



Behind the Legend

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.

From Our Food Safety Advisors

Sanitation: are you ready for inspections?

In addition to meeting regulatory requirements, an effective sanitation program protects your business by:

- Eliminating pathogens and spoilage bacteria from surfaces
- Preventing cross contamination (i.e. allergens)
- Extending product shelf life
- Reducing the risk of financial losses (i.e. recall)
- Preventing foodborne illness
- Providing your customers with safe food
- Completing and maintaining accurate records of sanitation activities
- Pre-operational inspections performed before production to confirm that rooms, equipment and utensils are visibly clean and
- Training for sanitation staff.

OMAFRA's Meat Inspection Program reviews sanitation programs and practices during regular inspection visits and audits.

An effective sanitation program should include:

- Specific written procedures that explain how every piece of equipment and area in your plant will be cleaned and sanitized
- Performing the sanitation practices outlined in the procedures at the required frequency
- Verification after sanitation practices are performed

- ✓ By maintaining and following a sanitation program, you are taking an important step to protect food safety.
- ✓ Your commitment to sanitation strengthens your business' reputation for delivering safe and quality food products.
- ✓ You will also be well prepared for upcoming inspections in the fall of 2015 focusing on sanitation in provincially licensed meat plants.



Proper Sanitation = Safe Products

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From Our Science Desk

Is your plant as clean as it looks? Environmental swabbing reveals results

How can you tell if your sanitation efforts have removed non-visible contaminants from equipment and meat processing areas of your plant? Environmental monitoring and testing programs (swabbing) can verify that these parts are as clean as they look.

In most food processing plants, food contact surfaces are cleaned and sanitized daily. If surfaces are cleaned infrequently biofilms may form. Once formed, biofilms are difficult to remove.

When bacteria attach to surfaces, they form dense aggregations called biofilms. Growth of biofilms in food processing environments leads to the increased chance of microbial contamination of processed products; testing for surface sanitation is a good way to monitor for biofilm growth.

Biofilms may contain species of bacteria that are resistant to disinfectants, including spoilage organisms and pathogens like *Listeria monocytogenes*, which thrives in cold, wet environments.

Cross-contamination occurs when food passes over surface biofilms or are exposed to aerosols or condensate that originate from these areas.

Swabbing for indicators & pathogens

Environmental sampling can monitor for the presence of specific indicators (e.g. *Listeria* spp.) or pathogens (e.g. *Listeria monocytogenes*) which can highlight the presence of microorganisms that may not have been eliminated by sanitation practises and therefore may be passed onto other food materials. Detection also assists in determining sources of these microorganisms that may be resident in the plant environment.

Swabbing sites should be mainly food contact surfaces, particularly areas that are difficult to clean.

Use these monitoring methods to confirm the effectiveness of your sanitation program

- After cleaning: adenosine triphosphate (ATP) bioluminescent monitoring to detect remaining food debris; followed by
- After sanitizer application: microbial monitoring to confirm that no viable bacteria remain.

ATP methods to measure cleanliness

ATP is a chemical found in the cells of animals, plants and bacteria. ATP bioluminescence is an easy, quick and inexpensive test that uses a device called a luminometer to measure the combined total of organic material (food residues and microbial populations) on a swabbed surface. A number of types of luminometers are available, each with their own specific instructions for use.

Effectively cleaned food contact surfaces will have low levels of ATP. Finding higher levels of ATP on a surface implies that food or bacteria remains. In such a case, re-cleaning should be done immediately.

Follow an environmental sampling program at your plant

- ✓ Meat plants, particularly RTE meat plants should use environmental sampling programs to measure the efficacy of cleaning and sanitation.
- ✓ An ATP monitoring system is a good tool to measure effectiveness.
- ✓ Alternatively, surfaces can be swabbed for indicator microorganisms such as, *E. coli*, coliforms or ACC (Aerobic Colony Counts).

Is your plant as clean as it looks? Environmental swabbing reveals results (cont'd)

Microbial Monitoring

Microbial monitoring complements ATP bioluminescence. While a clean surface generally is an indicator of low microbial levels, it is not a guarantee that the area is microbiologically clean. To determine this, microbiological analysis of surface areas must be done.

There are a variety of microbial testing formats and sampling techniques. The capabilities and limitations of each must be carefully considered to ensure the most appropriate is chosen.

Listeria monocytogenes

Testing for all *Listeria* species, rather than just *L. monocytogenes* increases the detection ability for *Listeria*. OMAFRA Food Inspection Program staff are available to answer your questions and help you initiate a process to verify the effectiveness of your sanitation programs.



For more information, contact your inspector or Area Manager.

From our Veterinarian Desk: Animal welfare: Our shared responsibility

More than ever, Ontario consumers are interested in the “field to plate” process – knowing where their food comes from, how it’s grown, and how food animals are handled. At every step of the way, consumers expect that animal welfare is safeguarded.

Ontario’s Regulation 31/05 (Meat) under the *Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001* (FSQA) stipulates that food animals be handled and slaughtered humanely at provincially licensed slaughter plants.

The Meat Regulation requires that:

- The slaughter process be conducted in a way that does not subject animals to avoidable pain or distress;
- The equipment or instrument to restrain, slaughter or render a food animal unconscious at a slaughter plant be operated by persons who are competent and physically able to do so without subjecting the animal to avoidable pain or distress; and
- The condition of the equipment or instrument and the circumstances under which it is used will not subject the animal to avoidable pain or distress
- The operator of a slaughter plant shall ensure that all food animals at the plant are handled in a humane manner. No person shall slaughter a food animal at a slaughter plant in a way that subjects it to avoidable pain and distress. O. Reg. 31/05 s. 60 (1), s. 75 (1).

OMAFRA meat inspectors monitor compliance with these laws. Meat inspectors are present at provincially licensed abattoirs

during all slaughter activities. They have the authority to stop slaughter, detain product and issue compliance orders if operations are not in compliance with standards, including animal welfare standards.

Meat inspectors and Regional Veterinarians are proud to play this front-line role in ensuring that Ontario’s food safety and animal welfare regulations are met. They are supported by veterinary scientists, food safety advisors and Area Managers who advise on all animal welfare-related matters at abattoirs.

In addition to their on-the-ground work, meat inspectors, Regional Veterinarians and ministry staff actively promote animal welfare through research, education, inspection and enforcement activities and through industry collaboration. By increasing understanding and awareness of the provincial regulations, we strengthen Ontario’s food safety and animal welfare reputation.

Find out how *Growing Forward 2* cost-share can help fund animal welfare improvements at your plant.

Check out the [Growing Forward 2 Processor Guide](#) for details or contact Amanda Culverwell at 519-826-3730.

From Our Veterinarian Desk

News you need: Clarifying the “hold for setup” policy

Why you need to know about extreme thinness or emaciation in animals:

OMAFRA has standardized the criteria for approving a very thin or emaciated carcass based on if the meat has set.

Extreme thinness or emaciation is a common post mortem condition, particularly in cattle, sheep and goats.

It is important that care be taken to identify very thin or emaciated animals, as emaciation can be a food safety risk.

Extreme thinness without disease may occur in older animals. In this case, muscle may still set into meat, but not in all cases as the energy stores may be too depleted. At the time of slaughter, this cannot always be visually assessed so OMAFRA must hold these very thin carcasses for setup to avoid releasing improperly set meat into the food chain.

Improperly set muscle is favourable for spoilage and may promote growth of organisms that can cause foodborne illness (for example botulism). OMAFRA inspectors will only approve a very thin or emaciated carcass if it has set.

When extreme thinness of a carcass is identified on post mortem, the inspector places a held tag on the carcass and edible parts.

1. The inspector notifies the Veterinary Scientist as a held for setup request.
2. The inspector checks the carcass for setup within 2 days.
3. The inspector notifies the Veterinary Scientist to have the carcass status changed to either 'available for release' if the carcass has set or 'condemn carcass' for failure to setup.

Have you seen these signs?

They may indicate a food safety risk you need to address.

Signs that a carcass has set include:

- Meat is firm and dry
- Dark with a purple tone
- The fat is mostly firm and white or off-white and
- Joints are rigid and difficult to move.

Signs that a carcass has not set include:

- Meat that is soft and wet or sticky
- Pale colour (pink tone)
- Fat is yellow-orange, gelatinous and wet
- Joints are moveable and
- There is evidence of fluid dripping from the carcass in the cooler.

On post mortem inspection, when extreme thinness or emaciation occurs with another pathological condition (for example chronic pneumonia, kidney disease, multiple abscesses) it indicates wasting from disease and therefore the carcass must be condemned.

Recent convictions

1.

On May 20, 2015, Ronald Weiland pleaded guilty in Guelph Provincial Offences Court to operating a premise where a licensed activity was carried out without the licence required to do so under Ontario's *Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001* and its regulation 31/05.

On October 17, 2014, Compliance and Advisory Officers from OMAFRA's Regulatory Compliance Unit conducted an inspection at Mr. Weiland's farm in Alma, ON. The purpose of their visit was to determine compliance with Ontario Regulation 31/05 under the *Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001*.

The Act requires licensing to produce "category 2" meat products, which include "canning, curing, dehydrating, emulsifying, fermenting or smoking of a meat product." During their inspection, the Compliance Officers observed a processing area with two stainless steel smokehouses and other equipment and ingredients that could be used to produce "category 2" meat products. In addition, they observed numerous "category 2" meat products in the hold cooler. At the time of the incident, Mr. Weiland did not possess the required OMAFRA-issued licence to conduct "category 2" activities.

Justice A. Rodney ordered Mr. Weiland to pay a fine of \$1,500 plus a Victim Fine Surcharge of \$375 for a total of \$1,875.

2.

On July 13, 2015, Amos Martin pleaded guilty in the Provincial Offences Court in Guelph to violating Ontario Regulation 105/09 under the *Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001*.

On January 22, 2015, Mr. Martin shipped a cull cow to the Ontario Livestock Exchange in Waterloo, Ontario. An OMAFRA appointed Veterinary Inspector examined the cow. The veterinarian found that the cow had a twisted stomach and

described it as being distressed, recumbent and unable to rise, dehydrated, dull and depressed. He deemed the cow to be a "fallen animal" that, by definition, means an animal that has been disabled by disease, emaciation or another condition that is likely to cause its death.

Justice A. Rodney ordered Mr. Martin to pay a fine of \$1,500 plus a Victim Fine Surcharge and court costs for a total of \$1,880.



Professional Development: OIMP Learning Opportunity

December 2, 2015

Labelling: What does your label say? Is it clear, accurate, and compliant?

- Labelling regulations in Canada
- How to label prepackaged meat products
- How to comply when making specific claims
- How to comply with allergen labelling and your responsibilities
- Tools to review labels to ensure they are compliant

Visit the OIMP's website at www.oimp.ca to register.



There are currently 379 FSMPs and 128 Abattoirs

We heard from you: Changes to *Behind the Legend*



In the recent communications survey, many of you told us that *Behind the Legend* should include content for both abattoirs and FSMPs. Following your feedback, we have refreshed the design to include articles of interest to each group.

DID YOU KNOW?

During 2014-15, approximately 806,000 red meat and about 17 million white meat animals were reported slaughtered in provincial abattoirs.

This represents about 4% increase for red meat and no change for white meat over the previous year.

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

Ask for your area manager by name.

Scarborough — Pierre Adrien 416-235-6585

Stratford — Mark Mitchell 519-271-8278

Thunder Bay — Vicky French (Acting) 807-475-1664

Verner — Doug McLean 705-594-2314

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Woodstock — Lisa Clarke (Acting) 519-537-5646

York — Pierre Adrien 416-235-6585

For more information:

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Regulation: www.ontario.ca/laws

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