



United States Department of Agriculture

May 9, 2023

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

TRANSMITTED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

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

Ms. Christine Monahan
American Oversight
1030 15th Street NW, Suite B255
Washington, DC 20005
Christine.Monahan@americanoversight.org

RE: 2021-FSIS-00201-F

Dear Ms. Monahan:

This is the final response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, dated February 24, 2021, to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). You requested all email communications (including email messages, complete email chains, email attachments, calendar invitations, and calendar invitation attachments) sent by the specified USDA officials including any employees or representatives using the listed email domains from August 1, 2020, through January 20, 2021. We received your request in our office on February 24, 2021.

The FSIS FOIA staff works with subject matter experts across the agency to locate responsive documents. For this request, we conducted a records search in the Office of the Administrator, and the Office of the Chief Information Officer. FSIS' search began on February 24, 2021. Our search includes responsive records in FSIS' control on that date.

Please also note that FSIS conducted a search for FSIS officials only. Other USDA officials may fall under the purview of the Departmental FOIA office for USDA.

We have located 15 pages that are responsive to your request. After a thorough review, we have determined that portions of these documents are exempt from disclosure under (b)(6) of the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552, as amended. Accordingly, this request is granted in part.

Portions of the responsive records are exempt from disclosure under FOIA Exemption 6, 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6). Exemption 6 protects information that would constitute an unwarranted invasion of an individual's personal privacy. The types of information withheld under Exemption 6 include the names, addresses, or cell phone numbers of employees of Establishments and third parties, including, but not limited to interviewees or customers.

You may appeal this determination by email to FSIS.FOIA@USDA.GOV. Your appeal must be in writing, and it must be received electronically no later than 90 days from the date of this letter. FSIS will not consider appeals received after the 90 calendar-day limit. Appeals received after 5:00 PM EST will be considered received the next business day. Your appeal should include the FOIA tracking number, a copy of your original request, FSIS's response to your original request, as well as reasons supporting your appeal.

Ms. Monahan
Page 2

For quickest possible handling, please email your appeal to FSIS.FOIA@USDA.GOV, and in the subject line of your email and the appeal letter, mark “Freedom of Information Act Appeal” and reference FOIA No. 2021-FSIS-00201-F.

If you do not have access to email, or are otherwise unable to email your appeal, you may mail your appeal to:

Paul Kiecker
Administrator
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service
1400 Independence Avenue, SW.
Room 1170, South Building
Washington, DC 20250-3700

Provisions of the FOIA allow us to recover part of the cost of processing your request. In this instance, no fees will be charged.

If you have any questions about the processing of your request or about the USDA’s FOIA regulations, please contact Timothy Poe at 202-937-4207 or via email at Timothy.Poe@usda.gov. If you have general questions about FSIS’ FOIA procedures or regulations, please contact Sarah A. Scharf, the FOIA Deputy Director/ FOIA Public Liaison at 202-329-2174 or via email at Sarah.Scharf@usda.gov.

You also have the option to seek assistance from the Office of Government Information. Services (OGIS). Please visit <https://www.archives.gov/ogis/mediation-program/request-assistance> for information about how to request OGIS assistance in relation to a FOIA request.

Thank you for your interest in FSIS programs and policies.

Sincerely,

Dexter Johnson

Digitally signed by Dexter
Johnson
Date: 2023.05.09 08:46:48 -04'00'

Dexter Johnson
Director, Freedom of Information Act Staff
Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Education

Enclosure: 15 pages

Be Food Safe: **CLEAN:** Wash Hands and Surfaces Often **SEPARATE:** Separate Raw Meats from Other Foods
COOK: Cook To The Right Temperature **CHILL:** Refrigerate Food Promptly

From: Kiecker, Paul - FSIS
Sent: Mon, 7 Dec 2020 14:38:50 +0000
To: mdopp@meatinstitute.org
Subject: Re: Letter to the Governor

Thanks Mark.

Paul Kiecker
Administrator
Food Safety and Inspection Service
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 331-E, J.L. Whitten Building
Washington, DC 20250
Office: 202 720-7025
Cell: [REDACTED]
paul.kiecker@usda.gov
From: Mark Dopp <mdopp@meatinstitute.org>
Sent: Monday, December 7, 2020 9:10:34 AM
To: Kiecker, Paul - FSIS <paul.kiecker@usda.gov>
Subject: FW: Letter to the Governor

Paul, this letter went to the governors of the 50 states on Friday afternoon. The request for prioritization included inspectors. Be well.

From: Samantha Beard
Sent: Friday, December 4, 2020 6:48 PM
To: [REDACTED]@wyo.gov
Subject: Letter to the Governor

Good Evening,

Please see the attached letter from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the National Pork Producers Council and the North American Meat Institute regarding vaccine distribution prioritization.

Best,

Samantha Beard
Manager of Public and Legislative Affairs
North American Meat Institute
615-504-3680

December 4, 2020

Honorable Mark Gordon
Governor of Wyoming
State Capitol
200 West 24th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Re: Prioritizing Distribution of the COVID-19 Vaccine

Dear Governor Gordon:

For the reasons discussed below the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, National Pork Producers Council, and the North American Meat Institute (the organizations) respectfully request that workers in the meat and poultry industry, including United States Department of Agriculture meat and poultry inspectors, and livestock producers be given very high priority regarding the distribution and administration of COVID-19 vaccines.

Earlier this year the Department of Homeland Security identified food manufacturing as a critical infrastructure sector, which included meat and poultry workers and livestock producers.¹ Those people have been on the front lines ensuring Americans have access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food.

The challenges packing plants and their producer suppliers in particular faced in the early stages of the pandemic were unprecedented and yet were endured. The meat industry is resilient and the supply chain remains intact.

Critical components of that resilience are the programs and protocols packers implemented in the spring and summer, programs that have proven effective in limiting the spread of the virus even while the curve nationally has been soaring in the opposite direction. Those programs and protocols, coupled with the education programs packers will undertake to explain the importance and safety of vaccination, put meatpacking facilities in an ideal position to administer the vaccine to many people in an orderly and efficient fashion.

The undersigned organizations acknowledge and support the Centers for Disease Control's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recent recommendation administering the vaccine first to health care workers and certain other high-risk individuals. But prioritizing thereafter meat industry workers and their livestock suppliers addresses an industry that is part of the critical infrastructure and necessary to ensure the animals are harvested and processed.

¹ Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency. <https://www.cisa.gov/identifying-critical-infrastructure-during-covid-19>.

Such prioritization would allow the utilization of an existing system to deliver the vaccine to a significant and important part of the workforce.

The Committee on Equitable Allocation of Vaccine for the Novel Coronavirus, part of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, got it right when it concluded that people in the population group that includes meat and poultry workers “need to be provided the vaccine, and special efforts must be made to reach these workers in ways that encourage them to be vaccinated.”²

The systems are in place. The workers are part of the critical infrastructure and the State of Wyoming depends on these people to supply and process livestock so agricultural communities can thrive. For these reasons we respectfully request that, as you plan for the distribution of the vaccine, meatpacking workers, USDA inspectors, and livestock producers be given high priority to receive vaccinations.

Respectfully submitted,

National Cattlemen’s Beef Association
National Pork Producers Council
North American Meat Institute

² *Discussion Draft of the Preliminary Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine*, p. 67.

From: Kiecker, Paul - FSIS
Sent: Wed, 5 Aug 2020 14:26:48 +0000
To: mdopp@meatinstitute.org
Cc: Newsome, Shawna - OSEC, Washington, DC; Brashears, Mindy - OSEC, Washington, DC
Subject: RE: Michigan Executive Directive re enforcement

Have you had any discussions with those responsible for enforcing the Michigan Executive Directive to see what they expect if the information is not clear? It does reference enforcement discretion from your additions below.

Thanks,

Paul Kiecker
Administrator
Food Safety and Inspection Service
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 331-E, J.L. Whitten Building
Washington, DC 20250
Office: 202 720-7025
Cell: (b)(6)
paul.kiecker@usda.gov

From: Newsome, Shawna - OSEC, Washington, DC <Shawna.Newsome@usda.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 5, 2020 10:21 AM
To: mdopp@meatinstitute.org; Brashears, Mindy - OSEC, Washington, DC <Mindy.Brashears@usda.gov>; Kiecker, Paul - FSIS <paul.kiecker@usda.gov>
Subject: Re: Michigan Executive Directive re enforcement

Hi Mark - we are happy to chat if needed. Have you all reached out and had any conversations with CDC and OSHA?

Shawna Newsome
Office of Food Safety, USDA
Cell: (b)(6)

From: Mark Dopp <mdopp@meatinstitute.org>
Sent: Wednesday, August 5, 2020 10:16:34 AM
To: Brashears, Mindy - OSEC, Washington, DC <Mindy.Brashears@usda.gov>; Kiecker, Paul - FSIS <paul.kiecker@usda.gov>; Newsome, Shawna - OSEC, Washington, DC <Shawna.Newsome@usda.gov>
Subject: FW: Michigan Executive Directive re enforcement

FYI. We may need to talk again regarding Michigan. Be well.

From: Mark Dopp
Sent: Wednesday, August 5, 2020 10:15 AM

To: Masters, Barbara <Barbara.Masters@tyson.com>; Deckinger, Adam <Adam.Deckinger@tyson.com>; gary.malenke@perdue.com; Lee, James <jlee@clemensfoodgroup.com>; tmckernan@clemensfoodgroup.com; 'Pryor, Kim' <Kim.Pryor@jbssa.com>; Keys, Chandler (chandler@keysgroupdc.com) <chandler@keysgroupdc.com>; Donald Vander Boon <don@westmichiganbeef.com>; Bonahoom, Jay <JBonahoom@wolverinepacking.com>; Laura Parvin <lparvin@grobbel.com>; abbottsmeat1907@sbcglobal.net; gary.malenke@perdue.com; Arndt, Tim <Tim.Arndt@jacklinks.com>; arpacking@sbcglobal.net; steves@byroncentermeats.com; sales@detroitsausages.com; jkoegel@koegelmeats.com; bernie@alexanderhornung.com; 'Mark Quayle' <Mark.Quayle@cargill.com>; deena_bailey@cargill.com; Devra Cornell <devra.cornell@bobevansfoods.com>; colin.daly@bobevansfoods.com; brian.robbins@bobevansfoods.com; 'Clemens, Bradford' <bclemens@clemensfoodgroup.com>; cullerhome@sbcglobal.net
Cc: KatieRose McCullough <KMccullough@meatinstitute.org>; Sarah Little <SLittle@meatinstitute.org>; Julie Anna Potts <japotts@meatinstitute.org>; Nathan Fretz <NFretz@meatinstitute.org>; Pete Thomson <PThomson@meatinstitute.org>; Hank Bongers <HBongers@meatinstitute.org>
Subject: Michigan Executive Directive re enforcement

You likely have seen the Executive Directive issued yesterday by Michigan Governor Whitmer. Although it seems that behavior in other areas prompted the governor to issue this directive, (the directive says "A single failure could set us back weeks: an outbreak at an East Lansing bar, one of the largest so far in the United States, resulted in 187 known infections.")

Executive Directive

Paragraph one in her instruction state department heads, which includes state police and the state department of agriculture among others, reads:

"State department directors and autonomous agency heads must review allocation of their resources to ensure that enforcement of COVID-19-related laws is a priority. Directors and agency heads should give elevated importance to enforcement of COVID-19-related laws in categories of establishments where transmission is well-documented, including but not limited to nursing homes, meat processing plants, and agricultural labor camps."

Paragraph 4 reads:

The Department of State Police must enforce violations of COVID-19 executive orders and epidemic orders in the same manner as it would enforce any other violation of law, using enforcement discretion as appropriate.

July 9 Executive Order

The July 9 order covers all businesses but has special provisions for meat and poultry processing (starting on page 16), including

"(c) Configure communal work environments so that employees are spaced at least six feet apart in all directions (e.g., side-to-side and when facing one another)." A reasonable interpretation of this

provision is that it applies to areas such as break rooms, locker rooms and other communal areas. The July 9 order

“(m)Reduce processing capacity or modify the processing or production lines and/or stagger workers across shifts to minimize the number of employees in the facility at any one time.”

Executive Directive

https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/MIEOG/2020/08/04/file_attachments/1510774/ED%2020-08%20COVID-19%20and%20enforcement.pdf

July 9 Executive Order

https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/MIEOG/2020/07/09/file_attachments/1492329/EO%2020-145%20Emerg%20order%20-%20Workplace%20safeguards%20-%20re-issue.pdf

I would like to set a call for tomorrow, August 6, at 11 a.m. EDT to discuss this directive and the new testing order. The call number is passcode Please contact me if you have questions.

From: Bronstein, Philip - FSIS
Sent: Fri, 8 Jan 2021 17:54:21 +0000
To: Roya Galindo
Cc: Sidrak, Hany - FSIS; French, Geraldine - FSIS; Wolseley, Paul - FSIS; Johnson, Sherri - FSIS; Norm Robertson
Subject: RE: FSIS Employee COVID19 Testing- Pineland Farms, Maine Est 46606 Philadelphia District

Hi Roya,

Thank you for your email. We are following up internally on this issue and we will get back to you, hopefully early next week.

Sincerely,
Phil

Philip Bronstein, Ph.D.
Assistant Administrator
Office of Field Operations
Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA
Room 344E Whitten Building
Washington, DC 20250
Office: 202 720 4991
Mobile: [REDACTED]
Email: philip.bronstein@usda.gov

From: Roya Galindo <RGalindo@meatinstitute.org>
Sent: Friday, January 8, 2021 12:18 PM
To: Bronstein, Philip - FSIS <philip.bronstein@usda.gov>
Subject: FSIS Employee COVID19 Testing- Pineland Farms, Maine Est 46606 Philadelphia District

Good morning Phil,

I hope this email find you well! My name is Roya and I work with Norm Robertson and Casey Gallimore at the Meat Institute, but have yet to have the opportunity to interact with you! Many of our members have informed us that they continue to struggle with what appears to be a communication disconnect with FSIS personnel at the local level. Norm and I continue to hear that various frontline supervisors are informing plant management that COVID-19 testing on FSIS inspectors is either not permitted, or the agency has concerns with the documentation that must be filled out and provided to the lab in order for the testing to occur. Most of the issues have been with Alameda, but I believe Norm had addressed that with you previously.

I completely understand the sensitivity of maintaining the confidentiality of the inspectors or any government employees medical records, but it seems like there should be a way to come together towards a resolution for both sides.

One facility in particular, Pineland Farms in New Gloucester Maine, Est. M46606 (Philadelphia District), is struggling with this issue presently and I've included the email correspondence with the District below for your review. FSIS employee COVID-19 testing is at a standstill because the laboratory form is unacceptable to the district due to it requiring a signature. See email thread for specific concerns.

A bit of background on the test, it is self-administered and the inspector can swab and pack the sample themselves and the company indicated that they would provide a shipping label. Not sure if this was a concern to the district or not, they didn't say, but I thought this information might be helpful to you.

I have attached 2 forms. The form titled "USDA COVID-19 Consent with PHI Authorization" was the form that was provided to FSIS and was said to be unacceptable. Pineland farms went back to the laboratory to work on a revised consent form. I reviewed it and found some language related to having the results sent to Pineland. The requirement for results to be sent to Pineland has been deleted, and attached you will find version 3 of the consent form. The District hasn't seen version 3 yet, but will likely disapprove since the signature requirement is still present because legally the lab needs a signature.

The company is happy to make changes to the form to comply with FSIS confidentiality requirements as long as those changes also satisfy the lab's legal obligations. Would you be able to assist on this so the company can move forward? I appreciate your time on this and please let me know how I can be helpful and if you need more information.

Take care,

Roya Galindo

Director, Regulatory Services

O: 202.587.4227

(b)(6)

F: 202.587.4300

From: Chris Willams <cwilliams@pfnmeats.com>

Sent: Thursday, January 7, 2021 9:19 AM

To: Osifat, Michael - FSIS <michael.osifat@usda.gov>; (b)(6) FSIS
(b)(6) @usda.gov

Cc: Schein, Joseph - FSIS <joseph.schein@usda.gov>

Subject: RE: COVID19 Testing at Pineland Farms, in New Gloucester Maine

As a follow up, the lab states "if there are no consent forms we cannot run the test legally". Based on this we are unable to complete this testing as was originally intended by the agency. I would ask that the agency reconsider this matter on the basis of the intent of Mr Kiecker and the ultimate state of public health due to the current pandemic. The fact that companies are working to take extra steps to keep the population safe, the same population that FSIS was created to protect, and have this roadblock in place is not right.

I understand that no one on this email chain makes this decision, nor do they have the authority to change it. Again I appreciate your point of view and time in looking in to this matter.

CHRIS WILLIAMS | *GENERAL MANAGER*
PINELAND FARMS NATURAL MEATS
(207) 688-1221 | [REDACTED] cell

<image001.png>

From: Osifat, Michael - FSIS <michael.osifat@usda.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 7, 2021 10:57 AM
To: Chris Willams <cwilliams@pfnmeats.com>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@usda.gov>
Cc: Schein, Joseph - FSIS <joseph.schein@usda.gov>
Subject: RE: COVID19 Testing at Pineland Farms, in New Gloucester Maine

I completely understand. This form was looked at from our higher-ups and these were the concerns I shared with you.

Thanks

Michael J Osifat
Deputy District Manager
USDA/FSIS/OFO
Philadelphia District Office
701 Market Street
Suite 4100-A
Philadelphia, Pa 19106
Office – 215-430-6218
Cell – [REDACTED]
Email – Michael.Osifat@usda.gov

From: Chris Willams <cwilliams@pfnmeats.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 7, 2021 10:48 AM
To: Osifat, Michael - FSIS <michael.osifat@usda.gov>; [REDACTED] - FSIS <[REDACTED]@usda.gov>
Cc: Schein, Joseph - FSIS <joseph.schein@usda.gov>
Subject: RE: COVID19 Testing at Pineland Farms, in New Gloucester Maine

Good Morning Michael,

Understood. I will see if the testing laboratory will accept this. I am concerned that they will not and that this will essentially block anyone in FSIS from ever being tested as was the intent in the statement by Mr Kiecker. Perhaps this is something that the agency could look in to as I know multiple establishments that would love to extend this benefit to your staff. It would be truly unfortunate if this level of paperwork authorization were something that resulted in an untested and asymptomatic infected inspector causing an outbreak at an establishment that was being proactive in testing its people or being required to by local laws.

I appreciate your efforts in running this information down.

Thanks,

CHRIS WILLIAMS | GENERAL MANAGER
PINELAND FARMS NATURAL MEATS
(207) 688-1221 | [REDACTED] cell

<image001.png>

From: Osifat, Michael - FSIS <michael.osifat@usda.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 7, 2021 9:37 AM
To: Chris Willams <cwilliams@pfnmeats.com>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@usda.gov>
Cc: Schein, Joseph - FSIS <joseph.schein@usda.gov>
Subject: RE: COVID19 Testing at Pineland Farms, in New Gloucester Maine

Good Morning Chris,

In discussion and review of the form, the agency takes the position that we have an issue with our personnel completing and signing it.

The only thing will ask our personnel to do at this point is provide information on where to send the results.

Once again, we will not be signing this authorization form.

Thanks,

Michael J Osifat
Deputy District Manager
USDA/FSIS/OFO
Philadelphia District Office
701 Market Street
Suite 4100-A
Philadelphia, Pa 19106
Office – 215-430-6218
Cell – [REDACTED]
Email – Michael.Osifat@usda.gov

From: Chris Willams <cwilliams@pfnmeats.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2021 10:40 AM
To: Osifat, Michael - FSIS <michael.osifat@usda.gov>; Soares, Jeronimo - FSIS <jeronimo@soares@usda.gov>
Cc: Schein, Joseph - FSIS <joseph.schein@usda.gov>
Subject: RE: COVID19 Testing at Pineland Farms, in New Gloucester Maine

Thank you Michael. To answer your questions:

- Empower is affiliated with Eurofins laboratories. We are in no way affiliated with either. Eurofins is simply our third party testing lab of choice. They have partnered with Empower on these tests
- Dr Bauer is associated with Empower and in no way Pineland Farms Natural Meats. We have never spoken with him directly.
- I understand your concern and think your wanting to protect your employees rights is admirable. The disclosure as it has been changed would only give them the ability to report back to the individual – in this case your inspector. I believe that for the testing laboratory to actually test and release results to the individual that this clause would need to stay.

If there are any additional changes that you would like to see completed on this form, I would be happy to make them. Our efforts are made with employee safety in mind. We are attempting to offer this testing to your employees as a benefit and good faith partnership with FSIS. The benefits to my company are secondary to our real concern of helping our staff, and yours by proximity, feel more comfortable and be more protected at their place of employment. We believe that we must do everything possible to protect ourselves and the general public from disease (COVID or other) whenever possible.

CHRIS WILLIAMS | *GENERAL MANAGER*
PINELAND FARMS NATURAL MEATS
(207) 688-1221 | (b)(6) cell

<image001.png>

From: Osifat, Michael - FSIS <michael.osifat@usda.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2021 10:18 AM
To: Chris Willams <cwilliams@pfnmeats.com>; (b)(6) <(b)(6)@usda.gov>
Cc: Schein, Joseph - FSIS <joseph.schein@usda.gov>
Subject: RE: COVID19 Testing at Pineland Farms, in New Gloucester Maine

Good Morning Chris,

I appreciate you sending back the update so quickly. I will take a look at it and will send to headquarters for clearance.

I have a few questions before I do so:

- What is Empower's affiliation to your firm?
- What is Dr. Bauer's affiliation to your firm?
- I see that there is still a section about giving authorization for disclosing medical results. I don't feel comfortable about that piece.

Thanks!

Michael J Osifat
Deputy District Manager
USDA/FSIS/OFO

Philadelphia District Office
701 Market Street
Suite 4100-A
Philadelphia, Pa 19106
Office – 215-430-6218
Cell – [REDACTED]
Email – Michael.Osifat@usda.gov

From: Chris Williams <cwilliams@pfnmeats.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2021 10:08 AM
To: Osifat, Michael - FSIS <michael.osifat@usda.gov>; [REDACTED] FSIS
[REDACTED]@usda.gov
Cc: Schein, Joseph - FSIS <joseph.schein@usda.gov>
Subject: RE: COVID19 Testing at Pineland Farms, in New Gloucester Maine

Hello Michael,

Completely understandable. I have changed the signoff document and created a new one for USDA only. This has been cleaned up to not allow for the release of any test results to our firm and only to the person being tested. I hope that this will be acceptable.

Again, thank you for working with us on this matter. We really appreciate it.

CHRIS WILLIAMS | *GENERAL MANAGER*
PINELAND FARMS NATURAL MEATS
(207) 688-1221 [REDACTED] cell

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From: Osifat, Michael - FSIS <michael.osifat@usda.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2021 9:35 AM
To: Chris Williams <cwilliams@pfnmeats.com>; [REDACTED]@usda.gov
Cc: Schein, Joseph - FSIS <joseph.schein@usda.gov>
Subject: RE: COVID19 Testing at Pineland Farms, in New Gloucester Maine

Good Morning Chris,

FSIS will not be signing any forms that indicate testing records will be received by your firm. FSIS will not allow establishments to obtain HIPAA information of any of our employees.

Your form and process will need to be changed if you would want FSIS to comply with testing.

Thanks

Michael J Osifat
Deputy District Manager
USDA/FSIS/OFO

Philadelphia District Office
701 Market Street
Suite 4100-A
Philadelphia, Pa 19106
Office – 215-430-6218
Cell – (b)(6)
Email – Michael.Osifat@usda.gov

From: Chris Willams <cwilliams@pfnmeats.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2021 8:50 AM
To: (b)(6) <(b)(6)@usda.gov>
Cc: Schein, Joseph - FSIS <joseph.schein@usda.gov>; Osifat, Michael - FSIS <michael.osifat@usda.gov>
Subject: RE: COVID19 Testing at Pineland Farms, in New Gloucester Maine

Thank you (b)(6) I appreciate you looking into this.

Please find an updated version of the lab form attached for review. I have changed all of the “my employer” comments to our establishment name. Please let me know if this is sufficient.

CHRIS WILLIAMS | *GENERAL MANAGER*
PINELAND FARMS NATURAL MEATS
(207) 688-1221 (b)(6) cell

<image001.png>

From: (b)(6) - FSIS (b)(6) <(b)(6)@usda.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2021 8:34 AM
To: Chris Willams <cwilliams@pfnmeats.com>
Cc: Schein, Joseph - FSIS <joseph.schein@usda.gov>; Osifat, Michael - FSIS <michael.osifat@usda.gov>
Subject: RE: COVID19 Testing at Pineland Farms, in New Gloucester Maine

Good Morning Chris,

USDA will permit the administering of the physical test as you propose for its employees providing inspection services to your establishment. However, the form you provided has been prepared for your employees. While USDA understand the need for an authorization to be completed for any type of medical test administered, this form would not be appropriate for USDA inspection personnel to complete and sign. You will need to prepare an authorization form specific to USDA FSIS In Plant Personnel (IPP) and it needs to be reviewed by USDA prior to its use.

Please let me know if you have questions.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6) Portland Circuit

Office of Field Operations
Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA
Advance Pierre Foods
70 Saint John Street
Portland, ME 04102
Cell: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@usda.gov

From: Chris Williams <cwilliams@pfnmeats.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 5, 2021 2:44 PM
To: [REDACTED] - FSIS [REDACTED]@usda.gov>
Cc: Schein, Joseph - FSIS <joseph.schein@usda.gov>; Osifat, Michael - FSIS <michael.osifat@usda.gov>
Subject: RE: COVID19 Testing at Pineland Farms, in New Gloucester Maine

Hi [REDACTED] et All,

Please find our SARS-CoV-2 plan attached that outlines our testing policy. I am also including the sign off from our testing laboratory for your review. Our testing is a self-administered PCR test so there is no contact with any medical practitioner or staff member.

I appreciate our conversation earlier today. It is my understanding based upon comments by Paul Kiecker on December 16, 2020 that FSIS in plant personnel were to follow the same testing procedures as establishments own employees. These comments were made on the industry COVID update call at 1pm EST. I believe that we are within our rights, and upholding the agencies stance based on these comments, to ask that our regular FSIS inspector(s) be tested along with our group.

I appreciate you looking in to this.

Thank you,

CHRIS WILLIAMS | *GENERAL MANAGER*
PINELAND FARMS NATURAL MEATS
(207) 688-1221 [REDACTED] cell

<image001.png>

From: [REDACTED] - FSIS [REDACTED]@usda.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 5, 2021 2:06 PM
To: Chris Williams <cwilliams@pfnmeats.com>
Cc: Schein, Joseph - FSIS <joseph.schein@usda.gov>; Osifat, Michael - FSIS <michael.osifat@usda.gov>
Subject: COVID19 Testing at Pineland Farms, in New Gloucester Maine

Good Afternoon Chris,

As discussed, please provide me your COVID19 testing protocols for USDA employees and I will follow up with my chain of command to ensure it is authorized.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6) Portland Circuit

Office of Field Operations

Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA

Advance Pierre Foods

70 Saint John Street

Portland, ME 04102

Cell: (b)(6)

(b)(6) @usda.gov

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