Behind the Legend

Quarterly newsletter for Ontario's provincially licensed meat plant operators
Issue 27 Winter 2019

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.

Contacting the Meat Inspection Program

As of January 2019, the Meat Inspection Program has discontinued the use of a third-party answering/paging service and transitioned to a direct contact method. We are doing this to ensure important, time sensitive information is communicated directly between operators and inspection staff. Your Area Manager and Regional Veterinarian are available for direct contact during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.), and after hours seven days a week for urgent matters.

The Meat Inspection Program is committed to providing high-quality client services. We know that emergencies can happen outside of regular business hours. We have outlined below the approach for emergency contact outside normal business hours (from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday, unless operations have been previously arranged for Saturday services).

Emergencies requiring immediate attention or action include, but are not limited to:

- Plant cancellation for slaughter that will occur within the following 18 hours
- An incident that potentially impacts food safety or the welfare of food animals

We kindly request that non-emergency business be communicated to your Area Managers, Area Coordinators and Regional Veterinarians during regular business hours.

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Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Ontario

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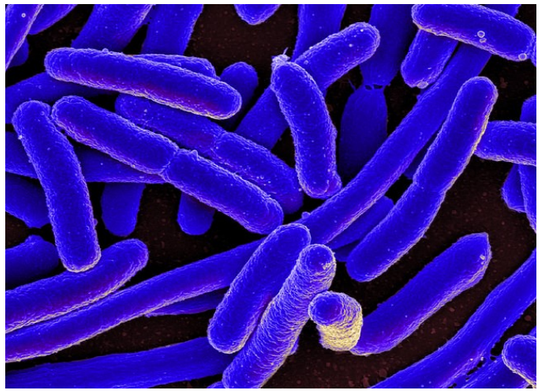

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Behind the Legend by email

Do you get too much mail?
Is your desk cluttered with paper?

Sign up to get a digital version of Behind the Legend. All you have to do is send an email to **meat.inspection.communications@ontario.ca** with "Email me Behind the Legend" in the subject line, and the newsletter will be emailed to you every quarter. No more paper! It's as simple as that.

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Meat Inspection Program Management Team

Your Area Manager can be reached by dialing their mobile device directly. We encourage initial contact by telephone as text messages and or emails are not always reliable.

General Manager
Rodger Dunlop (Acting)
519-826-4367

Operations Manager
Kristy Mitrovic (Acting)
519-820-6401

Regional Managers

East: Kim Landers
519-826-3250

West: Nick Van Lankveld
519-826-4281

Central and North: Pierre Adrien
519-826-4368

Area Managers

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613 848-1432

GTA: Ivona Jarosz
647-231-8866

Guelph: Kathryn Evans-Bitten
519 994-3244

Midhurst: Eloise Jones
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Peel: Alan Yee
905-903-5389

Kemptville: Philip Hawken
613-868-7917

Ridgetown: Jeff Richards
519-259-9080

Stratford: Zoran Sevic (Acting)
519-504-9467

Woodstock: Eric DeBoer (Acting)
519-788-6533

Vineland: Goce Manevski
905-515-5500

Verner: Vicky French
705-491-2523

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416-728-0326

For more information: **Telephone:** 1-877-424-1300 **Email:** ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca
Web: ontario.ca/meatinspection **Twitter:** @OMAFRAsafefood **Aussi disponible en français**

Contacting the Meat Inspection Program

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Items that are **not** considered an emergency include, but are not limited to:

- Routine operational issues such as requests for slaughter schedule adjustments for the following week
- Obtaining laboratory results for samples collected from your plant
- Program policy inquiries/support
- Compliance action follow-up or letters that have been brought to your attention with a reasonable time to respond

As a reminder, please ensure you include the following information when leaving a voicemail for the Meat Inspection Program (and the Veterinary Inspection Program) staff:

- Your name
- Your organization/plant name and number (if applicable)
- Your call back number
- The reason for your call including the urgency and response expectations

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Meat Plant Guidelines Changes to Take Effect April 1, 2019

The Meat Plant Guidelines (MPGs) are a clear, plain-language explanation of the regulatory requirements under the Meat Regulation (Ontario Regulation 31/05). The Meat Inspection Program recently reviewed and updated several MPGs to ensure they are provide better guidance, harmonize with current practices, and reflect the intent and authority of the regulation.

Updates to the following Meat Plant Guidelines come into effect on April 1, 2019:

New
C9.09.03.04 Specified Risk Materials (SRM) Procedures

Revised
C9.06.08.01 Chemical Usage and Storage
P9.10.01.01 Provision of Written Recipes
P9.10.01.04 Written specifications for incoming materials
P9.10.03.03 Conditions for storage of non-meat ingredients

Removed
C9.09.01.05 Removal of Specified Risk Materials
C9.09.01.06 Receiving carcasses containing Specified Risk Materials
C9.09.01.07 Separation, staining and handling of Specified Risk Materials
S9.09.03.01 Procedures for specified risk materials (SRM) prior to approval of carcasses
C9.09.03.02 Procedures for Specified Risk Material (SRM) removal in the cutting room
C9.09.03.03 Record keeping of Specified Risk Materials

In March, you will be provided with a letter outlining these changes and copies of these revised/new MPGs. The MPGs will also be available on our website at ontario.ca/meatinspection.

For questions on your responsibilities under OMAFRA's updated SRM policy, please contact your RV.

Resources :

For information on the CFIA's Specified Risk Materials (SRM) Controls in Non-Federally Registered Cattle Abattoirs:

http://www.inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/bse/srm/abattoirs-meat-processors/non-federally-registered-cattle-abattoirs/eng/1520967402782/1520967513334

Updates to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' Specified Risk Material (SRM) Policy

Starting April 1, 2019, there will be changes to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' (OMAFRA) Specified Risk Material (SRM) Policy, as a result of Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) changes to provincial requirements.

As a condition of licensing under the *Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001* (FSQA), provincial meat plants slaughtering and/or processing cattle are required to adhere to OMAFRA's Specified Risk Material (SRM) Policy.

OMAFRA's SRM policy plays an important role in a national system which protects the Canadian cattle herd from Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), and Canadian consumers from Bovine Variant Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease. As its policy, OMAFRA adopts the CFIA's document entitled "Inspection of Specified Risk Materials (SRM) Controls in Non-Federally Registered Cattle Abattoirs".

Effective **April 1, 2019**, the operating requirements of OMAFRA's SRM policy will be located in the Meat Plant Guideline (MPG) C9.09.03.04 Specified Risk Material (SRM) Procedures.

OMAFRA's SRM policy is being updated to reflect the CFIA requirements for SRM controls.

Here are the **key updates** you need to know about:

- The first two non-Over Thirty-Month (non-OTM) heads of any species stunned following an OTM head will be considered contaminated with SRM and must be disposed of as SRM. The contamination is caused by the captive bolt, so procedures to prevent this from occurring will be permitted and should be discussed with your Regional Veterinarian (RV).

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Ready-to-Eat Meat Testing Results Summary

As part of our surveillance and monitoring program, OMAFRA tests samples of ready-to-eat (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).

Year	Number of Sampled Lots Tested(1)	Number of Sampled Lots with Adverse Results(2)	Percentage of Lots with Adverse Results	Number of Adverse Results, by Type							
				Indicator Organisms			Pathogens/Toxins				
				Aerobic Colony Count (ACC) > 10,000	Coliforms > 1,000	*E. coli* > Health Canada limits(3)	*Listeria monocytogenes*	Verocyto-toxigenic *E. coli*	*Staphylococcus aureus* > Health Canada Limits(4)	*S. aureus* Toxin	*Salmonella*
2009	565	64	11.3%	52	1	0	11	0	0	0	1
2010	686	47	6.9%	36	8	0	6	0	0	0	0
2011	820	57	7.0%	48	2	0	9	0	0	0	1
2012	782	50	6.4%	36	1	0	11	2	2	1	2
2013	728	50	6.9%	39	4	0	13	0	2	0	0
2014	786	49	6.2%	32	1	0	17	0	0	0	1
2015	702	42	6.0%	34	0	0	8	0	0	0	0
2016	714	45	6.3%	37	1	0	7	0	1	0	0
2017	638	27	4.2%	26	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
2018	709	34	4.8%	26	3	0	4	0	0	0	2
2019(5)	88	1	1.1%	1	0	0	0	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, 2019 to January 31, 2019

BN9

Many OMAFRA programs will begin collecting the Business Number soon. The Business Number (also referred to as BN9) is a unique nine-digit business identification number assigned and managed by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). It's not just a tax number. The Business Number provides a consistent, standardized way of identifying businesses to ultimately make it easier to interact with government.

The majority of businesses will have a BN9. OMAFRA will be asking you to provide your BN9 when you renew a licence, registration or other agreement with us, including transfer payment agreements and grants.

Application forms are being updated to include space for you to give your BN9. Keep an eye out for this change and have your BN9 ready.

Thank you for your Feedback on Proposed Meat Regulation Changes

Local abattoirs and meat processors are very important for local economies. That's why our government proposed changes to the Meat Regulation to help reduce regulatory burden and make it easier to do business in Ontario.

The consultation on proposed changes to the Meat Regulation closed in January. Thank you to everyone who provided feedback. Your comments are appreciated and will be considered as we develop recommendations for regulatory changes. The goal of the changes is to reduce administrative burden, clarify requirements to provide more business opportunities and move to more outcome-based requirements.

Stay tuned for more information on this, in our next edition.

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twitter.com/OMAFRAsafefood

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- The two heads that are being disposed of as SRM following OTM heads do not require the captive bolt stun hole to be plugged (even if the cheek meat and tongue are being salvaged).
- Hides must not be contaminated with SRM (e.g., if dragged across the floor when the floor is contaminated with SRM).
- When splitting OTM carcasses, water must be controlled and diverted away from the carcass being split, other carcasses, edible offal, and clean inedible material (alternatively, water could be turned off).
- All bovine deadstock must be marked with blue ink on the forehead (unless all inedible material is buried/composted on the plant premises).
- Bovitrace documents may be used as reliable documents to indicate the birth date of an animal.
- Under Thirty-Month (UTM) spinal cords do not need to be removed unless the backbone will be used in the production of mechanically separated meat.

In addition, the updated SRM policy also clarifies the following:

- UTM tonsils and spinal cords do not need to be disposed of as SRM..
- All SRM records must be available **on the plant premises** for 10 years, except age verification documents which must be kept for 2 years.
- Daily SRM weights and tracking SRM weights to specific carcasses is not required; however, operators must be able to reconcile the amount of SRM produced with the date of SRM removal.
- Plants are not required to post a dentition poster; however, posters are available from OMAFRA.

Why Implement Microbial Control Interventions in Your Abattoir

Some types of *E. coli* bacteria can cause disease in humans that can lead to severe infections, and even death. They are found in the feces, fur, hair and skin of cattle most commonly, as well as other species such as sheep, goat and pig, and can cause contamination of carcasses during the slaughter and dressing procedures.

OMAFRA conducted carcass swabbing studies in 2016 and 2018 to demonstrate the prevalence of *E. coli* O157 and Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) on beef and veal carcasses slaughtered in Ontario's provincially licensed plants. Results indicate that there is a need to focus attention on hygienic slaughter and dressing practices, and on the application of microbial control interventions to mitigate food safety risks on carcasses.

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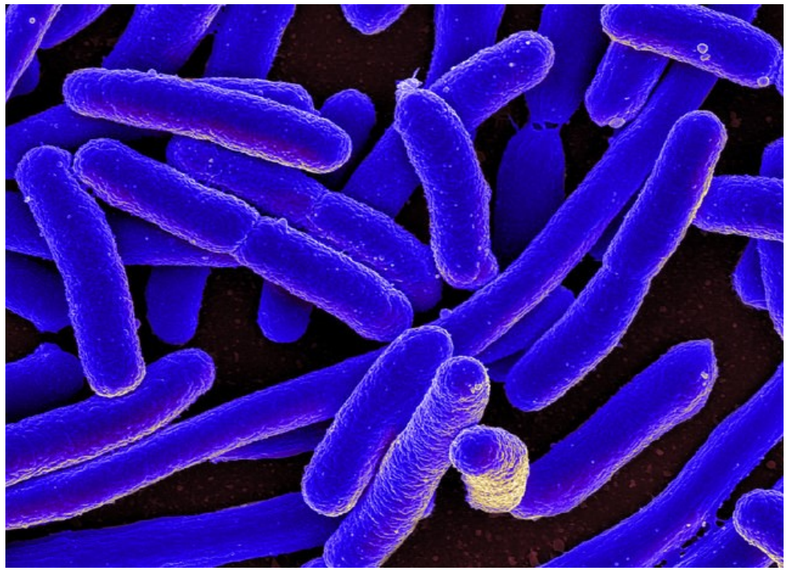
Microbial control interventions are applied to beef and veal carcasses during and/or after the dressing procedure to remove or reduce bacterial contamination. These interventions have been mandatory in federal slaughter facilities for some time. Using hygienic slaughter and dressing procedures are essential to reducing bacterial contamination on beef and veal carcasses. These, combined with the use of microbial control interventions, can provide a significant reduction in bacterial numbers, lowering risk of contamination being present on carcasses post-dressing, and thus, foodborne illness. In addition, the Meat Regulation (O. Reg. 31/05, section 68(3)) states that if the condition of a food animal would likely cause contamination during the dressing of its carcass, the operator of a slaughter plant shall ensure that the animal is not presented for slaughter.

Not only must microbial control interventions be approved safe for use on meat and its parts by Health Canada, but the intervention must also be effective at reducing pathogenic bacteria on the carcass surface. There are many options available for microbial control interventions that suit the needs of all operations. The type of microbial control intervention you choose will depend on the effectiveness of the intervention, the ease of use, and the cost.



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Microbial Control Interventions	Implementation Guidance	Suggested Record Keeping
Peroxyacetic acid/ peracetic acid, PAA	Not greater than 2000ppm	(1) Documenting proper concentration of solution at make-up, and (2) documentation of application to carcass
Lactic acid	Up to 5% applied with warm water (up to 54.5° C / 130°F)	(1) Documenting proper concentration of solution at make-up, and (2) documentation of application to carcass
Hot water	Minimum 74°C (165°F) for 5 seconds	(1) Periodic check of water temperature, and (2) documentation of application to carcass
Hot water wash cabinet	As per manufacturer's instructions, water temperature minimum 74°C (165°F) for 5 seconds	(1) Periodic check of water temperature, and (2) documentation of application to carcass
Citric acid	2.5% applied with warm water (up to 54.5°C / 130°F)	(1) Documenting proper concentration of solution at make-up, and (2) documentation of application to carcass
Acetic acid	2.5% applied with warm water (up to 54.5°C / 130°F)	(1) Documenting proper concentration of solution at make-up, and (2) documentation of application to carcass
Dry aging	No more than 90% relative humidity, temperature of 4°C or less for at least 6 days	(1) Cooler temperature less than 4°C, (2) relative humidity is continuously maintained at less than 90% and (3) documentation that carcasses are chilled/aged for at least 6 days
Steam pasteurization	As per manufacturer's instructions	(1) Periodic check of water temperature, and (2) documentation of application to carcass
Steam vacuuming	As per manufacturer's instructions; Steam is delivered by a continuous stream of 7-10 psi water at 82-94°C while simultaneously vacuuming the area around the stream of hot water	(1) Periodic check of water temperature, and (2) documentation of application to carcass
Sodium hypochlorite	Not greater than 20ppm, followed by a potable water rinse	(1) documenting proper concentration of solution at make-up, and (2)documentation of application to carcass
** Any other microbial control intervention that is effective in reducing carcass microbial loads.	Scientifically validated by the operator and submitted for review and approval by the Food Inspection Branch	

Operators are required to prevent contamination of carcasses and meat products. Already 87 per cent of provincially licensed meat plant operators have implemented microbial control interventions and are focused on hygienic slaughter and dressing procedures for every animal they slaughter.

Using good manufacturing practices means safe meat for your customers. When combined with hygienic slaughter and dressing practices, microbial control interventions will provide added assurance that you are producing safe food for consumers and will protect your investment.