

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, DC**

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**FSIS NOTICE**

35-17

7/5/17

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**DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS FOR “WOODY BREAST”  
AND “WHITE STRIPING” POULTRY CONDITIONS**

**I. PURPOSE**

This notice provides disposition information for conditions occurring in the breast muscles of broiler chickens referred to as “Woody Breast or “White Striping.” Upon issuance of this notice, Public Health Veterinarians (PHVs), Inspectors-in-Charge (IICs), Front Line Supervisors (FLSs), and Supervisory Consumer Safety Inspectors (SCSIs) as appropriate are to correlate with inspection program personnel (IPP) on how to identify and verify that poultry establishments are removing trimmable inflammatory tissues that may be associated with these conditions.

**II. BACKGROUND**

A. Signs of inflammation that may accompany “Woody Breast” and “White Striping” muscle abnormalities can feature:

1. Swollen breast tissues;
2. Scattered, small, pinpoint blood spots or patches (hemorrhages) of varying severity on surface of muscles, especially at the top or shoulder end of the breast fillet;
3. Thick, gelatinous, often blood-stained fluid and presence of deteriorated muscle tissue; and
4. One or both sides of the breast may be affected.

B. Inflammatory tissues are adulterated since they are unwholesome and unfit for human food thus establishments are required to remove them by trimming, as required for other trim defects. Breast muscle changes that do not exhibit active inflammatory signs, for example “White Striping” only, are considered a quality issue and do not necessarily require removal by trimming.

C. Pictures are provided in the Attachment, Pictures of Breast Inflammatory Tissue, to aid in identifying inflammatory signs requiring trimming and one picture showing “White Striping” only, which does not require trimming, to assist IPP in their decision making. If IPP have questions about identifying and trimming inflammatory tissue, they should consult with their supervisor (IIC, PHV, FLS, SCSi) or District Office.

**III. IPP RESPONSIBILITIES**

A. If IPP observe inflammatory tissue associated with “Woody Breast” or “White Striping” in further processing, for example at deboning or packaging, IPP are to determine whether the product lot is usable. IPP are to make this determination based on the entire lot and not on individual defects within a product lot. Products fail examination per 9 CFR 381.145(b) if defects are severe or numerous enough to affect the usability of the product. This is because there is not a zero tolerance for trimmable defects.

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**DISTRIBUTION:** Electronic

**NOTICE EXPIRES:** 7/1/18

**OPI:** OPPD

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B. After considering any findings and making a determination that the process is out of control, IPP are to issue a Noncompliance Record (NR) using the PHIS Other Inspection Requirements task, to document that the establishment is producing product with inflammatory tissue that is not useable and is adulterated because it is unwholesome and unfit for human food citing 9 CFR 381.1.

C. In an establishment that receives raw poultry with evidence of a high incidence of inflammatory tissues associated with “Woody Breast” or “White Striping”, IPP are to complete a Notice of Receipt of Adulterated or Misbranded Product (FSIS Form 8140-1) if they make the determination that the incoming lot is adulterated.

D. In slaughter operations, IPP are to verify removal of inflammatory tissues according to instructions in [FSIS Directive 6500.1](#), *New Poultry Inspection System: Post-mortem Inspection and Verification of Ready-to-Cook Requirement* or according to Finished Product Standards (FPS) testing regulations (9 CFR 381.76) for Streamlined Inspection System (SIS) and New Line Speed (NELS). Under Traditional Inspection trim is controlled at the point of post mortem inspection by the post mortem inspector.

#### IV. QUESTIONS

Refer questions regarding this notice to your supervisor. If additional information is needed, contact the Policy Development Staff (PDS) through [askFSIS](#) or by telephone at 1-800-233-3935. When submitting a question, use the Submit a Question tab, and enter the following information in the fields provided:

Subject Field: Enter **Notice 35-17**  
Question Field: Enter question with as much pertinent detail as possible.  
Product Field: Select **General Inspection Policy** from the drop-down menu.  
Category Field: Select **Slaughter** from the drop-down menu.  
Policy Arena: Select **Domestic (U.S.) Only** from the drop-down menu.

When all fields are complete, press **Continue** and at the next screen press **Finish Submitting Question**.

**NOTE:** Refer to [FSIS Directive 5620.1](#), *Using askFSIS*, for additional information on submitting questions.

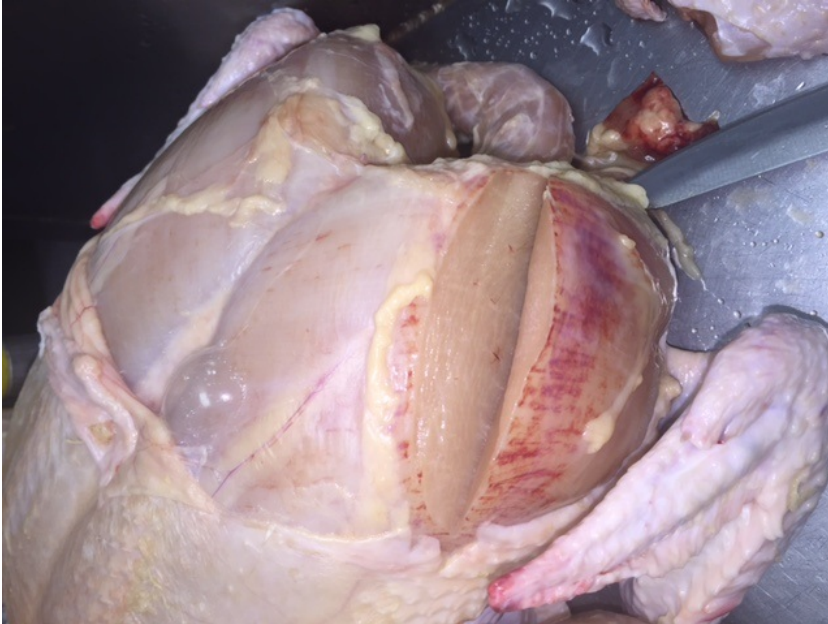


Assistant Administrator  
Office of Policy and Program Development

## Pictures of Breast Inflammatory Tissue

“Woody Breast” or “White Striping” are quality issues unless signs of associated inflammatory tissue as described in Section II are present. The presence of inflammatory tissue requires trimming of all affected tissue. Below is a picture showing that one of the breast fillets is enlarged and has obvious small hemorrhages (blood in muscle). The picture shows that the hemorrhage is on the surface of the breast muscle and does not extend deep into the muscle. Only the outer surface that is affected by the hemorrhage is to be trimmed.

**NOTE:** Knife cut is for instructional purposes only.



The picture below shows “White Striping”, but not any associated inflammatory tissue; therefore, trimming is not required. The white stripes are caused by fat depositing on muscle fibers and are not signs of inflammation as described in Section II.

**NOTE:** Knife cut is for instructional purposes only.



The picture below shows a thick, gelatinous fluid, yellow in color on the left side of this picture. On the right side there are several very small hemorrhages in a cluster. There is an overall shiny surface indicating excess fluid in the tissues. These associated inflammatory tissues require trimming.

