

This is in response to your question below.

Generic labeling came about in the mid 1990's and provides a means for plants to avoid the unnecessary time and expense of label review for simple single ingredient labels and labels which must conform to a defined standard of identity. Plants must still keep labeling records such that FSIS can review generic labeling for compliance with the regulations. I will answer your specific questions below in blue bold:

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Original Message-----

Sent: Wednesday, April 06, 2005 11:38 AM

To: TechCenter@fsis.usda.gov

Subject: a labeling question

Tech Center:

I operate a very small USDA facility in Nebraska. We are primarily a custom operation that does a little of everything. I am working on updating my label file and have a couple of questions.

It is my understanding that according to Section 317.4 "Labeling Approval", the labeling can be approved by plant management according to Section 317.5 "Generically approved labeling".

I do understand that any product making a special claim such as lean ratio or special ingredients has to have label approval from Washington.

Can you confirm that is acceptable for me to approve my own labels, provided that they meet the criteria in Section 319 "Definitions and Standards of Identity or Composition" ? **Yes. There are also standards of identity for poultry in 9 CFR 381.155 they are not as inclusive as 9 CFR 319. The FSIS Labeling Policy Book also provides some standards of identity which can be used to approve generic labeling. Link to Policy Book: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/larc/Policies/PolicyBook.pdf>**

For instance, if I make a summer sausage, polish sausage, pork sausage, or fresh item such as t-bone steak, under the generic approval guidelines I am able to create and print my own label, provided the labeling is in accordance with section 317.5 and shows all mandatory features in a prominent manner as required in Section 317.2, and is not otherwise misleading in any particular, correct? **That is correct but you need to keep a labeling file.**

These rules would also apply when I change the ingredients in a product, provided they are ingredients that are allowable in Section 319 "Definitions and Standards of Identity or Composition", therefore, not requiring label approval from USDA's Labeling division. **Ingredients can be changed as long as the standard of identity is still met and it is an allowed change under 9 CFR 317.5.**

Thank you in advance for your help clarifying these issues.

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