



Review

Food inspection services: A comparison of programs in the US and Brazil

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ABSTRACT

The food safety warranty is a fundamental principle of international trade. Veterinary inspection is the process that allows countries to meet trade obligations and access to the international markets by ensuring that food safety and animal health control are effective and trustworthy. Brazil and the United States (US) are the major players in the world's meat marketing industry. The Brazilian Federal Inspection Service (SIF) and the US Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) are responsible for food inspection services guidelines in these two countries. The objectives of this overview were to compare and highlight the similarities and differences between SIF and FSIS, to address the challenges of which Brazilian Food Inspection Service faces due to the rapidly growing demand by the livestock sector for Veterinary Services, and provide recommendations to improve the Brazilian food inspection services. Government regulations and local news were examined to provide information for this paper. FSIS is an agency under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), with their own governance and budget. In contrast, the SIF is not an independent agency, but is a department within the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply (MAPA). It has technical governance, but no separate budget or legal independence. The US establishments for production, processing and distribution of food of animal origin have the option to apply for Federal inspection or State inspection under the "at least equal to" (Federal) requirements policy. In Brazil the industry players have the option to apply for Federal, State or Municipal inspection, and there is no mandatory compliance with Federal requirements. The FSIS hiring system is continuous and straightforward, whereas the hiring system for all public servants in Brazil is conducted through a general entrance examination and is subject to the approval of high-ranking government. The challenges of the Brazilian food inspection services are discussed and recommendations to improve the service are presented.

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1. Introduction

Brazil has been ranked as the largest exporter of beef in the world since 2008. According to Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture, the expectation is that domestic production of meat will supply 44.5% of the world market by the year 2020 (MAPA indicadores, 2016). The US has the largest feeder-cattle industry in the world, and also the world's largest producer of beef, primarily high-quality, grain-fed beef for domestic and export use (US MEAT, 2016). The US exports of meat reached \$6.30 billion in 2015, with major US markets including: Canada (\$900 million), South Korea (\$810 million), Hong Kong (\$800 million), Japan (\$1.28 million), and Mexico (\$1.09 million) (USDA, 2016). Despite this, the US is a net beef importer, purchasing large amounts of lower-value, grass-fed beef destined for processing (USDA, 2016).

Brazil's strong export performance in the last several years has included and enlarged an industry that generated over US \$14.7 billion in exports of fresh, chilled, frozen, and prepared meats in 2015, an increase of 7% over the 2010 level (MAPA indicadores, 2016). Major Brazilian markets for fresh, chilled, and frozen meats in 2015 included the EU-27 (\$5.7 billion), Hong Kong (\$1.6 billion), Saudi Arabia (\$1.37 billion), Russia (\$1.35 billion), China (\$1.09 billion), and Venezuela (\$891 million) (AGROSTAT, 2016).

The food safety assurance is a fundamental principle of international trade, and Veterinary inspection is the process that enables countries to meet trade obligations and access to the international markets by ensuring that food safety and animal health control are effective and trustworthy (OIE, 2016).

Veterinary sanitary inspection of animal products is a clinical exam that aims to ensure that only healthy and physiologically normal animals are slaughtered for human consumption and that the meat from these animals is free from disease, wholesome and of no risk to human health (FAO, 2014). Furthermore, the inspection of animals at slaughter provides a valuable contribution to surveillance for certain diseases of animal and public health importance.

The objectives of this paper are: 1) to compare and highlight the similarities and differences between the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the two major players of the global meat market and 2) to provide recommendations for improvement of the efforts in the Brazilian Food Inspection Service.

2. Material and methods

The survey was carried out by collecting information available on the USDA and MAPA websites, website news, electronic databases and official documents from the US and Brazilian governments during the period from January to May 2016, and the OIE (World Organization for Animal Health) Performance Veterinary Services report 2014. Documents in English and Portuguese were identified using surveillance subject headings and truncations.

Brazil food inspection services: Veterinaria and inspecao and Brazil; Servico de inspecao and municipal and Brazil; SIF servico de inspecao federal; servico de inspecao estadual brasil; servico de inspecao municipal brasil.

US food inspection services: US and food and inspection and service; US food safety and inspection services; US and food and inspection and service and legislation; food safety and inspection service.

3. Results

3.1. The meat inspection services in US

In the USA, the *Meat Inspection Act* of 1906 was the first regulation of the country's meat, poultry, and egg products supply. The

act established standards for inspecting all meat processing plants that conducted business across state lines. It has since been amended and strengthened by subsequent acts, including the 1967's Wholesome Meat and Wholesome Poultry Products Acts. Currently, the 9th Code of Federal Regulations (9 CFR) is the codification of the general and permanent rules published by the USDA and its subordinated agencies. It is updated once each calendar year on January 1.

The Food Inspection Services are under two jurisdictions, facilities for production, processing and distribution of food from animal origin have the option to apply for Federal or State inspection (FSIS rulemaking, 2016). However, the federal Food Inspection Services FSIS provides the Compliance Guidelines for State Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) programs.

The FSIS is a public health agency of the USDA responsible for ensuring that the commercial supply of meat, poultry, and egg products is safe, wholesome, and correctly labeled and packaged.

The FSIS spends approximately 80% of its \$1.2 billion annual budget on personnel salaries and benefits. In 2014, 8051 from approximately 9600 Full-Time employees were devoted to inspection and other frontline duties, such as investigations and laboratory testing (FY 2016, USDA). The agency is the USA's largest employer of veterinarians, employing more than 1100 professionals. Recruitment is an open continuous process that is used to collect applications from applicants and fill vacant positions as they become available. The FSIS field structure consists of 10 district offices and 1 technical center. Each district office is under the direction of a District Manager, in a district consisting of a one or several States and territories. FSIS regulates 6400 meat, poultry and egg product establishments across the country (FSIS, 2016).

Under the Federal Meat and Poultry Products Inspection Act of 1978, states which demand to operate food inspection services under a cooperative agreement with FSIS must meet the "at least equal to" requirements policy. However, products produced under State Inspection are limited to intrastate commerce only, unless a state opts into an additional cooperative program, the Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program. The nature of the State Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) Programs are more personalized providing guidance to small or very small establishments. About 1900 meat and poultry establishments are inspected under State MPI programs. The 27 State MPI currently operating in the US receive about \$ 50 million per year from FSIS (USDA –FSIS, 2016). The other 23 states or have an independent Meat Inspection Program or do not have a Meat Inspection Program and relay on the USDA – FSIS.

3.2. The meat inspection services in Brazil

The Act 11.460 of 1915 is the landmark for food inspection in Brazil. This was followed by the Decree 1283 in 1950, which established the mandatory prior inspection of all products of animal origin, edible and inedible and created the Federal Inspection Service (SIF). In 1971, Act 5,760, revoked the States and Federal District competences and made the veterinary inspection of meat and poultry products an exclusive federal authority. This led to good results such as increasing the number of industrial establishments able to conduct interstate and international trade, improvement of the quality of products to the Brazilian consumer, greater efficiency in tax collection, and expansion of the labor market.

Nevertheless, in 1989, the Act 7889 reinstalled the authority of the veterinary inspection to states, federal district, and added the municipalities, but retaining the responsibility of the federal government the establishments that conduct interstate or international trade. Furthermore, the new legislation stated that product

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