

Behind the Legend

ISSUE NO. 4 *Quarterly newsletter for Ontario's provincially licensed meat plant operators*

June 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.



IN THIS ISSUE

Meat Plant Guideline Updates	2
Control of Trichinella Spiralis	2
Cured Meat Products	2
Options for Cooking Ready-to-Eat Products Now Available	3
Ready-to-Eat Meat Product Testing	3
New Audit Services Provider	3
Upcoming Workshops Offered by OIMP	4

Consistent Delivery Focus of Recent Meat Inspection Workshop 2011

Meat inspector training plays an important role in our ongoing efforts to improve consistency of delivery across the province. This is why more than 140 meat inspection staff from across the province recently gathered in Waterloo for training and updates in many aspects of their work.

Operators have asked that inspection delivery be the same across the province, regardless of plant location or of which inspector is conducting the inspection. The training focused on how to make consistency a key part of delivering meat inspection services, as well as learning the latest technical developments in the field.

As part of the workshop meat inspectors reviewed the foundations for good inspector-operator working relations as well as specific inspection situations. Updates on best practices, food safety compliance verification audits as well as skills building and team-building exercises rounded up the inspectors' learnings.

Staff heard about creating a food safety culture from special guest speaker Dr. Randall Huffman, chief food safety officer at Maple Leaf Foods Inc., and about the Ontario Independent Meat Processors from Laurie Nicol, executive director of Ontario Independent Meat Processors.

This workshop took place on May 27 and 28, 2011. Biannual workshops are a complement to the comprehensive and rigorous training system for meat inspectors. The Ontario training system includes classroom sessions, distance education courses

and a five-year learning plan that focuses on continuous learning.



Lee-Ann Walker, general manager of the Meat Inspection Program

“Workshops such as this one go a long way to ensuring we’re all on the same page in delivering our inspection services across the province,” said Lee-Ann Walker, general manager of the program. “Our thanks to all abattoir operators who made alternate arrangements to accommodate meat inspectors for this workshop.”

Meat Plant Guidelines Updates

The Meat Plant Guidelines are clear, plain-language explanations of the regulatory requirements under the Meat Regulation (O. Reg. 31/05). Updates are released on a quarterly basis.

Meat Plant Guideline updates are not a result of changes to the Meat Regulation. The Meat Regulation prescribes the outcome required but not the means by which to achieve it. It is the role of the Meat Inspection Policy Review Committee (which includes ministry staff and industry representatives) to review the Meat Plant Guidelines to ensure they respond to industry needs while maintaining the food safety outcomes prescribed in the regulation.

Updated Meat Plant Guidelines are now posted on OMAFRA's website at www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/meatinsp/manual/index.htm. Printed copies of the updated Meat Plant Guidelines or CD versions of the complete set can also be requested by emailing ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca or by calling 1-877-424-1300.

Updates to the following Meat Plant Guidelines are coming into effect July 1, 2011:

- C9.05.03.01 Water standards
- C9.05.03.02 Ice standards
- C9.05.03.03 Steam standards
- C9.06.07.01 Pest control program
- P9.10.03.03 Conditions for storage of ingredients
- P9.10.04.01 Manufacture of cured products – ingredients
- P9.10.04.02 Manufacture of cured products – process and application of cure
- P9.10.04.03 Manufacture of cured products – application of cure — REMOVED
- P9.10.04.12 Manufacture of cured and dry-cured products
- P9.10.04.19 Cooking devices configuration and operation
- C9.12.05.04 Packaging materials
- Appendix IV Use of Phosphate Salts and Nitrites in the Preparation of Meat Products — NEW
- Table of Contents

Updates to the following Meat Plant Guidelines are coming into effect October 1, 2011:

- C9.04.14.08 Thermometers used during freezing for *Trichinella spiralis* control
- P9.10.04.04 *Trichinella spiralis* control
- P9.11.02.01 *Trichina* control for prepared meat products — REMOVED
- Appendix III Approved Methods to Control *Trichinella spiralis* in Pork — NEW

More details...

Cured Meat Products

Many methods can be used to cure meat products. Specific limits for nitrites and nitrates are set by Health Canada. These limits are not new.

The Meat Plant Guidelines have been updated to group this information together and provide clarity to the requirements. Please refer to the updated sections P9.10.04.01 and P9.10.04.12 for more information. In addition, nitrate/nitrite calculations are explained in Appendix IV.

More details...

Control of *Trichinella spiralis*

Trichinella spiralis is a parasite causing the disease trichinosis in humans. It is sometimes referred to as the "pork worm" since it is found commonly in undercooked pork products.

With a few exceptions (i.e. side bacon, Wiltshire bacon, smoked pork jowls), treatment for the destruction of live *Trichinella spiralis* is required in:

- all prepared meat products containing striated pork muscle which are normally eaten without further cooking, and
- meat products containing pork which have the *appearance* of a cooked meat product.

Operators may choose one of three destruction methods: curing, heating or freezing. The requirement to control this parasite is not new. To help you, we've created a new guideline which includes details about the methods used to destroy *T. spiralis*. Refer to the Meat Plant Guidelines (visit www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/meatinsp/manual/p9100404.htm)

With the addition of Appendix III in the guidelines, operators now have easy access to relevant information.

Records will help you show that all requirements were met for the chosen method. Any deviations from the method and corrective actions must also be recorded. When the plant chooses to use freezing, there must be a self-recording device in place that can continuously monitor and record time and temperature during the treatment. The device must be checked for accuracy yearly. These requirements are described in section C9.04.14.08 of the Meat Plant Guidelines. (visit www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/meatinsp/manual/c9041408.htm)

Options for Cooking Ready-to-Eat Meat Products Now Available

If your operation prepares ready-to-eat (RTE) meat products, you now have more regulatory flexibility on how to safely process fully cooked, RTE meat products.

Cooking meat products to high temperatures to make them safe to eat may change the quality of some products. Industry looks for ways to safely cook products in a manner that preserves their unique tastes and textures.

New tables in Appendix 1 of the Meat Plant Guidelines provide combinations of internal product temperature and minimum holding time that will ensure a meat product is safe to eat. These tables can be used in the preparation of various cooked meat and poultry products (visit www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/meatinsp/manual/fs_appendix_01.htm). Operators must prepare a manufacturing process in writing for each fully cooked meat product that indicates the internal temperature reached during the process and the minimum holding time at that temperature. Cooking records must also be kept.

The new guidelines are consistent with Cooking Time/Temperature Tables adopted by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency in 2010. Also included in the updated Meat Plant Guidelines are the cooling rates of cooked meat products. Proper cooling of cooked meat products is a significant factor in ensuring product safety (visit www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/meatinsp/manual/p9100108.htm).

New Audit Services Provider

In our ongoing efforts to improve consistency of our audit program, QMI-SAI Canada Limited has been selected, through a competitive procurement process, to conduct the compliance verification audits in freestanding meat plants. OMAFRA veterinarians will be responsible for compliance verification audits in abattoirs. These changes are part of the ministry's continuous improvement process and help increase the quality of our meat inspection system.

We have listened to operators and have taken steps to ensure meat plant audits are conducted fairly and consistently. Along with the new audit rating system now in place, contracting a professional food safety audit services company strengthens our ability to verify compliance with the regulatory requirements in an objective, consistent and transparent way. Contracting one company instead of several individuals means the ministry will have a single point of contact to provide direction. The food safety audit company will be responsible for hiring qualified food safety auditors, service quality control, ensuring performance measures are met and training, reporting and messaging are consistent.

Food safety compliance verification audits complement Ontario's comprehensive meat plant licensing, inspection and compliance programs. They are an additional safety checkpoint that supports the meat inspection program.

QMI-SAI Canada Limited is headquartered in Toronto and has a highly experienced auditing force specializing in food safety. The company will start conducting freestanding meat plant audits this summer.

Ready-to-Eat Meat Product Testing

In January of 2009, the Meat Inspection Program started testing ready-to-eat meat products made in licensed plants. This testing program was put in place in response to one of Justice Haines' recommendations and it's important since it tests products for bacteria that pose a public health risk, including *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Salmonella* and *E. coli*.

There were some instances when products tested positive for the presence of some of these bacteria. When problems were found, operators held the product and meat inspection staff worked with them to review plant protocols and practices, set corrective actions, and ensure proper sanitation and proper disposition of the product took place.

As a result of testing and processes in place, the affected plants have implemented stronger food safety practices and protocols.

There are currently 144 provincially licensed abattoirs and 376 provincially licensed freestanding meat plants in Ontario.

We're transforming the way we're listing provincially licensed meat plants using Google Maps/Google Earth, providing businesses and the public with quick, at-a-glance plant information and locations across the province. Check out the new maps at www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/meatinsp/licenced_operators_list.htm

Upcoming Workshops Offered by Ontario Independent Meat Processors — **All meat plant operators welcome**

Sanitation in Meat Plants — July 13, 2011 Burlington and July 20, 2011 Scarborough

The single most important tool you have 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.

Fermentation and Dry Curing — August 17, 2011 Mississauga

Learn how to develop a food safety regimen for fermented and dry cured products. Understand regulatory requirements that are in place to address food safety risks. And how to overcome barriers related to compliance issues. Hear about the latest developments in starter culture technology.

Packaging and Labelling — September 21, 2011 Guelph

Packaging and labelling represent the final step in most meat processing activities. Packaging is a significant portion of your product cost and labeling has the potential to be costly if the labeling information is not compliant. Both are an important part of any food safety program. Learn how to manage packaging costs and understand label requirements.

How to Do a Mock Recall — October 19, 2011 Mississauga

Mock recalls are like a food safety fire drill. Being prepared for a recall is a good strategy that can pay big dividends if you ever find yourself in a situation where you need to quickly and efficiently remove your product from the marketplace. The best way to prepare is to practice a mock recall testing the integrity of your own records and documentation to trace back and identify ingredients used and trace forward to identify where the product went.

For more information: telephone, 519-763-4558; toll free: 1-800-263-3797; info@oimp.ca; www.oimp.ca

Meat Inspection Program Management Team

GENERAL MANAGER: Lee-Ann Walker

REGIONAL MANAGERS

Nick Van Lankveld, West/North 519-826-4281
Pierre Adrien, East 519-826-3250

AREA MANAGERS

Brighton — John Haagsma 613-475-5446
GTA — Ivona Jarosz 416-235-6690
Guelph — Lynn Philp 519-826-4368
Kemptville — Vickie Sauvé 613-679-2825
Midhurst — Travis McMunn 705-725-7292
Peel Region — Eloise Jones 416-235-4086

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.

Ridgetown — Jeff Richards 519-674-1534
Scarborough — Ryan Pinto 416-235-4591
Stratford — Mark Mitchell 519-271-7594
Verner — Doug McLean 705-594-2314
Vineland — Kim Landers 905-562-1710
Woodstock — Ed Bailey 519-537-5646
York — Idrees Hoseln 416-235-6585

Correction: Some contact information was missing from the Complaint Resolution Process infosheet distributed with the last edition of Behind the Legend. A corrected version is included in this edition for your use. We apologize for the inconvenience.

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