

# Behind the Legend

ISSUE NO. 8 *Quarterly newsletter for Ontario's provincially licensed meat plant operators* October 2012

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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## Your 2013 Licence Renewal: Easy as 1, 2, 3

The licences of 147 provincial meat plants will expire on March 31, 2013. A streamlined licence renewal process is now in place, which means that you can renew your licence easily and efficiently.

Each plant that has to renew will receive a licensing renewal package by the end of October. Please review the information in the package, sign, and return with your payment before January 31, 2013. All renewal applications received before this date will be processed prior to the licence expiry date of March 31, 2013.

For more information or to ask questions about licence renewals, contact Laura MacEachern, Program Delivery Officer at [laura.maceachern@ontario.ca](mailto:laura.maceachern@ontario.ca) or 519-826-3842.

## Providing safe, ritually slaughtered meat **Customer contact list needed for traceability**

More than 40 provincially licensed abattoirs provide Ontario religious communities with fully inspected carcasses or meat products slaughtered in accordance with their customers' religious practices. The meat regulation allows licensed plants to let consumers bring home a carcass that has not been cooled, provided the plant has received approval from a regional veterinarian.

In preparation for Eid-al-Adha, we remind all licensed abattoir operators who intend to provide halal slaughtered carcasses that the names and addresses of all customers provided with "hot carcasses" must be noted for traceability purposes, so that any meat product can be traced in the event of a foodborne illness.

A complete and accurate list of customers must be provided to OMAFRA meat inspection staff at the end of the exemption period (October 24 to 30, 2012). This is a very important food safety requirement.

For more information please discuss with your regional veterinarian, meat hygiene officer or contact your area manager.

# Meat Plant Guidelines Updates

Meat Plant Guidelines are clear, plain-language explanations of the regulatory requirements under the Meat Regulation (Ontario Regulation 31/05). Updates are released on a quarterly basis. They are not changes to the Meat Regulation.

The Meat Inspection Policy Review Committee (which includes ministry staff and industry representatives) reviews the Meat Plant Guidelines to ensure they respond to industry needs and maintain food safety. Updates to the following meat plant guidelines are effective immediately:

| No          | Title                                          | What has changed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| C9.04.08.04 | Inspection, testing and sampling facilities    | O. Reg. 31/05 s. 15(1)(b) added to authoritative source.                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| S9.08.07.01 | Ante mortem inspection                         | O. Reg. 31/05 s. 21(1)(a) and 21(3) were removed from Authoritative Source (these are in MPG S9.04.08.03 in Part 4) and s. 73(3) and 74(1) concerning ante mortem inspection and referred to in rationale were added.                                       |
| C9.04.02.03 | Separation of incompatible activities          | Title was changed to better reflect the outcome of the MPG. Rationale revised to remove references to backtracking and include prevention of cross-contamination. The audit elements have been revised for clarity and to reflect changes to the rationale. |
| S9.04.13.01 | Pens and crates for accommodating food animals | Title was changed from "Location/separation of pens and crates," to a more appropriate description. Rationale was rewritten to better reflect the regulatory reference.                                                                                     |
| S9.04.13.03 | Inspector access for ante mortem inspection    | Rationale reworded for better clarity.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

Updated Meat Plant Guidelines are posted on OMAFRA's website: [www.omafra.gov.on.ca/English/food/inspection/meatinsp/manual/index.htm](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/English/food/inspection/meatinsp/manual/index.htm). To request printed copies or CD versions of the complete set contact [ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca](mailto:ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca) or 1-877-424-1300. ■

# What's new under the federal allergen labelling regulations

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has made some changes to the allergen labelling section of the Food and Drugs Regulations. The amendments came into effect August 4, 2012. Three main areas of change include:

- Adding mustard seed to the list of declared allergens
- Declaring gluten source
- Declaring added sulphites

For food manufacturers there are two ways to identify food allergens, gluten sources, and added sulphites on their label. Manufacturers can either:

- identify these items in their list of ingredients, or
- include a "Contains....." statement at the end of their list of ingredients.

If an allergen or allergen-containing ingredient is *deliberately* added to food, food manufacturers cannot use a "May contain..." statement. This statement should be used when, despite all reasonable measures, the *inadvertent* presence of allergens in food is unavoidable.

The amended federal regulations also require manufacturers to list components of ingredients, such as a component in a spice, if that ingredient contains food allergens, gluten sources, or sulphites.

More information at:

[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/nr-cp/\\_2011/2011\\_23bk-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/nr-cp/_2011/2011_23bk-eng.php)

[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/allergen/precaution\\_label-etiquette-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/allergen/precaution_label-etiquette-eng.php) ■



# Poultry results shared with meat plant operators

A study conducted in poultry abattoirs provided valuable information on the prevalence of some pathogens in post-chilled broiler chickens.

Over a two-year period ending in January 2011, more than 1600 carcass rinse samples were collected from 27 Ontario plants and tested for three microorganisms that can cause foodborne illness in humans. Here are some observations from the study:

- There was a trend towards higher prevalence of *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and *L. monocytogenes* found in the summer and autumn seasons.
- There was a trend towards lower prevalence of *Campylobacter* and *L. monocytogenes* in larger volume plants. Plant size did not impact *Salmonella* prevalence.
- Flock size did not affect the prevalence of *Salmonella*, however smaller flock sizes were more likely to be positive for *Campylobacter* and *L. monocytogenes*.
- As broilers age, the changes they may be positive for *Campylobacter* increases; the age of the birds did not affect *Salmonella* or *L. monocytogenes* prevalence.
- *Campylobacter* rates were significantly lower when hard scald was used, but no effect was observed for *Salmonella* or *L. monocytogenes*.
- *Campylobacter* and *L. monocytogenes* positive rates were significantly lower with auto-evisceration, but there was no effect on *Salmonella*.

- *Campylobacter* positive rates were significantly lower with hard-scald, but there was no effect on *Salmonella* or *L. monocytogenes*.
- Plants that added chlorine to chill tanks had significantly lower levels of *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and *L. monocytogenes* compared to those that did not.

The information collected will also be used to: assist poultry abattoirs in improving their process to reduce pathogen prevalence; examine effectiveness of in-plant intervention use; compare current data to the 2001-2002 OMAFRA poultry baseline and to data from other regulatory agencies; and to better understand microbiological quality in plants.

For more information, contact: Jeanine Boulter-Bitzer, microbial food safety science analyst, at 519-826-3514 or [Jeanine.boulter-bitzer@ontario.ca](mailto:Jeanine.boulter-bitzer@ontario.ca) ■

**Meat Inspection staff completing a carcass rinse and preparing sample for shipment to the laboratory**



## Canadian Food Inspection Agency's Pathogen Reduction

The Pathogen Reduction Initiative is a joint federal, provincial and territorial initiative aimed at decreasing the health risks and economic impact of food-borne pathogens in Canadian meat and poultry. Initial outcomes of this initiative will affect federal plants operating under the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and trading across provincial and international borders.

The first task will be to establish a national baseline of the key pathogens in meat and poultry that have the greatest impact on public health and the economy. These include:

- *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* in raw chicken,

- *E. coli* O157:H7 in raw ground beef and trim, and
- *Listeria monocytogenes* in ready-to-eat meats.

The information collected will be used to develop recommendations for pathogen reduction programs and to serve as benchmarks to measure the effectiveness of pathogen reduction controls.

More information at: [www.inspection.gc.ca/food/meat-and-poultry-products/pathogen/eng/1338819927004/1338819992816](http://www.inspection.gc.ca/food/meat-and-poultry-products/pathogen/eng/1338819927004/1338819992816)

# Monitoring the safety of ready-to-eat meat products

Ready-to-eat (RTE) meat products are products that have been processed so that they can be safely eaten without any further cooking or preparation by the consumer. The ministry tests four types of ready-to-eat meat products to verify that they are safe:

- fully cooked comminuted
- fully cooked non-comminuted
- fermented
- dried

It is the processing steps, not the label, that determine if a meat product is ready-to-eat. Your meat hygiene officer may review all

processing steps to determine if the product meets the RTE definition and should be sampled.

For example, a meat product that meets the ready-to-eat definition is sampled regardless of what's on the label, even if cooking instructions are provided (which is required for non-ready-to-eat products that have the appearance of, or could be mistaken for, ready-to-eat products).

For more information about product sampling please contact your inspector or area manager. ■

## Supporting Your Food Safety Programs

Looking for help developing Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) or HACCP plans? OMAFRA food safety advisors are available to provide personalized advice on food safety best practices specific to your facility.

The following interactive workshops are designed to meet the needs of meat and poultry processors:

- GMP: Sanitation and Pest Control – October 24 in Mississauga
- GMP: Preventative Maintenance & Calibration, Environment – November 28 in Mississauga.

**In addition to our workshops, we also offer free one-on-one assistance.**

At your convenience, you can sit down with a Food Safety Advisor in Guelph to help develop your GMPs and HACCP Plans.

To register for a workshop, or to book your one-on-one session, call 1-877-424-1300 or visit [www.ontario.ca/haccp](http://www.ontario.ca/haccp) ■

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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.**

Scarborough — Idrees Hosein

416-235-4591

Stratford — Mark Mitchell

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Woodstock — Ed Bailey

519-537-5646

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416-235-6585

**There are currently 138 provincially licensed abattoirs and 397 provincially licensed freestanding meat plants in Ontario.**

**For more information:**  
**Telephone: 1-877-424-1300**  
**Email: [ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca](mailto:ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca)**  
**[ontario.ca/MeatInspection](http://ontario.ca/MeatInspection)**  
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