



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

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Behind the Legend - Issue Number 23

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Behind the Legend

Quarterly newsletter for Ontario's provincially licensed meat plant operators

Issue Number 23 - Fall 2017

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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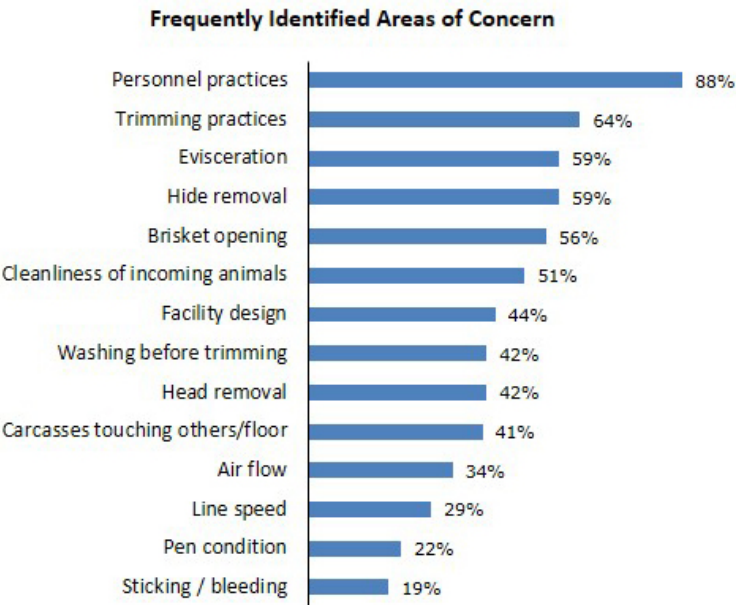
- Proposal for a Fish Food Safety Regulation under the Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001

From Our Food Safety Desk: Hygienic Slaughter and Dressing - What potential risk areas did we find?

Over the past year, Area Managers and Inspectors focused attention on assessing slaughter and dressing practices in abattoirs slaughtering bovine (beef/dairy). Hygienic slaughter and dressing practices were

observed at 59 abattoirs throughout the province. To support and further develop a trusted and robust food safety culture in these facilities, operators were asked to perform a root cause analysis and identify any potential risk areas they observed throughout their visit. With the assistance of inspection staff, operators were responsible for developing a corrective action plan to address identified risk areas.

The graph below summarizes the most commonly identified areas of concern from the 59 abattoirs assessed.

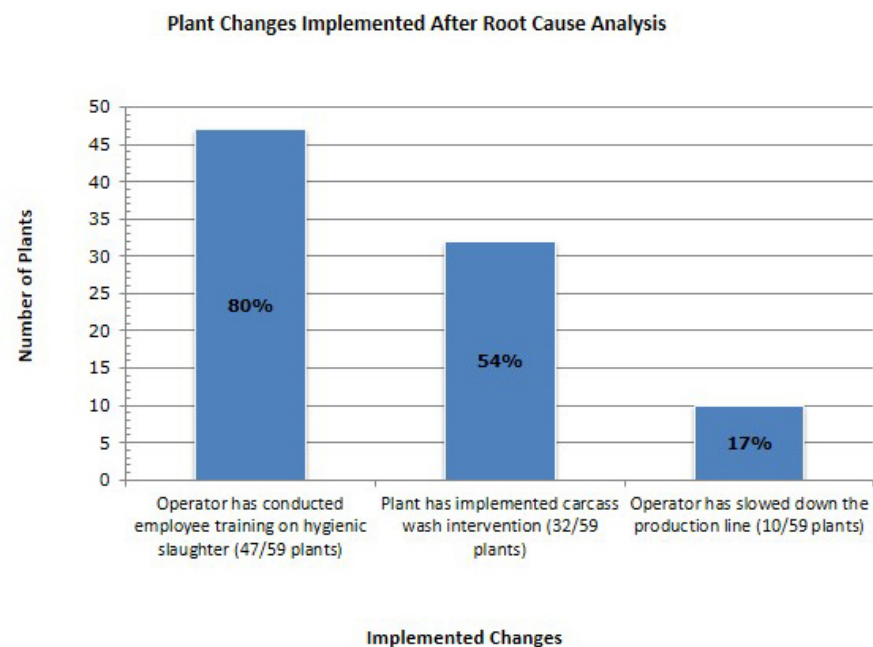


Text version

Here are some ways you can minimize the risk of carcass contamination:

- Ensure employees are trained to perform slaughter and dressing activities in a hygienic manner, and understand the impacts poor hygienic practices could have on public health and the reputation of your business.
- Ensure easy access to sinks and knife sanitizers for employees to allow frequent hand washing and sanitization of knives, tools, and equipment between each carcass (e.g., the sticking knife and the brisket saw).
- Ensure the line speed is at a pace that allows employees to effectively carry out their duties in a hygienic manner.
- Maintain adequate separation of incompatible activities, such as distal ilium removal, away from dressed carcasses.
- Maintain proper and frequent employee hygiene (e.g., washing hands, not touching carcasses with soiled hands, regularly cleaning tools and aprons).
- Prevent flapping or splatter of the hide during removal.
- Ensure employees are wearing appropriate work clothing (smock, boots, gloves) that are separate from their personal clothing.
- Ensure that process flow and air flow minimizes the potential for cross-contamination.
- Immediately trim all visible contamination to prevent further contamination of the carcass.
- Ensure employees are properly trained to conduct effective trimming of visible contamination.
- Trim stick wound to ensure contaminants from the hide or floor are effectively removed.
- Avoid cutting or breaking the paunch and intestines.
- Keep viscera intact, and process all paunch opening and viscera in an area and manner that prevent direct or air-born contamination of the carcass.
- Ensure procedures are in place to prevent cross contamination from viscera carts or trucks.

Since the hygienic slaughter risks were identified at the 59 abattoirs, 80% have conducted employee training on hygienic slaughter (47 out of 59 plants). As well, 54% of the abattoirs involved implemented a carcass wash intervention (32 out of 59 plants), and 17% have slowed down their production line (10 out of 59 plants) to more effectively address hygienic slaughter.



Text version

For more information on hygienic slaughter practices, please speak with your Inspector.

From Ontario Independent Meat Processors Association: Hygienic Practices Enhancement: Pilot Project

For meat processing operations and abattoirs, plant sanitation and controlling contamination of carcasses during slaughter and processing are two of the most critical hygienic practices that reduce major risk factors for foodborne illnesses in humans. When operators follow proper hygienic practices, they are actively protecting their customers from foodborne illness and thereby protecting their business' reputation and bottom line. In a new pilot project, the **Ontario Independent Meat Processors Association** (OIMP) aims to enhance food safety management capacity related to hygienic slaughter and sanitation in provincially licensed meat processing operations in Ontario.

The objectives of the project are to enhance food safety management through:

- using recognized food safety standards
- implementing food safety systems and practices
- equipping meat plant operators with education and appropriate supporting tools and equipment so they can effectively manage risks associated with carcass contamination and plant sanitation.

OIMP will focus on three key activity areas:

- **Hygienic Slaughter Improvements:** Microbiological baseline studies conducted by OMAFRA indicate a high prevalence of pathogens (e.g., E.coli O157:H7, Salmonella and Campylobacter) on beef and poultry carcasses in Ontario abattoirs. OIMP will help participating provincially licensed meat plants improve hygienic slaughter practices and advance implementation of interventions that control carcass contamination.
- **Customized Sanitation Training:** OIMP will work directly with selected meat plants to design and test customized training to improve sanitation practices.
- **Use of Luminometers:** Using this tool to assess the effectiveness of sanitation can provide invaluable information to operators. OIMP will facilitate the purchase of luminometers to equip

a limited number of meat plants producing high risk products with this technology to facilitate the ongoing commitment to food safety.

Agri-food businesses have a critical role in protecting the safety of Ontario food products through the continuous implementation of food safety best practices in their daily business operations. OIMP is reaching out to interested meat plants to participate in this pilot. The timelines for this pilot are short and space is limited so please contact us to participate at technical@oimp.ca or call the office at 519-763-4558 Ext 222 or toll free (800) 263-3797. Don't delay!

The Ontario Independent Meat Processors Association (OIMP) provides valuable assistance through education, training, and technical support to the meat processing sector in Ontario.

This project was funded in part through Growing Forward 2 (GF2), a federal-provincial-territorial



From Our Training Desk: Food Safety and Traceability Online Courses

Give your company a competitive edge - take free eLearning courses to learn more about industry best practices!

Visit agandfoodeducation.ca to access the new Food Safety and Traceability eLearning courses. Courses are offered at the Agriculture and Food Education in Ontario online learning system, through the University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus.

The new Traceability eLearning courses show you how best practices can:

- maximize productivity, improve business efficiency, reduce costs and improve business processes
- increase competitive advantage by accessing new markets
- improve supply chain management

The new Food Safety eLearning courses will help you to:

- identify food safety hazards that can occur in your operation
- understand best practices and develop programs to control these hazards
- decrease the likelihood of food safety hazards that can lead to a foodborne illness outbreak or product recall

Register for your FREE account today at agandfoodeducation.ca. Then simply log in and begin learning - wherever and whenever is convenient for you! Accessible versions of the courses are available. For more information, contact the University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus at rcagfood@uoguelph.ca or 519-674-1500 ext. 63295. Available online courses are listed in the chart below.

Please note: if you prefer classroom-based learning, the Food Safety and Traceability courses and workshops are still offered by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA). Go to www.ontariosoilcrop.org for the dates and locations of upcoming in-person opportunities.

This project was funded in part through Growing Forward 2 (GF2), a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

Online courses available at agandfoodeducation.ca

Title	Producer	Processor
Food Safety Foundations	x	x
Grow Your Farm Profits	x	
Maximizing Your Traceability Investment	x	
Personnel		x
Profiting from Traceability		x

Recall		x
Sanitation		x
The Basics of Traceability	x	x
Water Use	x	
Worker Practices	x	

Upcoming training sessions:

Event	Date and Time	Location	Contact
Meat Industry Expo	October 20 & 21, 2017	Niagara Falls	Ontario Independent Meat Processors
Food Handler Examination	October 25, 2017	Guelph	Business Development Centre, University of Guelph
Food Handler Examination	November 16, 2017	Guelph	Business Development Centre, University of Guelph

From Our Program Desk: Frequently Asked Questions about the Volume Distribution Exemption

In 2014, the Meat Regulation was amended to clarify OMAFRA's role in the inspection system, specifically the inspection of slaughter plants and higher risk meat processing plants. These businesses require the ministry's focus as they distribute a significant portion of their meat products through wholesale markets or perform higher risk meat processing activities. Three exemptions clarify when a licence to operate a provincially licensed meat plant is not required. The three exemptions were outlined in the **Spring edition** of Behind the Legend. The Food Product exemption was discussed in the **Summer edition**. In this article, we will describe the Volume Distribution Exemption.

What is the Volume Distribution Exemption?

Businesses may wholesale a portion of their meat products without requiring a provincial licence.

A business is exempt from licensing if the business:

- ONLY performs Category 1 activities; and
- Sales to wholesale markets do not exceed the greater of:
 - 25% of meat products sold in a fiscal year; and
 - 20,000 kg of meat products sold in a fiscal year.

A licence is required if both of these amounts are exceeded.

What does this mean?

A business would require a licence if they exceed both 25% and 20,000 kg of meat products sold in a year.

What should I do if I think my business is exempt from licensing?

Contact your Area Manager. The Meat Inspection Program will work with Public Health Units as necessary to evaluate your plant and activities to determine if you may be exempt from licensing. The process of assessing plants to determine if they are exempt may take time and discretion must be used to ensure careful consideration and informed decision making.

If a plant no longer requires a licence due to any of the three exemptions, will anyone monitor their activities?

A plant that is no longer licensed under the Meat Regulation due to the exemptions, will be subject to the Food Premises Regulation under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, and therefore inspected by the municipal public health unit. Compliance staff from OMAFRA and the municipal public health unit will be monitoring the business activities from time to time for compliance with applicable regulations.

Where can I learn more?

The three exemptions can be found in section 2.1 of the Meat Regulation. OMAFRA's '**Do you Operate a Provincial Meat Plant**' chart can provide you with more information on the exemptions. Should you have questions, please speak with your Inspector.

From our Food Safety Desk: Ready-to-Eat (RTE) Meat testing results summary

As part of our surveillance and monitoring program, OMAFRA tests samples of RTE meat produced at provincially licensed plants. Occasionally these tests will come back with an adverse result. When the adverse result is a pathogen, in addition to a review of practices/protocols/procedures, the meat inspector will ensure that there is no risk to the public and assist the plant operator to complete a root cause analysis to aid in the identification of the potential source of contamination (e.g., environmental testing).

Number of Adverse Results, by Type				Indicator Organisms		
Year	# of Sampled Lots Tested ⁽¹⁾	# of Sampled Lots with Adverse Results ⁽²⁾	% of Lots with Adverse Results	Aerobic Colony Count (ACC) >10,000	Coliforms >1,000	E. coli >Heath Canada limits ⁽³⁾
2009	565	64	11.3%	52	1	0
2010	686	47	6.9%	36	8	0
2011	820	57	7.0%	48	2	0
2012	782	50	6.4%	36	1	0
2013	728	50	6.9%	39	4	0
2014	786	49	6.2%	32	1	0
2015	702	42	6.0%	34	0	0
2016	714	45	6.3%	37	1	0
2017 ⁽⁵⁾	451	17	3.8%	16	0	0

Number of Adverse Results, by Type				Pathogens/toxins				
Year	# of Sampled Lots Tested ⁽¹⁾	# of Sampled Lots with Adverse Results ⁽²⁾	% of Lots with Adverse Results	Listeria monocytogenes	Verocytotoxigenic E.coli	Staphylococcus aureus > HC limits ⁽⁴⁾	S. aureus toxin	Salmonella
2009	565	64	11.3%	11	0	0	0	1
2010	686	47	6.9%	6	0	0	0	0
2011	820	57	7.0%	9	0	0	0	1
2012	782	50	6.4%	11	2	2	1	2
2013	728	50	6.9%	13	0	2	0	0
2014	786	49	6.2%	17	0	0	0	1
2015	702	42	6.0%	8	0	0	0	0
2016	714	45	6.3%	7	0	1	0	0
2017 ⁽⁵⁾	451	17	3.8%	1	0	0	0	0

(1) Five sub-samples collected and tested per sampled lot.
(2) When levels of indicator organisms and/or pathogens are unsatisfactory (i.e. when levels found in the sample exceed Health Canada Limits). There could be more than one type of adverse result per lot.
(3) Health Canada limits for Generic E.coli are any of the following:
Heat treated Fermented Sausage >103/g in 1 subsample or >101/g in more than 1 subsample
Raw Fermented Sausage >103/g in 1 subsample or >102/g in more than 1 subsample
Non-Fermented products >103/g in 1 subsample or >102/g in more than 2 subsamples
(4) Health Canada limits for S. aureus are any of the following:
FCC,FCNC & Dried: if any subsample has >104/g or >102/g in more than 2 subsamples
Heat Treated Fermented Meats: if any subsample has >104/g or >50/g in more than 1 subsample. Raw Fermented: >104/g or >250/g in more than 1 subsample.
FCC - Fully Cooked Comminuted
FCNC - Fully Cooked Non-Comminuted
(5) From January 1, 2017 to September 29, 2017

From the Canadian Food Inspection Agency: Changes to the Food and Drug Regulations: Nutrition Labelling, List of Ingredients and Food Colours

On December 14, 2016, Health Canada updated the Food and Drug Regulations (FDR), introducing changes to nutrition labelling, list of ingredients, and food colour requirements. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is responsible for enforcing these new requirements.

The amendments will make labelling information on prepackaged food products more useful and easier to read for Canadians, and aim to achieve efficiencies by removing the requirement for lot certification of food colours.

Some of the major changes include:

- new requirements regarding the legibility of ingredients list;
- grouping of sugars in the list of ingredients;
- changes to information contained in the Nutrition Facts table (NFT);
- new requirements for how food colours are declared;
- removal of the requirement for certification of synthetic colours;
- incorporation by reference of daily values, templates for the NFT formats, reference amounts, serving sizes and most food colour specifications.

Industry will have until December 14, 2021 to implement these changes. Amendments to food colour specifications and removal of synthetic colour certification requirements are in effect now.

Learn more:

- [CFIA](#)
- [Health Canada](#)
- [NFT Templates](#)

From the Fish Program Desk: Proposal for a Fish Food Safety Regulation under the Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001

The Ministry is developing a proposal to replace Ontario's current Fish Inspection Act and Ontario Regulation 456 Quality Control, with a new fish food safety regulation under the Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001.

The proposed changes would enhance food safety requirements and strengthen consumer confidence in Ontario's non-federally registered fish processors distributing within the province.

The proposed fish regulation would apply to businesses that process fish products for distribution, including provincially licensed meat plants that process fish products for distribution. The regulation would not apply to businesses that only sell fish products directly to consumers (e.g., at a retail counter). Fish products would be defined as a food product that does not contain meat, but contains more than 25 per cent fish by weight or is a raw, ready-to-eat fish product (e.g. sushi).

For more details, the proposal can be accessed at: www.ontariocanada.com/registry/view.do?postingId=21982&language=en

For any questions regarding the proposal please contact:
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For more information:
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