

Behind the Legend

ISSUE NO. 3 Quarterly newsletter for Ontario's provincially licensed meat plant operators April 2011

The **meat inspection legend** is the stamp that goes on meat products when they have met all regulatory requirements and are deemed safe for Ontario consumers.



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Food safety starts with training

Preparing your workforce

Providing your staff with proper training is part of those practices that go a long way in producing safe food for your customers.

As a meat plant operator, you are responsible for ensuring that food products are handled properly, in a way that maintains food safety. The Meat Regulation requires that at least one supervisor per shift at the plant has received formal training in hygienic food handling. You need a trained supervisor on site anytime slaughter takes place, or anytime carcass dressing or processing, labelling or packaging carcasses, parts of carcasses or meat products takes place.

The Food Handler Training program developed by the Ontario Independent Meat Processors provides the required learning. The program offers flexibility to trainees. Workers and supervisors can get ready for the exam through self-study or by attending a two-day workshop. The presentation slides, workbook and exam are now available in ten languages.

By taking the training, you and your employees are enhancing food safety practices in your operation and complying with the requirement.



Our thanks to Wellington Poultry Ltd.

For more information on **Food Handler Training** contact:

Ontario Independent Meat Processors
Telephone: 519-763-4558
Toll free: 800-263-3797
info@oimp.ca
www.oimp.ca/safety/handler-training.aspx

Exam information and dates:

www.ridgetownc.uoguelph.ca/bdt/ce_foodhandler.cfm

Stay up-to-date on Meat Plant Guidelines

The Meat Plant Guidelines (MPGs) are your guide to a clear, plain-language explanation of the regulatory requirements under the Meat Regulation (O. Reg. 31/05). The ministry's Meat Inspection Policy Review Committee regularly reviews and updates MPGs to ensure they are consistent and scientifically valid, harmonize with current practice and reflect the intent and authority of the regulation.

For your information, updates to the following Meat Plant Guidelines came into effect on April 1, 2011:

C9.04.03.01	Construction factors
P9.04.09.04	Location of smokehouses
P9.04.09.05	Construction of smokehouses
S9.08.16.02	Cooling and refrigeration of rabbit and poultry carcasses
C9.08.19.05	Labelling of hunted game
P9.10.01.08	Cooling rate of cooked meat products
P9.10.01.12	Cooking of ready-to-eat meat products (new)
P9.10.04.15	Smoke generation
P9.10.04.16	Smokehouse temperature
P9.10.04.17	Control of cold spots in smokehouses and ovens
P9.12.04.02	Durable life determination (formerly <i>Shelf life determination</i>)
Appendix 1	Cooking Time/Temperatures Tables (new)
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Meat Plant Guidelines are updated regularly to ensure they:

- are consistent
- are scientifically valid
- harmonize with current practice

In addition, to eliminate duplication, Occupational Health and Safety MPGs (B9.01.01 – B9.93.01.03) have been removed. While these standards have been deleted, it remains the plant operator's responsibility to ensure they are in compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA). Any questions regarding the OHSA can be directed to the Ministry of Labour at 1-877-202-0008.

Going forward, all updates will be released on a quarterly basis in April, July, October and January each year. All changes to MPGs will take effect on the release date. Changes will be communicated to plant operators through **Behind the Legend**. Printed copies of the updated MPGs or CD versions of the complete set of MPGs can be requested by emailing ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca or by calling 1-877-424-1300. (Members of the Ontario Independent Meat Processors can access the MPGs on the OIMP website at www.oimp.ca.)

New tool to guide your efforts to fight *Listeria*

In meat plants that produce ready-to-eat (RTE) meat products, recognizing and minimizing the potential for bacterial contamination is essential in reducing the risk of foodborne illnesses.

Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada estimate that between 11 and 13 million Canadians suffer from illnesses caused by foodborne bacteria every year.

Health Canada's "Policy on *Listeria monocytogenes* in Ready-To-Eat Foods", came into effect on April 1, 2011. It is an important tool that guides operators of small or large, provincial or federal meat plants as they identify steps they can take to reduce the risk of contamination in RTE foods.

For example, the policy encourages industry to consider using post-lethality treatments and/or growth inhibitors. The federal policy — and OMAFRA — also recommend plant operators conduct their own environmental testing to assess the effectiveness of sanitation and good manufacturing practices. By detecting and responsibly responding to any positive result, consumer risk can be minimized.

For more information: www.bc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/legislation/pol/policy_listeria_monocytogenes_politique_toc-eng.php
or contact: tel.: 613-957-2991; toll free: 1-866-225-0709; e-mail: info@bc-sc.gc.ca

Continue to take all precautions when slaughtering bovine animals

Abattoir operators are responsible for following their specified risk materials (SRM) protocols diligently. Pre-treatment screening systems continue to be required in abattoirs whenever bovine animals are slaughtered. These systems prevent SRM from entering the waste water system or the blood pit.



Our thanks to Highland Packers Ltd.

You should also let your staff know that screens must be kept in place at all times during bovine slaughter through to completion of the clean-up. All drains on the kill floor must be covered with 4-mm screens before slaughter starts. If the age of the bovine is determined to be over thirty months (OTM), these screens must remain in place until all visible floor debris has been cleaned up and placed in SRM containers.

When cleaning up, make sure waste and waste water go free flowing down the drain. Animal material and debris must not be macerated or pressed through the screens. They must be recovered and be disposed of with all floor waste as SRM inedible material.

Leaving screens in place will prevent contamination of the waste water tank. Should contamination occur, the whole wash water system would need to be treated as SRM, at a potentially high disposal or decontamination cost for the operator.

New smokehouse policy provides clarity and consistency

OMAFRA has prepared a formalized Smokehouse Policy to provide guidance to meat plant operators on how to achieve compliance with the Meat Regulation.

Smokehouse requirements have been clarified to improve consistency of interpretation for all operators and meat inspection staff. They are based on basic food safety principles that apply to any other piece of equipment in meat plants in the production of safe meat products for Ontario consumers. These requirements are not new, and they have been part of the Meat Regulation since 2005.

The Smokehouse Policy is outcome-based and reflects the intent of the Meat Regulation.

Infosheet posted at www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/meatinsp/info-smokehouse.htm or contact 1 877 424-1300.



Our thanks to Stemmler Meats & Cheese Heidelberg Inc.

New Advantage Series of Manuals to Grow Your Business

OMAFRA has new food safety manuals that are easier to use to help you grow your business.

Contact: 1 877 424-1300
www.ontario.ca/foodsafety

What to do when you have a concern

The Meat Inspection Program has a **Complaints Resolution Process** in place to address meat plant operators' concerns.

An insert is included with this edition of **Behind the Legend** for your quick reference.

Upcoming workshops offered by OIMP

Smoking Cured Meats: May 18, 2011 Mississauga

If you are going to upgrade your smokehouse with monitoring controls, want to improve cooking yields by managing cold spots or are concerned about energy costs, this workshop will provide solutions to these and many other issues.

Managing Food Safety Risks: June 1, 2011, Mississauga & June 15, 2011, Ottawa

Records and corrective actions are more than just buzz words. Emerging food safety threats require a definitive response and compel operators to exercise due diligence. Learn how to evaluate and understand risks associated with chemical, physical and biological contamination. Learning these best practices will help protect your business from food safety threats that could lead to a recall or financial harm.

Sanitation in Meat Plants: July 13, 2011, Burlington & July 20, 2011, Scarborough

An important tool to manage risks associated with food safety and quality in meat processing is a well executed sanitation program that is efficient and cost effective. This workshop will deal with best practices to use when cleaning and sanitizing a meat plant.

For more information: telephone: 519-763-4558; toll free: 800-263-3797; info@oimp.ca; www.oimp.ca.

Meat Inspection Program Management Team

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For any inquiries regarding meat inspection, please contact your area manager. All area managers can be paged at: 1-800-263-1420. Please ask for your area manager by name.

AREA MANAGERS

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Louis Martel, Meat Inspection Regional Manager (East Region) retired on March 22, 2011 after close to 34 years of service with the Meat Inspection Program. He started his career in the Ontario Public Service as a meat inspector in eastern Ontario.

We want to hear from you!

Give us your feedback about the newsletter

Send us your questions and story suggestions

For more information :
Telephone : 1-877-424-1300
Email: ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca
www.ontario.ca/omafra
www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/index.html