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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES**NO. 1238****15 DECEMBER 2015****MEAT SAFETY ACT, 2000 (Act No. 40 of 2000)****MEAT INSPECTION SCHEME****INVITATION FOR PUBLIC TO COMMENT ON THE MEAT INSPECTION SCHEME**

I, Senzeni Zokwana, MP, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in terms of section 12 of the Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act No. 40 of 2000), hereby publish the Draft Meat Inspection Scheme for broader public comment.

interested parties are invited to submit written comments within 30 days from the date of publication of this Public Consultation Notice to the following address:

The Director General
Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
Private Bag X138
PRETORIA
0001

Or hand deliver to

Office G21 Delpen Building
Cnr Union and Annie Botha Avenue
Riviera
PRETORIA
0184
Tel: +2712 319 7572
Fax: +2712 329 7699

Or email to

VPH@daff.gov.za


(MR) S ZOKWANA, MP**Minister: Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries**Date: 11 / 12 / 2015

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1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1. **Abattoir** means a slaughter facility in respect of which a registration certificate has been issued in terms of section 8(1) and in respect of which a grading has been determined in terms of section 8(2) of the Act.
- 1.2. **Act** means the Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act No. 40 of 2000).
- 1.3. **Assignee** means any person/undertaking/body/institution/association that has been designated under Section 4 of the Act to provide a specific service.
- 1.4. **Authorized person** means a person contemplated in section 3(1)(a)(ii) of the Act.
- 1.5. **Client** means anyone who:
- a. Purchases meat and meat products from an abattoir for further processing or trade.
 - b. Supplies animals to an abattoir for slaughter either for trade or own consumption.
- 1.6. **Department** means the National Department of Agriculture.
- 1.7. **Game Meat Examiner** means a person with a game meat examination or equivalent qualification accredited by the relevant accreditation body and endorsed by the NEO.
- 1.8. **Independence** means that the meat inspection assignee has no business, financial, personal or any other interest in the abattoir other than the rendering of a meat inspection service, or where the PEO permits, meat classification, for which he/she may receive fair remuneration for work performed; and that there are no circumstances that may compromise the objectivity of the assignee in performing such services.
- 1.9. **Meat Examiner** means a person with a meat examination or equivalent qualification accredited by the relevant accreditation body and endorsed by the NEO.
- 1.10. **Meat Inspector** means a person with a minimum 3 year relevant bio-scientific qualification accredited by the relevant accreditation body.
- 1.11. **Meat Inspection Forum** means an advisory forum consisting of members of National and Provincial Departments of Agriculture and interest groups which advises the NEO/PEOs on meat inspection service in the country.

- 1.12. **Meat Inspection Service** means the performance of ante-mortem, primary and secondary meat inspections, regulatory control and reporting to the PEO.
- 1.13. **Meat inspection assignee** means a person/institution/business entity assigned by the Minister in terms of section 4(1) of the Act to provide a meat inspection service at an abattoir or processing plant
- 1.14. **Monitoring**, in relation to meat inspection service, means the oversight function which is played by a supervisory registered inspector who may be a meat inspector or veterinarian, or a Veterinary Public Health Official over the performance of an assignee or registered inspector. This may include regular visitations to audit and check the performance of the assignee/registered inspector and also to audit the feedback systems by the assignee/registered inspector to the Department
- 1.15. **National Executive Officer (NEO)** means an officer of the Department of Agriculture who is a veterinarian and has been designated by the Minister of Agriculture in terms of section 2(1) of the Act.
- 1.16. **Organoleptic Inspection techniques** means the physical inspection of meat and meat products through observation, palpation, smell and where necessary incision.
- 1.17. **Poultry Meat Examiner Level 1** means a person with a poultry meat examination qualification accredited by the relevant accreditation body and endorsed by the NEO.
- 1.18. **Poultry Meat Examiner Level 2** means a person with a poultry meat inspection/Quality assurance qualification accredited by the relevant accreditation body and endorsed by the NEO.
- 1.19. **Provincial Executive Officer (PEO)** means an officer of a Provincial Department of Agriculture who has been delegated by the NEO with the consent of the MEC of that Province to enforce the Act in the Province.
- 1.20. **Registered Inspector** means a person appointed, authorised or assigned in terms of the Act to perform the scope of meat inspection service as defined in this document.
- 1.21. **Supervision** means direct observation of the performance of meat inspection personnel by a suitably qualified person.
- 1.22. **Supplier** means anyone who supplies any commercial commodity and/or service to an abattoir for usage in the abattoir operations. These includes the supply of animals, equipment, chemicals, cleaning material, etc., Suppliers include all animal farmers,

feedlots, animal traders and animal commodity associations whose members may be potential suppliers.

- 1.23. **trained person (game)** means a person registered by the PEO who is or accompanies a harvester(s) to verify proper shooting, bleeding times, hygienic harvesting and transport procedures during game slaughter, as well as identifying abnormal behaviour in the live animal and deviations from procedures and in such cases alerting the registered inspector at the harvesting depot or game meat abattoir.
- 1.24. **Veterinarian** means a person as defined in section 1 of the Veterinary and Para-Veterinary Professions Act, No 19 of 1982.
- 1.25. **Veterinary Public Health (VPH)** means a component of Veterinary Services in the national and provincial Departments of Agriculture responsible for the administration of the Act.
- 1.26. **Veterinary Public Health Officer (VPHO)** means a person employed by the national or provincial Department of Agriculture and delegated under Section 5(3)(a) of the Act to enforce meat and food safety.

2. NAME OF THE SCHEME

2.1. The scheme is known as the meat inspection scheme

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME

- 3.1. To define the scope of meat inspection in abattoirs
- 3.2. To ensure that there is provision of a meat inspection service that is independent at all abattoirs
- 3.3. To make provision for a meat inspection service that is independent at export approved cutting plants, processing plants and cold stores, and import approved cold stores where deemed necessary by the NEO
- 3.4. To set the procedure for the assignment and/or authorization of meat inspection personnel and service providers
- 3.5. To set standards for the operations of meat inspection assignees at abattoirs and export approved cutting plants

4. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

- 4.1. The scheme is compulsory and applies to all abattoirs in the Republic of South Africa. The Minister may exempt specific abattoirs from the applications of this scheme.
- 4.2. The scheme applies to all animals under Schedule 1 of the Act.
- 4.3. The NEO/PEO may use the services of a meat inspection service provider at export approved cutting plants, processing plants and cold stores, and import approved cold stores to assist with the monitoring or the establishments and recommendation for certification and approval of products

5. DURATION OF THE SCHEME

The scheme is intended to serve as a tool for the assignment and/or authorization of meat inspection service providers for the provision of a meat inspection service in the country. In the proposal for a meat inspection service, it has been proposed that a dual system in which meat inspection assignees will provide meat inspection service at all high throughput and busy low

throughput abattoirs, whereas a government meat inspection service will provide such services at rural and infrequently slaughtering low throughput abattoirs.

The scheme will be in force in perpetuity until the Minister decides otherwise. In accordance to the intention of the scheme as described above, the scheme is necessary for the assignment and functioning of service providers in abattoirs, which will be an ongoing process as according to the proposed model for a meat inspection service in South Africa.

6. LEGISLATIVE MANDATE

According to section 12(1) of the Meat Safety Act, 2000, the Minister may by notice in the Gazette establish a scheme for the improvement of meat safety and safety of animal products. Meat inspection is a critical component of ensuring meat safety and safety of animal products.

Section 11(1)(b) of the Meat Safety Act, 2000 indicates that the owner of an abattoir must procure a meat inspection service for that abattoir. Section 11(1)(c) further indicates that meat inspection services may only be performed by the national executive officer, a provincial executive officer, an authorised person or an assignee, who must perform that function independently from the abattoir. A person performing a meat inspection service must be a veterinarian, meat inspector, meat examiner, animal health technician or such other duly qualified person as may be prescribed (section 11(1)(d)).

In order to allow meat inspection personnel to conduct a service legally, the Minister may assign the application of the Act or certain provisions thereof throughout the Republic or in a particular area, to any person with an interest in or particular knowledge of meat and meat safety (Section 4(1)).

The NEO may, with the approval of the Minister, delegate any power conferred on him or her or assign any duty imposed on him or her under the Act, to a person who is not an officer (section 3(1)(a)(ii)). An assignment as contemplated must set out the powers and duties of the assignee who must exercise the powers and perform the duties subject to the directives of the national executive officer.

Unless the Minister in a particular case directs otherwise, an assignee has no recourse against the State in respect of any expenses incurred in connection with the exercise of the powers or the performance of the duties in question (Section 4(3) of the Act).

Regulation 111 of the red meat regulations No. 1072 of 2004 and regulation 84 of the poultry meat regulations No. 153 of 2006 state that the person contemplated in section 11(1)(c) of the Act must register with the PEO to perform meat inspection at a specific abattoir.

Regulation 84 of the red meat regulations and regulation 76(1) of the poultry meat regulations further state that the Provincial Executive Officer may determine the number of meat inspectors and meat examiners required at an abattoir after having considered the abattoir design, number of inspection stations, line speed, different species, structural and managerial aspects.

7. ASSIGNMENT OF MEAT INSPECTION SERVICE PROVIDERS

7.1. Criteria for assignment as a meat inspection service provider

- a. The Minister may assign any competent and resourced meat inspection service provider to deliver a meat inspection service at an abattoir in South Africa. There is no limit to the number of service providers that may be assigned.
- b. The Minister will determine the scope of activity for a particular assignee and this will be indicated in the letter of assignment.
- c. An assigned meat inspection service provider is not limited to the Province in which the assignment process was initiated, but may offer their service at any abattoir in the country, but within the limits of the scope of activity indicated in the letter of assignment
- d. A meat inspection assignee may subcontract the services of competent meat inspection personnel who will report to the assignee.
- e. Assignment of a service provider will not lapse, unless the Minister determines otherwise or the service provider has not complied as indicated in section 8 of this document.

7.2. Attributes of an assignee

- a. General

Essential National Standards as contained in the Meat Safety Act require that meat inspection services be performed independently from the abattoir. In light of the view that no definition for independence is offered within the relevant legislation, the following criteria is therefore to be used for the purpose of meat inspection service.

b. Integrity

Meat inspection assignees, its personnel or any person deemed to be employed within its structures may not:

- i. be in the direct employment of an abattoir in any capacity other than for meat inspection services;
- ii. in relation to an abattoir, be a supplier, client or have any contractual relationship other than a contract for rendering of meat inspection services, and where the NEO and/or PEO deems practicable, may perform meat classification and/or, be a professional advisor but only in a capacity as a Registered Inspector;
- iii. have in its shareholding, board of directors, management, administration, technical operations, anyone who is an abattoir owner, is representing an abattoir or is a client or supplier to an abattoir;
- iv. receive direct remuneration or any incentive from an abattoir and/or its representatives in terms of services rendered, unless written permission has been granted by the NEO.

In terms of the above, assignees may be required to submit declarations in this regard and may also be required to have similar declarations signed by its employees, irrespective of their position or work within the organization, on or prior to them being employed.

c. Independence

Assignees must give clear guidelines on how they will ensure that they or their employees will not be subjected to any situation that may negatively affect meat safety or compromise the objectivity of their employees in the performance of meat inspection services at facilities. These guidelines must include but are not limited to the following:

- i. steps to be taken to mitigate the potential risk where employees may be subjected to any form of influence or bribes to alter decision making;
- ii. steps to be taken to support employees in exercising the authority accorded to them in terms of the Act and the regulations;
- iii. methods for reporting, investigating and addressing complaints of untoward actions received from or about its employees;
- iv. methods of reporting the above cases to the relevant Provincial Authorities;

d. Confidentiality

Assignees, in accordance with section 17 of the Act, must ensure confidentiality of information acquired in the course of the inspection service. They must undertake not to divulge any information without written consent of the owner except where such information is required by the NEO or PEO in the administration of the Act.

Assignees must refer all requests for information that they may hold as a result of the performance of an inspection service in terms of the Act and the Regulations, to the NEO or the PEO to be dealt with in accordance with the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No. 2 of 2000).

7.3. Organisation and Management

- a. The assignee must have an organisational structure that enables it to maintain the capability to perform its functions.
- b. The assignee must define and document the responsibilities and reporting structure of the organisation.
- c. The assignee must provide effective supervision by a registered Veterinarian familiar with the inspection methods and procedures, the objectives of the inspection and the assessment of the examination results as required by the NEO and/or PEO.
- d. Each operation within the service must be described. These job descriptions must include the requirements for education, training, technical knowledge and experience.

- e. The assignee must maintain a system for control of all documentation relating to its activities. It must ensure that:
 - i. the current issues of the appropriate documentation are available at all relevant locations and to all relevant staff;
 - ii. all changes of documents or amendments to documents are covered by the correct authorization and processed in a manner which will ensure timely availability at the appropriate location;
 - iii. records are maintained for a period of 5 years;
 - iv. any authorized parties, as necessary, are notified of changes and provided with the necessary documents as may be determined.

- f. The assignee must have documented procedures for dealing with feedback and corrective action whenever discrepancies are detected in the performance of services.

- g. The management of the assignee must review the service at appropriate intervals to ensure its continuing suitability and effectiveness. The results of such reviews must be recorded.

7.4. **Personnel**

- a. The assignee must have a sufficient number of personnel with the range of expertise to carry out its normal functions – this includes the services of veterinarians, meat inspectors/examiners and relief personnel.

- b. The staff responsible for the service must have appropriate qualifications and experience. They must also undergo continuous professional development in meat inspection and/or food safety hygiene management to keep pace with developments in the meat industry.

- c. The staff must have satisfactory knowledge of the requirements of the service to be carried out. They must have the ability to make professional judgments as to conformity with regulatory requirements and to report thereon. They must also have relevant

knowledge of the technology used in the slaughter process, and of the defects which may occur during these processes.

- d. The assignee must establish a document management system to ensure that the training of its personnel, in the technical and administrative aspects of the work in which they will be involved, is kept up-to-date in accordance with its quality management system.
- e. The assignee must ensure that all meat inspection personnel undergo an induction period of at least 1 day under qualified and experienced personnel to prepare them for their duties and familiarize them with the particular abattoir operations.
- f. All newly qualified or inexperienced meat inspection personnel must work under direct supervision of an experienced meat inspector for at least 1 month, however, the NEO or PEO may extend this period if deemed necessary.
- g. The assignee must provide guidance for the conduct of its staff, and a written code of conduct must be available.
- h. The assignee must ensure that persons engaged in inspection do not receive any compensation and/or gifts for their meat inspection service from sources other than the assignee.
- i. All personnel must be clearly identifiable as being a veterinarian, meat inspector or meat examiner in service of the assignee and must have proof of authorization/registration available at all times.

7.5. Facilities and equipment

- a. The assignee must have access to adequate suitable facilities and equipment required for rendering the service.
- b. The assignee must have the following equipment to provide a meat inspection service:

- i. Protective clothing for each meat inspection personnel which is compliant to the Meat Safety Act, 2000.
 - ii. Calibrated thermometers for every abattoir serviced.
 - iii. Calibrated light meter for every abattoir serviced.
- c. The assignee must ensure that all such equipment is properly maintained, in accordance with documented procedures and instructions. Defective equipment must be removed from service
- d. The assignee must ensure that, where appropriate, abattoir supplied equipment is calibrated before being put into service and thereafter according to an established programme.

7.6. Inspection methods and procedures

- a. The assignee must use the methods and procedures which are defined in the regulatory requirements for inspection.
- b. The assignee must have and use adequate documented instructions on inspection planning and on standard sampling and inspection techniques. Where applicable, this requires sufficient knowledge of statistical techniques to ensure statistically sound sampling procedures and the correct processing and interpretation of results.
- c. When the assignee has to use inspection methods or procedures which are non-standard, such methods and procedures must be appropriate and fully documented in a protocol, and approved by the NEO or PEO.
- d. All instructions, standards or written procedures, worksheets, checklist and reference data relevant to the work of the assignee must be maintained up-to-date and be readily available to the relevant authority.
- e. Observations and/or data obtained in the course of inspections must be recorded in a timely manner to prevent loss of relevant information.

- f. All calculations and data transfers must be subject to appropriate checks.

7.7. Handling inspection samples and items

- a. The assignee must ensure that carcasses and parts thereof are inspected, identifiable and correlated to avoid confusion regarding the identity of such items at any time.
- b. Any carcass or part thereof with apparent abnormalities notified to or noticed by the inspector must be dealt with in accordance with regulatory requirements.
- c. The assignee must have documented procedures and appropriate facilities to avoid deterioration or damage to inspection items which are under its responsibility.

7.8. Records

- a. The assignee must maintain a record system to suit its particular circumstances and to comply with applicable regulations.
- b. The records must include sufficient information to permit satisfactory evaluation of the service.
- c. All records must be safely stored for a specified period, held secure and in confidence to the client, unless otherwise required by law.

7.9. Complaints and appeals

- a. The assignee must have documented procedures for dealing with complaints received from clients or other parties about the assignee's activities.
- b. The assignee must have documented procedures for the consideration and resolution of appeals against the results of its inspections, as these are carried out under legally delegated authority.

- c. A record must be maintained of all complaints and appeals and of the actions taken by the assignee.

7.10. **Lines of communication**

- a. All official communication between the assignee, the NEO and the PEO must be in writing.
- b. Amendments to particulars of the assignee to this document must be in writing and be forwarded to the NEO and PEO at least 14 days prior to effect.

7.11. **Reporting**

An annual report (or more often if required) must be submitted to the PEO. The format of such a report must be negotiated with individual PEOs and should form the basis of discussion pertaining to the performance criteria of the inspection service provided by the assignee in the province.

7.12. **Assignment process**

- a. An assignee intending to provide a meat inspection service at an abattoir must apply to the PEO in a Province in which they wish to operate.
- b. The PEO will assess the application and if found to be compliant, will recommend the application to the NEO for further processing.
- c. The NEO will assess the documents submitted by the PEO and make a recommendation to the Minister for approval.
- d. If the Minister is satisfied that the application meets the requirements set for assigneeship for meat inspection service, she/he will approve the application.
- e. Feedback on the approval/disapproval of the application will be sent to the assignee via the PEO.
- f. The assignee will be listed in the list of approved assignees

All meat inspection personnel must register with the PEOs in which they operate. Meat inspection personnel are to be procured by abattoirs from assigned meat inspection service providers only.

The PEO may allow an owner of a rural or infrequently slaughtering low throughput abattoir to procure a meat inspection service from a competent meat inspection person who has not been assigned by the Minister.

8. TERMINATION AND SUSPENSION OF THE ASSIGNMENT BY THE MINISTER

The Minister may terminate or suspend an assignment of a service provider to conduct meat inspection service at abattoirs in South Africa if the service provider in question:

- a. does not comply with a provision of the Meat Safety Act, 2000 or with a directive by the national executive officer;
- b. no longer complies with any condition subject to which the assignment was issued;
- c. is found incompetent by a court of law to operate a similar business;
- d. has at any time by reason of improper conduct been disqualified or dismissed from a position of trust;
- e. has at any time been found guilty of an offence involving an element of dishonesty; or
- f. does not have the necessary capacity and resources to conduct a meat inspection service;

The Minister may not withdraw an assignment unless he or she has:

- a. informed the service provider in question of the intended withdrawal and of the grounds upon which it is based; and
- b. afforded the owner a reasonable opportunity to state his or her case or to rectify any shortcoming with regard to such abattoir within the period specified by the national executive officer.

9. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEAT INSPECTION ASSIGNEES

Meat inspection assignees' roles in the meat inspection service include:

a. Provision of meat inspection personnel

An owner of an abattoir must procure a meat inspection service through a registered meat inspection assignee. Inspection capacities must be maintained at all times during and for the full duration of production cycles at abattoirs. These include extended working hours, overtime, night, weekend and holiday shifts, multiple shifts, and emergencies. Provision must be made for relief personnel and to service peak production periods.

b. Provision of secondary meat inspection service by veterinarians

All abattoirs must have a registered inspector who is a veterinarian to conduct the duties as listed elsewhere in this document. All veterinarians servicing abattoirs as registered inspectors, with the exception of state veterinarians, must be procured through meat inspection assignees. This means that meat inspection assignees must therefore be able to provide veterinarians to abattoirs as required. A veterinarian must visit an abattoir for a pre-determined period of time on slaughter days as determined by the PEO.

c. Registration of meat inspection personnel

The meat inspection assignee must ensure that all meat inspection personnel under their employment are registered with the PEO to provide meat inspection at abattoirs.

d. Monitoring of meat inspection personnel by the supervisory registered inspector

The meat inspection assignee must provide supervisory meat inspection personnel to monitor the performance of meat inspection personnel in all abattoirs they are servicing. The supervisor is also responsible for the assessment of meat inspection personnel in accordance with regulations 55(c)(ii) and 53(c)(ii) of the red meat and poultry meat regulations respectively.

e. Induction and continuous training of meat inspection personnel

New or inexperienced meat inspection personnel must receive direct supervision by a senior and more experienced official for a period of at least 1 month. The meat inspection assignee must ensure that the meat inspection personnel receive continuous professional development related to their duties in abattoirs.

f. Liaison with the PEO in relation to meat inspection

The meat inspection assignee must provide regular reports on meat inspection service at abattoirs they are servicing to the PEO at a frequency to be determined by the PEO. The reports must include slaughter statistics. The PEO may require an assignee to report to him/her on any activity under their scope of activity.

10. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OWNER OF AN ABATTOIR

The abattoir owner has a responsibility to supply meat that is safe for human and animal consumption. The owner must:

- a. Procure meat inspection service for the abattoir
- b. Ensure that all meat inspection personnel are registered by the PEO
- c. Comply with all provisions of the Act and its regulations
- d. Provide and implement a hygiene management system
- e. Avail the necessary resources for the production of safe meat and meat products, including meat inspection facilities.
- f. Allow the meat inspection personnel to exercise their duties within the abattoir without undue pressure and influence.
- g. Respect the decisions of meat inspection personnel.

Any change of meat inspection assignees and/or meat inspection personnel must be approved by the PEO in advance. The owner of an abattoir must provide reasons to the PEO for the need for change. The PEO must consider the reasons provided by the owner to ensure that no reasons that are in contravention of meat safety are used to change meat inspection personnel. If an owner is unhappy with the performance of a registered inspector or assignee servicing their abattoir, they should approach the PEO for a resolution.

11. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER

- a. Enforcement of the Meat Safety Act in accordance with section 5(1) of the Act.

- b. Monitoring of the performance of meat inspection personnel, including the supervisory meat inspection personnel and registered veterinarian.
- c. Registration of meat inspection personnel.
- d. The PEO may overrule a registered inspector at an abattoir after considering all factors at hand.

12. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER

- a. Oversight and monitoring of the meat inspection service in South Africa
- b. Recommendation to the Minister for assignment of meat inspection service providers
- c. Maintenance of the national register of assigned meat inspection service providers
- d. Maintenance of essential national standards

13. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MEAT INSPECTION ASSIGNEE AND THE PEO

A meat inspection assignee registered to perform meat inspection service at an abattoir acts on behalf of government in the performance of their responsibilities as defined elsewhere. The relationship between government and the meat inspection assignee is therefore regulated as follows:

- a. The NEO/PEO is responsible for the regulatory control of abattoirs and meat inspection service in the country.
- b. The meat inspection assignee will report to the PEO on matters related to the performance of their duties as defined in the scope of meat inspection service.
- c. A registered inspector may issue an order to suspend or not to start slaughter at an abattoir if he/she deems the non-compliances at the abattoir are critical and will have a direct impact on the hygiene of the products. It is important to note that a decision to be made by a registered inspector on the fate of the products inspected should be based on the inspection results and considerations of the abattoir and harvesting depot (in case of game) hygiene.
- d. An order issued by a registered inspector must be communicated to the PEO at the earliest convenience.

- e. Orders issued to an abattoir by a registered inspector must be put in writing at the earliest convenience.
- f. An abattoir owner may refer a decision made by a registered inspector to the PEO for resolution.
- g. The PEO may overrule a decision made by meat inspection personnel.

14. SCOPE OF MEAT INSPECTION

A meat inspection service at an abattoir must comply with and include the following:

- a) Ante-mortem inspections of all animals presented for slaughter.
- b) The inspection or examination of carcasses, parts thereof, including cut or deboned meat or processed meat products.
- c) The inspection or examination of all incoming and outgoing carcasses, meat or meat products, including product that have been returned to an abattoir.
- d) Provision of secondary meat inspection by a veterinarian.
- e) The approval of fitness for human consumption of the final products to be dispatched. i.e., the approval of the products must extend beyond the meat inspection points and must include the approval at the point of dispatch.
- f) Registered inspectors who may not necessarily be involved in the “on line” meat inspection function, must mainly focus on the verification of compliance to a ‘Farm to Fork’ and in-house Food Safety Management Systems and must also be involved in exercising control over the inspection or release of products or consignments from such facilities.
- g) In poultry abattoirs, the above mentioned Registered Inspectors will also be responsible for monitoring and assessing the meat inspection efficiencies of designated and/or authorized inspectors/examiners.
- h) Verification of hygiene management systems (including residue, chemical and microbiological sampling)
- i) Subject to the approval of the PEO, the implementation of a hygiene management system at an abattoir may be included under activities to be performed by a meat inspection assignee separate from the meat inspection service only under exceptional circumstances and where alternatives are not available, as may be the case in some low

throughput and rural abattoirs. If such approval has been granted, the PEO must continuously monitor the performance of these separate roles by the assignee to ensure that there is no negative impact to the independence and integrity of the meat inspection service;

- j) Monitoring the handling and disposal of condemned material and abattoir waste;
- k) Providing written authorization, in consultation with the NEO/PEO, for the taking and removal of samples for research or training purposes in line with the requirements of the relevant regulations;
- l) Reporting to the PEO/NEO on matters relating to regulatory compliance. This includes, inter alia, reports on meat inspection, abattoir hygiene management, animal health, animal welfare and disease control. The enforcement of the Act and regulations remain the responsibility of the PEO. Frequency of reporting may increase on the basis of the impact of transgression on food safety;
- m) Meat inspection service must be provided under the supervision of a veterinarian registered by the PEO as a registered inspector.

A registered inspector must take into consideration the welfare of the animals waiting to be slaughtered, the practical and logistical implications.

The powers of meat inspection personnel at an abattoir include:

- i. Decision making on fitness of animals for slaughter during ante-mortem inspections
- ii. Decision making on carcasses and offal – Pass, condemn
- iii. Decision making on commencement of slaughtering. Slaughter may only start with the consent of the meat inspection personnel in charge
- iv. Suspending the slaughter operation if non compliances warrant such
- v. Control slaughter line speed

The services of meat inspection assignees at export approved cutting plants, processing plants and cold stores, and import approved cold stores will be determined by the NEO/PEO as and when necessary

15. ROLES OF DIFFERENT MEAT INSPECTION PERSONNEL AT ABATTOIRS

15.1. Red Meat and Farmed Ostriches Abattoirs

a. Meat Examiner

- i. Conduct primary meat inspection of carcasses and offal.

In addition to the core duties of a meat examiner as described above, additional duties for a meat examiner may extend to the following in agreement with the PEO:

- i. Monitoring of the dispatch processes.
- ii. Monitoring of the handling of condemned material until safe disposal.
- iii. The NEO/PEO may authorize a meat examiner to perform meat examination (ante-mortem and primary meat inspection) in the absence of a Meat Inspector/VPHO at a rural abattoir. In this case the PEO must set up the necessary monitoring and reporting systems to ensure that meat safety and abattoir hygiene are maintained. A meat examiner such authorized must receive additional training and continuous professional development to be able to manage all aspects necessary to ensure that the meat and products released from the abattoir are safe for human consumption.

b. Meat Inspector

- i. A meat inspector may perform any of the duties of a meat examiner.
- ii. Conduct ante-mortem inspection of slaughter animals. Training of meat inspectors in animal behavior must be included in the scope of training or as additional in-service training
- iii. Prepare and submit to the PEO a monthly report on the meat inspection service, including slaughter statistics, as well as any non-conformances which require immediate intervention.
- iv. Regulatory control including verification of the abattoir hygiene management system

The functions of a meat inspector may be carried out by an animal health technician (AHT) provided that he/she has acquired additional training in meat examination to carry out primary meat examination

c. Veterinarian

- i. A veterinarian may perform any of the functions of a meat inspector
- ii. Conduct ante-mortem inspection of animals that have been deemed not fit for slaughter by the meat inspector/examiner
- iii. Conduct secondary meat inspection on all carcasses detained by the meat inspector/examiner, all carcasses of animals that had been referred by the meat inspector/examiner for veterinary ante-mortem inspection, and all carcasses that underwent emergency slaughtering.
- iv. Prepare and submit to the PEO a report on the meat inspection service(s) conducted.
- v. Verification of the abattoir hygiene management system.

The veterinarian may engage any personnel in the abattoir for assistance with the performance of his/her responsibilities.

15.2. Poultry and Rabbit Abattoirs

a. Poultry Meat Examiner Level 1

- i. Conduct meat examination of carcasses and offal under supervision of a senior meat inspection personnel.
- ii. Monitoring of the dispatch processes.
- iii. Monitoring of the handling of condemned material until safe disposal.

b. Poultry Meat Examiner Level 2

- i. A PME Level 2 may perform any of the functions of a PME level 1.
- ii. Responsible for meat inspection at recovery point
- iii. Monitoring of the slaughter processes.

- iv. Monitoring and direct supervision of the meat examination by the PME level 1(s)
- v. Verification of the abattoir hygiene management system.
- vi. Approval of the products after the assessment of the slaughter and meat examination processes and abattoir hygiene management.
- vii. Prepare and submit to the PEO a monthly report on the meat inspection service, including slaughter statistics.

c. Meat Inspector

Meat inspectors will be attached to all high throughput abattoirs to perform the same activities as for PME 2 as described above.

d. Veterinarian

- i. A poultry/rabbit abattoir must have access to the service of a veterinarian to carry out farm health and welfare management systems. This must include:
 - An applicable flock health control programme, which includes verification that all day old chicks placed comply with Salmonella control and pathogen reduction programmes as well as the necessary vaccination requirements.
 - Farm flock health certification before catching, including compliance with withdrawal periods
 - Disease control measures including:
 - vaccination of birds.
 - Ecto and endoparasite control of birds.
 - Treatment of sick and/or injured birds.
 - Post mortem examination of dead birds on the farm and at the abattoir.
- ii. Prepare and submit to the PEO a report on the meat inspection service(s) conducted.
- iii. Verification of the abattoir hygiene management system.

15.3. Game Meat and Wild Ostriches Abattoirs

Where reference is made to game, the same applies to wild ostriches and crocodiles

a. Trained person

- i. Conduct ante-mortem inspection of game animals to be slaughtered. In the context of game slaughter, ante-mortem inspection is limited to a visual appraisal, which in most cases may be from a distance further than in red meat and poultry, of the behavior and actions of the game animal to determine its fitness for slaughter.
- ii. Verification of proper shooting, bleeding times, hygienic harvesting and transport procedures of harvested game.
- iii. Identification of abnormal behaviour in the live animal and deviation from procedures.
- iv. Reporting to the registered inspector at the harvesting depot or game meat abattoir

b. Game Meat Examiner

- i. Conduct examination of carcasses and offal at the game harvesting depot.
- ii. Conduct examination of carcasses and offal at the game meat abattoir.
- iii. Monitoring of hygiene control during harvesting and at the game harvesting depot.

In addition to the core duties of a meat examiner as described above, additional duties for a meat examiner may extend to the following in agreement with the PEO:

- i. Monitoring of the dispatch processes at the abattoir.
- ii. Monitoring of the handling of condemned material until safe disposal.

Due to the locations, numbers and accessibility of game farms, the infrequent slaughtering/harvesting and the challenges with accessing the animals on a game farms, it may not always be possible to have independent meat inspection personnel servicing the game harvesting depots on these farms. The NEO/PEO may therefore waive the requirement for independence for game meat examiners at game harvesting depots for small game harvesting operations for practical reasons as described. This means that the owner must have a game meat examiner during game harvesting, but such an individual may not necessarily be independent of the owner or farm.

A game meat examiner operating under the waiver of independence must report to the PEO on the meat examination service provided at a frequency as shall be determined by the PEO. The game meat examiner must also submit a meat examination report to the game abattoir with each consignment for the attention of the abattoir meat inspector.

c. Meat Inspector

- i. A meat inspector may perform any of the duties of a game meat examiner.
- ii. Conduct primary meat inspection on all carcasses.
- iii. Prepare and submit to the PEO a monthly report on the meat inspection service, including slaughter statistics.
- iv. Verification of the abattoir hygiene management system.

d. Veterinarian

- i. Conduct secondary meat inspection on all carcasses detained by the meat inspector/examiner for a veterinary decision.
- ii. Conduct inspection on all emergency slaughter carcasses and offal.
- iii. Prepare and submit to the PEO a report on the meat inspection service(s) conducted.
- iv. Verification of the abattoir hygiene management system.

15.4. Crocodile Abattoirs

a. Meat Examiner

- i. Conduct post mortem inspection of carcasses and offal at the abattoir.
- ii. Monitor receiving of chilled harvested crocodiles at the abattoir.

b. Meat Inspector

- i. A meat inspector may perform any of the duties of a meat examiner.
- ii. Conduct ante-mortem inspection at harvesting of crocodiles.
- iii. Monitor receiving of chilled harvested crocodiles at the abattoir.
- iv. Prepare and submit to the PEO a monthly report on the meat inspection service, including slaughter statistics, as well as any non-conformances which require immediate intervention.

- v. Regulatory control including verification of the abattoir hygiene management system
- c. Veterinarian
- i. Monitor ante-mortem done by meat inspector.
 - ii. Conduct secondary meat inspection on all carcasses detained by the meat inspector/examiner for a veterinary decision.
 - iii. Prepare and submit to the PEO a report on the meat inspection service(s) conducted.
 - iv. Verification of the abattoir hygiene management system.

16. TRAINING OF MEAT INSPECTION PERSONNEL

Training of veterinarians, meat inspectors and animal health technicians is carried out at institutions of higher learning registered with the Department of Higher Education. There are quality management systems at these institutions to maintain standards of training. The qualifications and curricula are registered with the South African Qualifications Authority.

Training for meat examiners (red meat, poultry and game) is offered by private service providers and is unregulated. The standards and duration of training for meat examiners differ. It has been noted that some of the training for meat examiners is substandard.

The inadequacies in the training of meat inspection personnel are of concern to the government and industry and need immediate attention.

In order to have some degree of control of training for meat inspection personnel, the NEO will form a unit to be led by DAFF that will monitor training of all meat inspection personnel. The terms of reference for the unit will be:

1. To set standards for training of meat inspection personnel.
2. To assess and endorse all qualifications for meat inspection personnel to ensure that they meet the requirements.
3. To monitor the training of meat inspection personnel.

The unit will use expertise from government and industry for advice on any matter related to training of meat inspection personnel.

17. MEAT INSPECTION FORUM

A meat inspection forum consisting of government and other stakeholders in the meat inspection service is to be set up to advise the NEO and PEOs on the implementation of meat inspection service in the country.

a. Composition of the Meat Inspection Forum

- i. National Executive Officer (Chairperson)
- ii. All Provincial Executive Officers
- iii. One representative of the meat inspection assignees
- iv. One representative of the red meat industry
- v. One representative of the poultry meat industry
- vi. One representative of the game meat industry
- vii. One representative of the ostrich meat industry
- viii. One representative of the crocodile meat industry
- ix. One representative of the rabbit meat industry

b. Meetings of the Meat Inspection Forum

The NEO is the chairperson of the forum and presides over all meetings of the forum. In the absence of the NEO, the members present at a meeting must elect a chairperson for the meeting.

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries must provide administrative and secretarial services to the forum.

The forum is to meet at least twice per year. Any member of the forum may request an urgent/extraordinary meeting of the forum if supported by at least 50% of the members of the forum. The chairperson, however, has the power to call an urgent/extraordinary meeting of the forum if the need arises.

In addition to being a forum where feedback is given on the performance of meat inspection in the country, the forum will also advise the NEO/PEOs on:

- i. Any matter of relevance related to meat inspection service at abattoirs.
- ii. Grievances and complaints related to meat inspection services lodged by any party
- iii. Conditions of service for meat inspection personnel

Recommendations of the meat inspection forum are not binding on the NEO and PEOs, however, the government must use the forum to learn about the developments and best practices in the meat industry.