Implementation of SOP's

(**a**) Each official establishment shall conduct the **pre-operational procedures** in the Sanitation SOP's before the start of operations.

(**b**) Each official establishment shall conduct all **other procedures** in the Sanitation SOP's at the frequencies specified.

(**c**) Each official establishment shall **monitor daily** the implementation of the procedures in the Sanitation SOP's.

§ 416.14 Maintenance of Sanitation SOP's

Each official establishment shall **routinely evaluate** the effectiveness of the Sanitation SOP's and the procedures therein in preventing direct contamination or adulteration of product(s) and shall revise both as necessary to keep them effective and current with respect to changes in facilities, equipment, utensils, operations, or personnel.

§ 416.15 Corrective Actions

(**a**) Each official establishment shall take appropriate corrective action(s) when either the establishment or FSIS determines that the establishment's Sanitation SOP's or the procedures specified therein, or the implementation or maintenance of the Sanitation SOP's, may have **failed to prevent direct contamination** or adulteration of product(s).

(**b**) Corrective actions include procedures to ensure appropriate **disposition of product**(s) that may be contaminated, **restore sanitary** conditions, and **prevent the recurrence** of direct contamination or adulteration of product(s), including appropriate reevaluation and modification of the Sanitation SOP's and the procedures specified therein or appropriate improvements in the execution of the Sanitation SOP's or the procedures specified therein.

§ 416.16 Recordkeeping requirements

(**a**) Each official establishment shall **maintain daily records** sufficient to document the implementation and monitoring of the Sanitation SOP's and any corrective actions taken. The establishment employee(s) specified in the Sanitation SOP's as being responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the procedure(s) specified in the Sanitation SOP's shall authenticate these records with his or her initials and the date.

(**b**) Records required by this part may be maintained on computers provided the establishment implements appropriate controls to ensure the **integrity of the electronic data**.

(**c**) Records required by this part shall be maintained for at least **6 months** and made accesable available to FSIS. All such records shall be maintained at the official establishment for **48 hours** following completion, after which they may be maintained off-site provided such records can be made available to FSIS **within 24 hours of request**.

§ 416.17 Agency verification

> FSIS shall verify the adequacy and effectiveness of the Sanitation SOP's and the procedures specified therein by determining that they meet the requirements of this part. Such verification may include:

(**a**) Reviewing the Sanitation SOP's;

(**b**) Reviewing the daily records documenting the implementation of the Sanitation SOP's and the procedures specified therein and any corrective actions taken or required to be taken;

(**c**) Direct observation of the implementation of the Sanitation SOP's and the procedures specified therein and any corrective actions taken or required to be taken; and

(**d**) Direct observation or testing to assess the sanitary conditions in the establishment.

HACCP Plan

What is HACCP?

HACCP is a technical term that stands for **Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points**. This is a system that meat and poultry processors use to put a business's food safety practices into action. The system focuses on preventing potential food safety hazards to ensure the production of food products that are safe to consume. It applies scientifically-based and technical information to practical situations in the meat and poultry production process. As of January 2000, all meat and poultry processors under Federal or State inspection, regardless of size, are required by the Federal Regulations to have a HACCP system in place.

HACCP can be a confusing and challenging concept for many meat and poultry processors. It is important to focus on learning the basic concepts of HACCP prior to designing and implementing your own HACCP plan. Using model plans can be helpful for learning these concepts. However, each individual processor has a unique process and their plan needs to accurately reflect that process and their food safety procedures.

Many different manufacturing and food processing industries use HACCP to control food safety problems in their processes. It can be a very effective tool for improving food safety procedures and processes. Note that each industry has some specific requirements for their HACCP plans that differ from other industries or manufacturing processes. The specific requirements for meat and poultry HACCP plans are found in 9 CFR 417 (the Code of Federal Regulations, see Appendix A).

How do I get started?

Before you get started with the actual plans, use the following simple steps to help you get a good foundation for building an effective plan. Some of the specific information developed with these steps is required by the HACCP regulations. In addition, HACCP training is required for at least one person involved in your operation.

- **Assemble your HACCP team:**

  This team should consist of people who have specific knowledge and expertise appropriate to your product and process. While a team approach is helpful, some operations may only have one person working with the HACCP plan. The team should include people who are (or will be) directly involved in the operation as they are most familiar with the product and production processes. Depending on their level of knowledge, they need to be trained in the basic concepts of HACCP to effectively

participate in the development process. Some processors also include a specially trained HACCP consultant in the process to help them develop the plan. When consultants are used, they need to be familiar with your specific process.

- **Describe the product and its distribution:**

  The HACCP team should develop a basic description of the product or products being produced, including ingredients and processing methods. The method for distributing the product should also be described along with information on whether the product is to be distributed frozen, refrigerated, or at ambient (room) temperature. This step is important for determining which HACCP category a specific product will fall in.

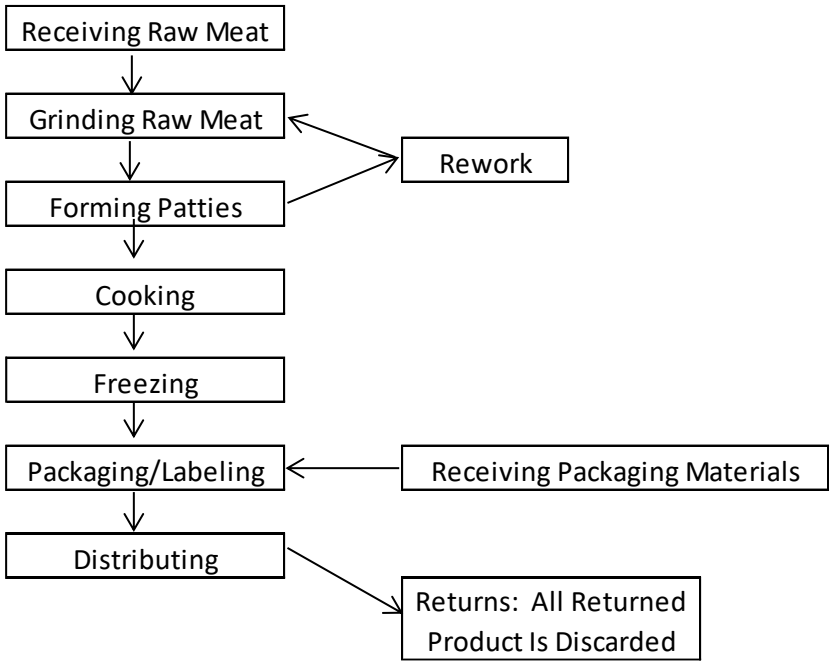
- **Describe the intended use and consumers of the product:**

  In addition, the HACCP team must describe the normal expected use of the product. The intended consumers may be the general public or a particular segment of the population (i.e. infants, elderly, etc.). This is important for determining which food safety hazards are significant for the product.

- **Develop a flow diagram which shows the process steps:**

  For each type of process, the team must develop a flow diagram to represent their process. The purpose of the flow diagram is to provide a clear, simple outline of the steps involved in the process. It must cover all of the action steps in the process which are directly under the control of the plant. This step is required and serves as the basis for the future development of a hazard analysis.

Example of a Simplified Flow Diagram for a Cooked Hamburger Patty Process



HACCP Basics

After completing the introductory steps, you are ready to move on to the development of your HACCP system. The HACCP system is the basic food safety plan for the establishment and their processes. HACCP systems are science-based process controls that work to eliminate, prevent or reduce to an acceptable level food safety hazards that are likely to occur in an establishment‘s processes. In this system, the establishment has full responsibility for producing products that are safe for consumers. The system is based on seven principles that are described in this material. Understanding and implementing these principles is essential to creating and implementing an effective HACCP plan.

HACCP Definitions

The terminology used to describe HACCP can seem strange and confusing. The following list includes definitions of some commonly used terms used to describe and implement HACCP in meat and poultry production.

Control Measure: Any action or activity that can be used to prevent or eliminate a food safety hazard or reduce it to an acceptable level. Corrective Action: An action that is taken when the maximum or minimum values or results for a critical control point are not met.

Critical Control Point (CCP): A step at which a control can be applied to prevent or eliminate a food safety hazard or reduce it to an acceptable level.

Critical Limit (CL): A measurable or observable value that is used to judge whether certain food safety standards have been met. Deviation from a Critical Limit: Failure to meet the value for a critical limit.

Deviation from a Critical Limit: Failure to meet the value for a critical limit.

Flow Diagram: A symbolic and logical representation of the series of steps or operations used in the production of a particular food item.

Hazard: A biological, chemical, or physical agent that may be present in or added to a product during the production process with the potential to cause a harmful health effect.

Monitor: A planned sequence of observations or measurements designed to assess whether target values for a CCP have been met.

Step: A procedure or operation performed in the production of a food product. Verification: Procedures performed to ensure that the HACCP plan is functioning as it was intended.

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HACCP Categories

The regulations in 9 CFR 417 also describe several HACCP categories that can be used to describe an establishment‘s processes. These categories, and examples of products that might fall in these categories, are shown on the following table.

Receiving Raw Meat Returns: All returned product is discarded.ReworkGrinding Raw Meat Forming patties Cooking Freezing Boxing/Labeling Distributing Receiving Packaging Materials consultant in the process to help them develop the plan. When consultants are used, they need to be familiar with your specific process. •Describe the product and its distribution: The HACCP team should develop a basic description of the product or products being produced, including ingredients and processing methods. The method for distributing the product should also be described along with information on whether the product is to be distributed frozen, refrigerated, or at ambient (room) temperature. This step is important for determining which HACCP category a specific product will fall in. •Describe the intended use and consumers of the product: In addition, the HACCP team must describe the normal expected use of the product. The intended consumers may be the general public or a particular segment of the population (i.e. infants, elderly, etc.). This is important for determining which food safety hazards are significant for the product. •Develop a flow diagram which shows the process steps: For each type of process, the team must develop a flow diagram to represent their process. The purpose of the flow diagram is to provide a clear, simple outline of the steps involved in the process. It must cover all of the —action" steps in the process which are directly under the control of the plant. This step is required and serves as the basis for the future development of a hazard analysis. Example of a Simplified Flow Diagram for a Cooked Hamburger Patty Process 14

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