

Behind the Legend

ISSUE NO. 15 Quarterly newsletter for Ontario's provincially licensed meat plant operators

May 2015

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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From our science desk:

What you need to know about *Listeria monocytogenes*

Listeria monocytogenes survives well in cool, damp environments, making meat processing plants an ideal habitat. Areas of plants that have ready-to-eat (RTE) product are critical in controlling *L. monocytogenes*, as the products in these areas will not be cooked or otherwise treated by the consumer to kill *Listeria* before the food is eaten. It is important that manufacturers of RTE foods use effective measures to control *L. monocytogenes*.

If *L. monocytogenes* is found in a meat product, the ministry's RTE policy requires operators to complete the following five steps:

1. Stop production and thoroughly clean and sanitize the plant.
2. After approval to begin processing, supply three negative re-test samples from the same production system as the contaminated lot. Re-tests should be regular commercial-size lots (not specially made).
3. Review all protocols with the Further Processing Inspector (FPI).
4. Complete a root-cause analysis to assist with determining the source of the contamination.
5. Complete a corrective action plan and submit to the FPI or Area Manager within 10 business days of notification of the result.

Note – the corrective action plan and three negative retest results are required prior to resuming normal operations.

Ongoing commitment:

Operators' demonstrated success in controlling *L. monocytogenes* shows that proactive sanitation practices work



For more information on controlling listeria contamination, visit www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/meatinsp/controllinglisteria.htm. For more information on listeria response, call 1-888-466-2372 ext 6-4230 or email foodinspection@ontario.ca.

Connect with Program Operations: Reporting business changes

Is your plant under new management? Has your business structure changed recently? Remember to report any ownership changes to the Meat Inspection Program through your Area Manager. Maintaining accurate records on your plant's business structure will ensure that you are compliant with the Meat Regulation's requirements.



Contact the Program Delivery Officer at 519-826-3842 for more information.

Do you process fish? About the Fish Interim Audit Program (FIAP)



Last year, the Fish Interim Audit Program (FIAP) was transitioned to OMAFRA from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF). The FIAP administers the *Fish Inspection Act* R.S.O. 1990 and Regulation 456, R.R.O. 1990.

Under the Act, processing includes: cleaning, filleting, icing, packing, canning, freezing, smoking, salting, cooking, pickling, drying or preparing fish for market in any other way.

- Any establishment in Ontario that is processing fish and is not federally registered may register with the FIAP as a non-federally registered fish processor.
- A registered establishment under FIAP is called a “non-federally registered fish processor.” (*Note: fish clients with MNRF were registered and were transitioned to OMAFRA as “registered.” Under FIAP, OMAFRA currently continue to register them.*)
- Every non-federally registered fish processor under FIAP receives three audit visits per fiscal year. The audit visits verify compliance with the *Fish Inspection Act*, while providing food safety education and best practices to the operator. OMAFRA is currently reviewing the number of audit visits per year required by the program.
- At each establishment producing ready-to-eat (RTE) fish products, five fish product samples and 10 environmental (swab) samples are taken for bacterial testing.
- At the time of this newsletter's publication there are 101 active non-federally registered fish processors being audited under FIAP. Of these, 24 are provincially licensed meat plants that also process fish.

For further information on FIAP, contact Danny Janusev, OMAFRA Food Safety Advisor, by calling 519-826-4756 or emailing dusko.janusev@ontario.ca.

There are currently 132 provincially licensed abattoirs and 377 provincially licensed freestanding meat plants in Ontario.

Thank you to those who participated in the recent communications research survey. We appreciate your feedback on your communications needs and will follow-up in the near future on our findings.

Better informed:
your input on the recent survey
will help us to better deliver the
information you need,
when you need it

From our science desk: Best practices to reduce risks in poultry plants

In Canada, *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* are two of the top four pathogens causing domestically acquired food-borne illnesses. Poultry is a common source of these pathogens.

Recommended best practices

OMAFRA has developed recommendations for in-plant practices to help poultry plant operators manage and reduce cross-contamination pathogen risks from chilling, water use, chemical interventions and changes to the order of slaughter.

By adopting these best practices, particularly with poultry chill tanks, operators can reduce poultry pathogen levels – and further improve business operations by increasing product quality and its shelf life.

About contamination in chill tanks:

- Microbial loading (e.g., *Campylobacter* or *Salmonella*) and organics increase in poultry chill tanks as carcasses are added over the day of processing.
- Once a chill tank's water becomes positive with *Campylobacter* or *Salmonella*, the water remains positive for the duration of slaughter; there is therefore a high probability of many non-contaminated carcasses becoming contaminated.
- There are low-cost options available for processors in Ontario to prevent carcasses from becoming positive for *Campylobacter* or *Salmonella* in chill tanks; these products greatly aid in preventing cross-contamination from occurring in the chilling system.

What can you do
to reduce risks
in your plant?
Take these
simple and
cost-effective
steps

Reduce risks by changing the order of slaughter:

- The flocks least likely to be positive for *Campylobacter* (i.e. younger flocks) should be slaughtered earlier in the processing day, followed by other flocks.
- Broilers are unlikely to be positive for *Campylobacter* when younger than approximately 34 days of age, they should be slaughtered first.
- Red birds, fowl, pigeon, silkies and other older flocks are often positive for *Campylobacter*, and should be slaughtered after the younger broilers.

Continued on page 4

Poultry chill bins



From our science desk:

Best practices to reduce risks in poultry plants (cont'd)

Improve sanitation with water and chemical interventions:

- In a bin chilling system, individual bins should be rinsed and sanitized prior to re-use. All remaining ice should be disposed.
- Fresh water should be added to chill tanks throughout the day. When chill tanks are used but do not overflow water, the rapid increase in pathogens and spoilage organisms, as well as Total Dissolved Solids and other organics throughout the day not only reduces the shelf life and quality of the meat, but makes chemical intervention difficult.
- Inside/Outside (IO) washes should be used and monitored daily to reduce chill tank microbial organic loading.
- Chemicals such as Chlorine and Peroxyacetic Acid (PAA) decrease pathogens and spoilage microorganisms in chill tanks. PAA performs better than chlorine when used in conditions of high organics and in plants that have water at pH close to 7.8 or 8.0. These products are effective in not only reducing pathogen levels, but also increasing shelf life as spoilage organisms are greatly reduced with use. A pump and monitor for anti-microbial chemical addition is a low-cost sanitation option.

It's easy:

OMAFRA staff can help you identify ways to improve your product's quality and shelf life

Poultry plant operators interested in having in-plant testing performed on antimicrobial controls in their chill systems can call 519-826-3514 or email jeanine.boulter-bitzer@ontario.ca.

Monitoring mutton and lamb labelling

The issue of mutton being mislabelled as lamb was last reported in December's issue of *Behind the Legend*. OMAFRA's Regulatory Compliance Unit (RCU) continues to monitor mutton and lamb labelling through record reviews with operators during other inspections.

A shared goal:

we all have a role to play to ensure public trust in accurate product labelling

The RCU is committed to responding to complaints received for allegations of misrepresentation. To date, no specific complaints of this kind have been reported. Concerns regarding mislabelled products can be reported directly to the RCU by calling 519-826-4537 or by emailing regulatory.compliance@ontario.ca.

OIMP workshops

The OIMP is featuring three upcoming workshops from May through July:

May 27, 2015

Ventilation Design and Food Safety

June 24, 2015

Energy Conservation

July 22, 2015

E-Coli Lunch & Learn Webinar
(online only)



For more information on workshops or to register, call the OIMP at 519-763-4558 ext. 221 or email info@oimp.ca.



Growing Forward 2: What's new?

Growing Forward 2 (GF2) offers cost-share funding assistance, free workshops and training for Ontario producers, processors, organizations and collaborations.

What's New for *GF2*?

- Priorities are clearly identified in the program guides
- All projects will be assessed on merit
- Cost-share funding will be capped depending on the project category
- Some project categories have prerequisites as a required condition before clients can apply
- Approval of your project is needed before costs can be incurred and paid

New Dates for *GF2*

GF2 cost-share funding assistance application intakes for producers and processors are:

- May 1 to May 21, 2015
- August 10 to August 27, 2015
- November 16 to December 3, 2015

Application questions?
Contact Amanda Culverwell
for more information at
(519) 826-3730

For more information visit www.ontario.ca/growingforward2.

Growing Forward 2: Free workshops

Take advantage of the free *Growing Forward 2* workshops and education options available to you. Getting the training required for your business is an important step to help you reach your goals.

Who Can Attend

Eligible businesses that are directly involved in processing, modification and/or transformation of agricultural commodities, food, beverage, or agricultural based bio-products in Ontario.

If you are looking to keep up to date on the latest business practices, food safety and traceability training then register for any or all of these upcoming free workshops.

To register visit: <http://www.gftc.ca/courses-and-training/growing-forward-2.aspx>.

Boosting your success:
Attending these workshops can
help strengthen your *GF2*
funding assistance application

Recent convictions

On December 3, 2014, Ontario Corporation 1121385, operating as Farmer Al's Food Inc., pleaded guilty in the Hamilton Provincial Court to one count of carrying on licensed activities without being licensed. The court ordered Farmer Al's Food Inc. to pay a fine of \$2,000 plus a victim fine surcharge of \$500 for a total of \$2,500 plus court costs.

On March 21, 2014, Hamilton Public Health Inspectors conducted a routine inspection at Farmer Al's Food Inc. at 2070 Rymal Road and discovered smoked meat on the premises. The operator of the business, Mr. Anthony Longo, did not have a licence to conduct this activity and further investigation revealed that in 2012 he had given up the business' licence and signed a declaration agreeing not to produce smoked meat in the future. The operator admitted to smoking the meat on March 20, 2014.

On August 21, 2014, the Ontario Court of Justice in Ottawa found that Anthony Scissons was guilty of offenses under the *Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001* and Ontario Regulation 31/05. On March 11, 2015, a formal decision was released from the court ruling that on October 26, 2012, Anthony Scissons committed the following offences contrary to the *Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001*, and Ontario Regulation 31/05:

- Carrying on a licensed activity without holding a licence.
- Failure to ensure ante mortem inspection of a food animal and approval for slaughter.
- Failure to ensure post mortem inspection of a food animal carcass.
- Unlawful selling of a carcass of a food animal.

The court ordered Mr. Scissons to pay a total of \$1,250. Two additional charges for selling the carcass of a food animal were stayed.

For more information about convictions under the *Food Safety and Quality Act*, visit: www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/cbulletins/index.htm.

Meat Inspection Program Management Team

GENERAL MANAGER:
REGIONAL MANAGERS

Kim Landers, West/North
Nick Van Lankveld, East

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Joe Iacobellis

Jason McLean

519-826-3250

519-826-4281

519-826-4364

For any inquiries regarding meat inspection, please contact your area manager. All area managers can be paged at:

1-866-395-8957 or 416-614-5580.

Ask for your area manager by name.

AREA MANAGERS

Brighton — Robin Drew

705-324-7353

GTA — Ivona Jarosz

416-235-6690

Guelph — Lynn Philp

519-826-4368

Kemptville — Vickie Sauvé

613-679-2825

Midhurst — Eloise Jones

705-725-7292

Peel — Alan Yee

416-235-4591

Ridgetown — Jeff Richards

519-674-1534

Scarborough — Pierre Adrien

416-235-6585

Stratford — Mark Mitchell

519-271-8278

Thunder Bay — Vicki French (Acting)

807-475-1664

Verner — Doug McLean

705-594-2314

Vineland — Goce Manevski

905-562-1710

Woodstock — Ed Bailey

519-537-5646

York — Pierre Adrien

416-235-6585



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Follow @ONFoodSafety on Twitter.

For more information:
Telephone: 1-877-424-1300
Email: ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca
ontario.ca/meatinspection
[@ONfoodsafety](https://twitter.com/ONfoodsafety)
www.ontario.ca/laws