

Behind the Legend

ISSUE NO. 11 Quarterly newsletter for Ontario's provincially licensed meat plant operators Nov. 2013

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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Open for Business strategy Revised Meat Regulation means many positive changes ahead

As part of the Open for Business strategy, changes to the Meat Regulation were filed recently by the Ontario government and will come into effect on January 1, 2014.

This is a significant and exciting step in our continuous improvement process to make sure the Meat Regulation addresses food safety without being unnecessarily onerous for businesses. The changes support food safety for the public, clarify that OMAF and MRA's role is the inspection of slaughter plants and freestanding meat processing plants that conduct higher risk meat processing or significant distribution, and make it easier for businesses to comply with the regulation. As animal welfare continues to be a key focus and priority, we are also making changes that will improve animal handling and care standards at slaughter plants.

A summary of the changes is included on page 2. You can also review the revised O. Reg. 31/05 through ontario.ca/meatinspection. A printed copy will be sent to you within the next two months. Meat inspection staff will inform and guide you as changes are implemented.

Your input was invaluable in helping us understand your needs and concerns and making sure the regulation was amended in a meaningful way. The new food safety requirements are strong, appropriate for the level of risk and workable on the ground. They also support a dynamic and innovative business climate and the continued success of Ontario's meat plants.

Lee Orphan
General Manager

**Visit ontario.ca/meatinspection
to review changes to the Meat Regulation**

Changes to Meat Regulation at a glance

What's in it for meat plant operators? Here's a look at some of the changes that will come into effect January 1, 2014.

This information is for summary purposes only.
For specific details refer to O. Reg. 31/05 (Meat).

Clarifying when a provincial meat plant licence is not required:

Under the current Meat Regulation, some businesses not normally considered to be meat plants currently require a licence. The regulation has been clarified to allow OMAF and MRA to better focus our expertise and meet our objectives: the inspection of slaughter plants and processing plants that conduct higher risk processing or significant product distribution. The changes clarify when a licence is not required and exempts those businesses that do not require a licence. Operations no longer covered by the Meat Regulation will be inspected by local public health units.

Food product exemption

- Some products are exempt from licensing (e.g., sandwiches, pizzas, bouillon, edible oil or fat, products containing less than 25 per cent meat).

Volume distribution exemption

- For very small businesses and other businesses, like retail stores, that perform only lower risk activities and whose sales to other businesses are no greater than 25 per cent of their meat product sales or 20,000 kg of meat annually.

Food service exemption

- For restaurants and caterers, and facilities where the majority of the business conducted is food service (preparing and serving meals).

Any potential changes to licensing status will be discussed between inspection staff and operators over the next few months.

Allowing inspected meat products from unlicensed or unregistered facility:

Meat plant operators will have the option of receiving inspected meat products from unlicensed facilities if minimum food safety requirements are met. The operator is responsible for ensuring the requirements are met.

Improving animal handling and care:

- As of July 1, 2014 plants will need to have:
 - A back-up stunning device, alternative equipment or method in the event of equipment failure or improper stunning; and,
 - Appropriate equipment to restrain and euthanize

animals that are found compromised, unfit or non-ambulatory in their holding pens or crates.

- Rabbits may not be suspended while conscious.

Changing the Fees Regulation to reflect current practices:

Changes to Ontario Regulation 223/05 (Fees) have been made to reflect the ministry's current practices in charging supplementary inspection fees (i.e. allowing an additional half hour for transition from pre-slaughter to post-slaughter inspection without charge and clarifying that licensees receive one free day of supplementary inspection per year).

Here are some of the additional changes that will reduce regulatory burden, provide a clearer, modernized and more outcome-based regulation:

- Allowing portable lighting, temporary or task lighting to meet the lux requirements in a meat plant;
- Reducing some of the lux values for lighting;
- Removing the construction requirement for a separate dry storage room;
- Office washrooms no longer have to meet the same construction requirements as washrooms in the plant area (if there is more than one washroom in the building);
- Rather than requiring freestanding meat plants to have their own washrooms, it is now acceptable to have access to a washroom;
- Clarifying that a change area does not have to be separate from a processing area in some cases;
- Removing the need for slaughter plants to have a telephone and workspace specifically for the inspector;
- Allowing products to be transported in a frozen state rather than requiring a specific temperature;
- Clarifying that freestanding meat plants can process and sell pet food;
- Removing the requirement for an inedible materials room in slaughter plants, if they dispose of inedible material within 24 hours or before the start of operations on the next day. ■

Recent convictions

The following are recent convictions under the Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001 in the meat industry.

August 7, 2013

Sausage Pros Inc. of Thunder Bay, its President, Michael Bihun and its Director, Kathleen Nuutinen, (both also of Thunder Bay), pleaded guilty in the Ontario Court of Justice in Thunder Bay to charges stemming from processing "category 2" or high-risk meat products without a licence as required under section 3 of the Meat Regulation 31/05 and in contravention of subsection 4(1) of the act.

The offences occurred between April 23, 2013 and May 2, 2013. Justice of the Peace Bruce Leaman ordered Sausage Pros Inc. to pay a fine of \$10,000 plus a victim fine surcharge of \$2,500. Mr. Bihun and Ms. Nuutinen were each ordered to pay \$5,000 plus a victim fine surcharge of \$1,250, for a total fine of \$25,000.

July 16, 2013

901769 Ontario Inc., operating as Pittsburgh Farms (a.k.a. Pittsburgh Packers) in Joyceville, and its owner, William Greenlees, pleaded guilty in the Ontario Court of Justice in

Kingston to five counts:

- Three counts to the company for carrying on a licensed activity without a licence, contrary to section 4(1) of the act; and,
- Two counts to Mr. Greenlees for carrying on a licensed activity without a licence, contrary to section 4(1) of the act.

The offences occurred between May 2011 and May 2012. Justice of the Peace Cathy Hickling ordered Pittsburgh Farms and William Greenlees to pay a fine of \$2,000 per count plus a victim fine surcharge of \$2,500 for a total fine of \$12,500.

July 12, 2013

Adrian Tamminga, owner of Tony's Meat Market in Wyoming, pleaded guilty in the Ontario Court of Justice in Sarnia, to carrying on a licensed activity without a licence, contrary to section 4(1) of the act.

This offence occurred on June 6, 2012. Justice of the Peace Malcolm Rogers ordered Mr. Tamminga to pay a fine of \$2000 plus a victim fine surcharge of \$500 for a total fine of \$2,500. ■

More court summaries at:

www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/foodsafety/compliance/courtsummaries.htm

Trichinellosis risk from pork

Although a rare occurrence, trichinellosis still exists in Ontario and can be transmitted; meat plants need to continue taking precautions.

Trichinellosis has largely been eradicated from the Canadian commercial swine industry through sound biosecurity and hygienic feeding practices, and the risk to public health is extremely low. However, a recent case in Bruce County related to swine raised in a non-commercial operation has shown that the disease is still present in Ontario, and the industry must continue to take the necessary precautions to protect public health.

A child got trichinellosis from pork in January of this year. The case was reported by the Canadian Food Inspection

Agency (CFIA). An investigation revealed that the pork came from two home-raised pigs that were housed in unsanitary conditions and fed food scraps. The pigs were slaughtered and consumed on the farm and did not enter the public food chain. It is believed the child ate smoked ham or sausage from the infected pig.

Trichinellosis is caused by small roundworms of the *Trichinella* species found in raw or undercooked infected meat. Although the parasite was prevalent in swine in the past, now, human cases in Canada are usually related to consumption of

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undercooked wild meat, such as wild boar, walrus and bear. Commercial confinement hog production practices (including rodent control and not feeding meat and meat by-products to swine) have successfully controlled this disease however, many wild and domestic animal species can be infected with *Trichinella*. These animals pose a risk to commercial swine herds and to public health.

Suspected cases of trichinellosis must be reported to the CFIA. Meat Plant Guideline P9 10 04 04 *Trichinella spiralis* control and Appendix 03 — Approved Methods to Control *Trichinella spiralis* in Pork outline steps that need to be taken. Smoking the meat does not heat it to a high enough

temperature to kill the parasite. The CFIA recommends cooking all wild game meat and pork to an internal temperature of at least 71° C.

Trichinellosis is not usually fatal and can be easily treated, however some cases are serious and may be life-threatening. Fortunately, the Bruce County child infected in January recovered without treatment.



More information on the Canadian Food Inspection Agency site: www.inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/trichinellosis/fact-sheet/eng/1330023015817/1330023110684 ■

Upcoming OMAF and MRA workshops

These workshops are supported by Growing Forward 2, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

- **NEW! Maximizing Your Traceability Investment** — **Online:** November 21, 2013 from 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
- **Fermented and Dry Cured Meat Products — Process Controls:** November 28, 2013, Guelph (see newsletter insert)
- **Preventative Maintenance and Calibration, Pest Control and Environment** — November 22, 2013, London
- **Developing Your HACCP Plan** — December 6, 2013, Guelph
- **GMP: Recall** — December 13, 2013, Ottawa
- **Personnel and Handling and Sanitation** — January 16, 2014, Brampton
- **GMP: Recall** — February 14 2014, Guelph
- **Developing Your HACCP Plan** — March 6, 2014, London

To register

for any of our informative workshops, please call 1-877-424-1300 or visit:

- **Food Safety in-person workshops:** www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/foodsafety/processors/events.htm
- **Traceability online workshop:** www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/foodsafety/traceability/workshops.htm

Your 2014 Licence Renewal

March 31, 2014 is the expiry date for 199 meat plant operators' licences. Each plant eligible for 2014 renewals should have received a licensing renewal package in October 2013.

Please review the information provided, sign, and return with payment to the Guelph head office prior to **January 31, 2014**. All renewal applications received before this date will be processed prior to the licence expiry date of March 31, 2014. The Meat Inspection Program is committed to ensuring you can efficiently and effectively renew your provincial meat plant operator's licence.

For more information, please contact Laura MacEachern, Program Delivery Officer at laura.maceachern@ontario.ca or 519-826-3842. ■

Safe production of fermented sausage and dried meat products

Interventions are in place in many plants; if you don't have controls in place yet, you need to prepare an implementation plan.

Guidelines for the safe production of fermented sausage and dried meat products will be effective as of January 1, 2014. Interventions to control pathogenic *E. coli* O157:H7 and *Salmonella* in fermented sausages and dried meat products (such as jerky and jerky-like products) need to be in place in plants that process these products.

Earlier this year, the Ontario Independent Meat Processors indicated their support for the guidelines and asked that the ministry provide time and training for operators. Following information sessions in June 2013, meat inspection staff received additional training to prepare them to visit plants to assist operators with determining the best interventions and implementation plan for their products.

Many plants have already put controls in place which address more than 50 per cent of the products. Work continues in remaining plants. The ministry understands that each plant's situation is unique and some may require additional time to meet the guidelines. As these products present a higher food safety risk when proper processes are not followed, the ministry is currently assessing remaining plants and is developing a strategy to ensure all plants have proper control methods in place.

If you have any questions about developing an implementation plan please contact your area manager. ■

A few clarifications

Which fermented sausage products are covered?

The Meat Inspection Program's focus is to obtain compliance within plants that:

- use beef as an ingredient in a dry or semi-dry fermented meat sausage;
- store or handle uncooked beef on site; or
- obtain raw meat from a supplying establishment which stores or handles uncooked beef on site.

Is non-beef fermented sausage covered?

Meat plants which make fermented sausage and only handle pork or other species (not beef), and do not obtain

meat ingredients from other plants that handle beef are not covered in the new guidelines. However, these plants must use a validated method to control *E. coli* O157:H7 and *Salmonella* in the finished product. The meat inspection program will focus current compliance action on plants that handle beef as described above.

What about jerky and similar dried meat products?

Regardless of the type of meat used as ingredient (beef, pork, chicken, etc.), the production of jerky and similar dried meat products must use a validated method to control *E. coli* O157:H7 and *Salmonella* in the finished product.

New Local Food Fund launched

On September 16, 2013, Premier Kathleen Wynne announced that applications are now open for a new Local Food Fund.

The fund is part of a \$30 million dollar investment from the province to create jobs and support innovative local food projects over the next three years. This fund is also part of the government's broader local food strategy to increase awareness and demand for foods grown and made in Ontario.

It will support projects that:

- Market and promote local food

- Strengthen regional and local food networks by increasing partnerships along the supply chain
- Use new and innovative equipment and processes to boost the supply, quality, availability and distribution of local food

Supporting local food is part of the Ontario government's plan to grow the economy, create jobs and help people with their everyday lives.

Find Local Food Fund application and guidelines at:

www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/about/localfood.htm ■

Upcoming OIMP Workshop

November 13, 2013, Guelph: In the event of an emergency or recall — are you prepared?

You will leave this workshop with a solid understanding of:

- Why it is important to have emergency response and recall plans
- The important elements of emergency response and recall plans
- The documents and information required to support emergency response and recall plans
- What to do after the emergency or recall is over

Information: Ontario Independent Meat Processors, 519-763- 4558 Ext. 221, info@oimp.ca, www.oimp.ca ■

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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.

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519-537-5646

York — Pierre Adrien

416-235-6585

There are currently 131 provincially licensed abattoirs and 397 provincially licensed freestanding meat plants in Ontario.

For more information:

Telephone: 1-877-424-1300

Email: ag.info.omafr@ontario.ca

[@ONfoodsafety](http://ontario.ca/meatinspection)

www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/index.html