



Behind the Legend

Quarterly newsletter for Ontario's provincially licensed meat plant operators
Issue 26 Fall 2018

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 Policy Desk

Ontario Cutting Red Tape

The Ontario government is taking action to cut red tape and reduce regulatory burden for all businesses. As part of this effort, Ontario is targeting costly and burdensome regulations in the agri-food sector — while maintaining rules that keep Ontarians safe and healthy.

Proposed regulatory changes to the Meat Regulation will reduce paperwork and fees and also encourage additional business opportunities for provincially-licensed meat processors. For example, meat-plant licenses will no longer need to be renewed, saving operators \$300 every three years, and eliminating time consuming paperwork.

The proposed amendments are now posted on the Regulatory Registry, with comments accepted until January 10, 2019.

To read the full list of proposed changes and provide your feedback, please visit: <https://www.ontariocanada.com/registry/view.do?postingId=27767&language=en>.



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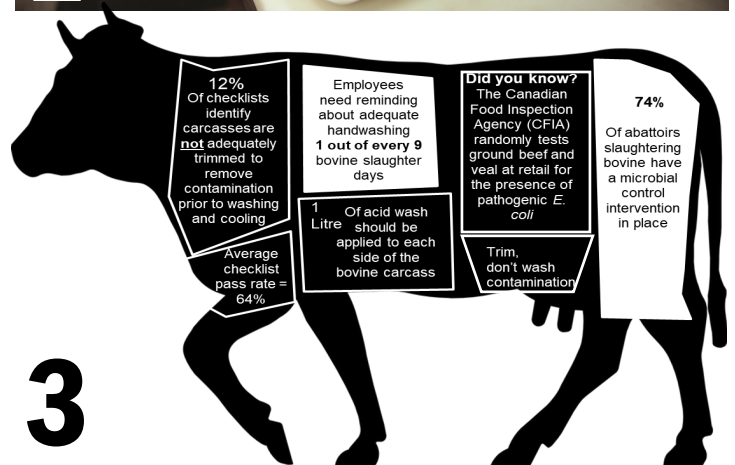
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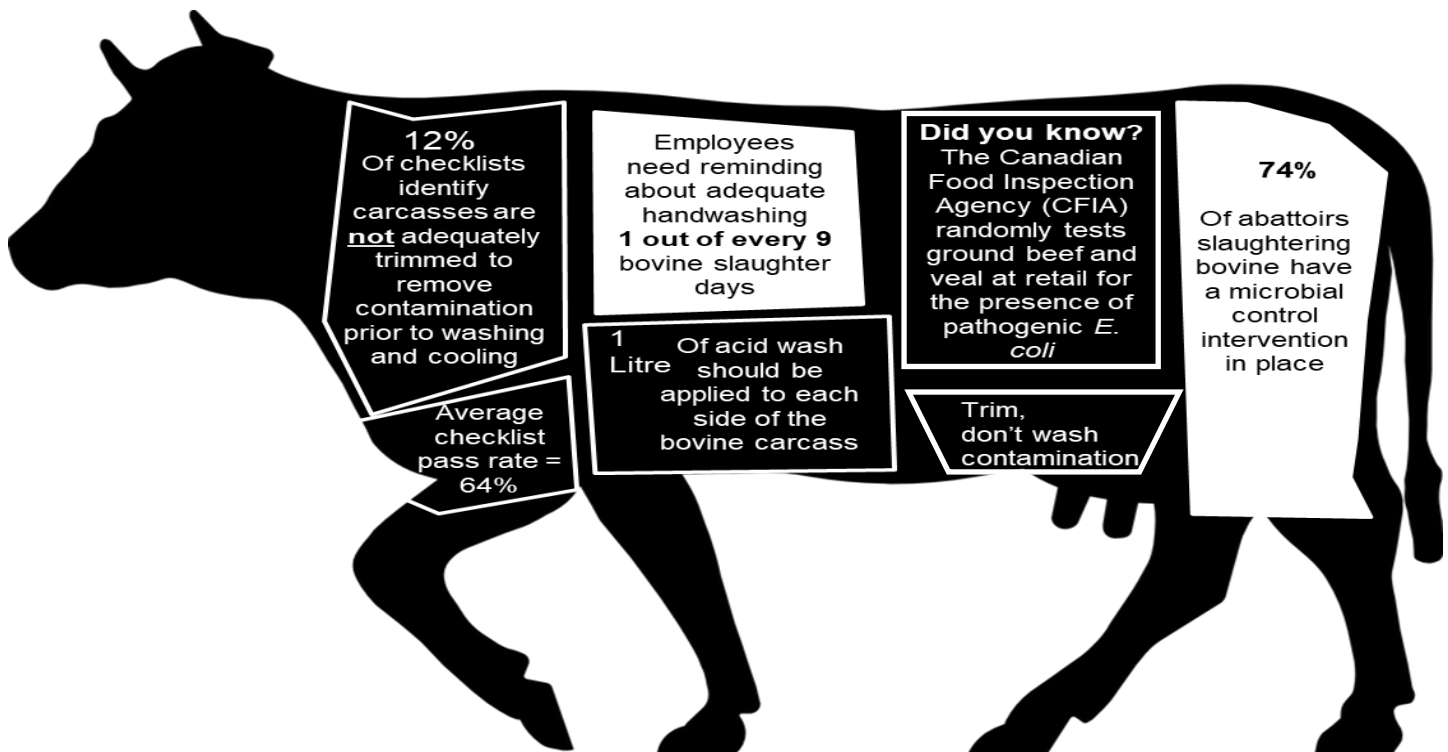
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Results of the Use of the Hygienic Slaughter Checklist and Microbial Control on Bovine Carcasses in Provincially Licensed Abattoirs



From our Program Desk

Eid al-Adha 2018 Follow-Up

At the end of August, the Muslim community celebrated another year of Eid al-Adha. The Meat Inspection Program sincerely thanks all 34 provincially licensed meat plants that provided ritual slaughter services during Eid. Between August 21 and 24, 2018 a total of 14,030 animals underwent ritual slaughter for Eid celebrations, an increase from last year's 12,216. We received very positive feedback from celebrants who said that Eid would not have been a success without your organization, preparation, and of course, continued commitment to food safety.

During early to mid-autumn, area managers distributed the Eid follow-up survey to operators who participated in providing this service — thank you for your time and effort in completing the survey. The goal of the survey was to collect information on any changes you made this year that helped with your operations during Eid. We are currently reviewing the survey results. Your feedback will remain anonymous, while statistics and common themes from the survey results will be shared with our operators in an effort to help them further prepare for the next Eid. Once again, thank you for your support in making this a successful event for the meat industry and the Muslim community.

From our Food Safety Desk

Smoked Meats and Food Safety

Smoking meat is one way to add flavour to your product; however, depending on the smoking method used, achieving this flavouring does not come without food safety hazards. Most importantly, as a plant operator, you need to be aware that smokehouses using direct heat/smoke pose a serious food safety and chemical contaminant risk to your customers.

Smoking of meat products can be achieved by the use of smoke generated from hardwood, hardwood sawdust or liquid smoke derived from condensed smoke. Some chemical contaminants are formed during the smoking process.

Direct smoking methods pose an increased risk to the consumer, especially those with high levels of consumption. However, accumulation of harmful chemicals on smoked meats can be significantly reduced by replacing direct smoking used at traditional smokehouses (i.e. smoke generated in the same chamber as the meat is processed) with indirect smoking. Indirect smoking, in modern smokehouses supplied with filtered smoke from external generators, does not lead to significant contamination of the products with harmful chemicals.

Traditional direct heat/smokehouses are not allowed at federally registered

establishments (i.e., smoke must be generated externally). Smoke is a complex mixture of more than 1000 compounds. Among these compounds are phenols, carbonyl compounds, alcohols, organic acids and others which contribute to typical flavour, colour and taste. However, during the thermal decomposition of the wood some harmful compounds such as Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAH) are also formed. PAHs are fine particulate matter which are present in smoke and many of them are known or suspected carcinogens.

During smoke generation, formation of PAH cannot be avoided if the temperature of the process exceeds 400 degrees Celsius. However, by lowering the temperature of smoke generation to between 300 and 400 degrees Celsius and using filters, the PAH content in the smoke can be reduced about tenfold. Although the use of medium to low heat can reduce PAH formation, placing the meat further from the heat source is the best way to reduce PAH accumulation in the products. In addition, increasing the distance between the smoke generator and the meat (i.e., longer pipes equipped with multiple good quality filters) will help reduce contamination with PAH further.

An alternative to traditional smoking procedures is the use of Liquid Smoke Flavouring (LSF). LSF is produced from condensed smoke, which is then

fractionated and purified to remove most PAH. The use of liquid smoke flavourings is generally considered to be less of a health concern than the traditional smoking process, as it may minimize PAH accumulation.

Results from scientific studies suggest that using indirect smoking methods for meat products minimizes PAH contamination. Meat plants that have traditional smokehouses and use direct smoking methods should strongly consider replacing them with smokehouses where smoke is generated outside the smoking chamber (i.e., indirect smoking methods).



From our Food Safety Desk

Frozen Raw Breaded Chicken Products

Do you produce raw frozen breaded chicken products that are packaged for retail sale? If you do, then this article contains some important information regarding the production of these products. New federal requirements have been developed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA); they are coming into effect on April 1, 2019 and will apply to all products of this type produced in Canada.

The CFIA has mandated that raw frozen breaded chicken products, specifically products formed from comminuted or chopped meat, must have zero detectable Salmonella in the end product.

These requirements were introduced as a method of controlling ongoing Salmonella outbreaks as the result of public undercooking and consuming raw frozen breaded chicken products. Numerous recalls have resulted from these cases; a complete list, inclusive since the summer of 2017, has been published and maintained by the CFIA (see Appendices, link 1)

The definition of raw includes uncooked and partially cooked products. Breaded products that are partially cooked or fried may have a fully cooked appearance. Consumers may not understand that these are raw and could potentially not cook them properly. Therefore it is important that the CFIA requirements are properly followed to protect vulnerable populations, such as children, who often consume chicken nuggets. *

Products in scope:

The following information is taken directly from the CFIA Manual of Procedures, Annex S: Salmonella control options in frozen raw breaded chicken products (see Appendices, link 2).

Appendix 1: List of raw breaded poultry products:

Products covered by these requirements:

Non-intact (that is, ground, chopped or formed) raw, breaded, par-fried chicken products for retail sale (only), for example chicken nuggets, pieces, strips (cutlettes), burgers, popcorn chicken, chicken patties, balls, fries, fritters, whole muscle formed products (products formed from multiple whole muscle pieces) including meat mixed with other ingredients, such as a nugget of chicken and cheese.

Products that are not part of these requirements:

Whole muscle, intact, raw breaded par-fried chicken products, such as chicken breast, chicken filets, chicken strips, chicken morsels, schnitzel, chicken sandwich, chicken tenders, chicken popcorn, chicken bits
Raw breaded chicken products, not par-fried
Raw breaded par-fried chicken products for sale to food service
Raw breaded turkey products (par fried or not par-fried)
Raw non-breaded chicken and turkey products
Raw breaded par-fried stuffed chicken products, such as cordon bleu, divan, Kiev, Swiss

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From our Food Safety Desk

Frozen Raw Breaded Chicken Products

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Control measures

The CFIA has provided options to operators who produce products within the scope of these requirements. Adding a validated cooking step that achieves a 7-log reduction of *Salmonella*, therefore resulting in a fully cooked end product, is an acceptable control measure. There are also controls that offer operators the option of using various product testing programs, as a way of proving that their products have zero detectable *Salmonella*. For a complete list, please refer to Annex S: *Salmonella* control options in frozen raw breaded chicken products (see Appendices, link 2).

Provincially licensed meat plant operators must ensure they meet both federal and provincial labelling requirements. If you produce frozen raw breaded chicken products, please reach out to your local CFIA office (see Appendices, link 3) for more information on these federal requirements.

Appendices

List of recalls of frozen raw breaded chicken products due to *Salmonella*: from July 2017 to present:
<http://inspection.gc.ca/food/information-for-consumers/food-safety-investigations/list-of-recalls-of-frozen-raw-breaded-chicken-prod/eng/1536716947924/1536717030715>

Annex S: *Salmonella* control options in frozen raw breaded chicken products:
<http://inspection.gc.ca/food/meat-and-poultry-products/manual-of-procedures/chapter-4/annex-s/eng/1531254524193/1531254524999>

CFIA Area and Regional Offices:
<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/about-the-cfia/offices/eng/1313255382836/1313256130232>

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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. Ask for your area manager by name.

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