



Food and Dairy Division Meat Variance Approval Process Update December 20, 2016

Background

In March 2015, MDARD began requiring specialized retail meat processors to obtain a Food Code variance and maintain an approved food safety plan. This was to assure safe processing of specialized meat products. The department anticipated the submission, review and variance approval process to take approximately 18 months to complete for all **279** Michigan processors.

Current Status

Food and Dairy is on pace to complete the majority of variance process reviews in 18-21 months. Timely response by industry is also needed to assure we can meet our time goals and any enforcement actions may slow the process for a few establishments.

Step	1	2	3	4
Description	Receive Application	Desk Review by Senior Processors	Field Approval by Processing Senior	Final Approval by Jan. 1, 2017
Expected Activity	279	279	279	279
Complete to Date	274	252	236	224
Remaining Effort and Status Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Firms have not yet submitted. • That's 98% of the 279 total facilities required to submit variances for retail meat processing. • 124 firms originally identified as needing a variance have now been identified as "No Variance Needed". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 Applications that were submitted are not yet through the desk review process. • 9 Firms need to submit more information. • 12 applications are currently under review. • 1 Application was denied • 5 applications have not yet been received 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27 Firms that submitted applications have not yet been visited. • 10 Firms could not be approved based on the first visit. Additional visits are required. • 1 Firm has been officially denied. • 5 Firms have not yet submitted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of firm have been final approved. • 12 Field approvals are either under review or in the process of being submitted for final approval • 1 firm has been denied.

Plan Moving Forward

Short-Term:

- Confirm the enforcement status of the 5 firms that have not applied. License limitations will be issued in accordance with the enforcement plan.
- Complete the majority of variance approvals by January 1, 2017.
 - Enforcement plan #3 "Delay in Process" will be initiated for firms not responding to seniors
 - Submit a summary of remaining open applications with explanations of the status.
 - Determine if applications should remain open or be considered "Denied"

Long-Term:

- Continue to coordinate regulator and industry training and process quality improvement. This is a partnership with industry and MSU meat experts using two existing advisory groups (general and technical).
- Assure food safety by inspecting against approved plans.
- Work with establishments to update plans as needed or develop plans for new establishments.
- Share successful strategies nationally.