

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND
FISHERIES (DAFF)
presentation to the
DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
Portfolio Committee**

**Focus on recent on recent incidents with respect to incorrect
labeling of food stuff**

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28 NOVEMBER 2012**



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forestry & fisheries**
Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Purpose

To provide the PC on background on recent incidents with respect to recent incorrect labeling of food stuff

Focus on:

- Alleged “illegal” importation and relabeling
- Legislations involved in Food Safety and different Departments playing a role
- Monitoring of religious certifications
- General matters



Alleged illegal importation and relabeling

- Case of Orion Cold Storage has been recently cited in the traditional media, courts, social media, etc for the alleged activities of illegal importation and relabeling of various foodstuff
- In as far as food handling is concerned
 - the Orion Cold Storage is registered with as a food premise under the Department of Health
 - the Orion Cold Storage is also approved for import and exports of meat and meat products under Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF)
- DAFF approval is valid for one year and must be renewed



Procedures for the importation of food of animal origin

- **A prospective importer must apply and obtain Import Permit issued by DAFF prior to such importation**
- **Import permit specifically determines the specie, quantities at times, sanitary and other conditions that shall be complied with**
- **The importer provides the Veterinary Authorities of the country of origin of animal products with import permit issues by South African Authorities**
- **For each consignment, the Veterinary Authorities of the country of origin issue Veterinary Certificate declaring that ALL requirements & conditions imposed by South Africa have been met & the**

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Procedures for the importation of food of animal origin (cont....)

- At the Port of Entry in South Africa, DAFF Veterinarians
 - Detain all consignments with animal products at approved inspection sites
 - Evaluate the initial import permit issued by DAFF
 - Evaluate the original Veterinary Certificate issued by Veterinary Authority of the Country of origin
 - Inspect each consignment for compliance and verification
 - Release the consignment to the importer
- Once released to the importer – the consignment assumes the status of “domestic food” and is regulated by statutes governing all local foods
- In case of Orion Cold Storage, all these processes have been met, meat was imported legally, properly declared and properly inspected on arrival – the products complied with South African legislations under DAFF for the regulating imports



Legislations involved in Food Safety and different Departments playing a role

- Animal Disease Act, 1984 (Act 35 of 1984) - DAFF
 - Regulates on-farm disease control and health of the animals
- Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act 40 of 2000) - DAFF
 - Regulates the slaughter of animals at abattoirs to ensure that only healthy animals are slaughtered and are handled in hygienic manner
- Health Act, 1977 (Act 63 of 1977) – Department of Health (DoH)
 - Replaced by the National Health Act, 2003 (Act of 2003)
 - Regulates hygiene requirements for transportation and premises handling food



Legislations involved in Food Safety and different Departments playing a role (Cont...)

- Foodstuffs, Cosmetics Disinfectants Act, 1972 (Act 54 of 1972)
DoH
 - Regulate food ingredients, additives and labeling
- Agricultural Product Standards Act, 1990 (Act 119 of 1990) =
DAFF
 - Regulates marketing of certain agricultural products
- Trade Metrology Act, 1973 (Act 77 of 1973) – **DTI**
 - Has SABS appointed by the Minister of Trade and Industry
 - Inspectorate responsible for ensuring safety of certain food products
- Deals with legal metrology requirements foodstuffs have to comply with including SABS (SANS289:2005)



Monitoring of Religious Certifications

- Religious certifications are internationally considered “private” standards – they operate independently of government
- Governments concentrate on sanitary and phytosanitary matters
- Religious and ritual slaughter are provided for, and are covered under the Meat Safety Act
- DAFF monitors the safety of the product while ‘private religious entities’ monitor compliance with various religious practices
- Once meat products have left the abattoir – the Department of Health monitors the safety of foodstuffs and ‘private religious entities’ monitor compliance with various religious practices
- Monitoring and verification of religious protocols and certifications is conducted by private the religious bodies concerned.



Monitoring of Religious Certifications

- The Codex Alimentarius Commission accepts that there may be minor differences in opinion in the interpretation of lawful and unlawful animals and in the slaughter acts of countries, according to the different Islamic Schools of Thought.
- General guidelines are therefore subjected to the interpretation of the appropriate authorities of countries.
- Certificates are granted by the religious authorities with the principle that justification is provided for specific requirements.

Slaughtering

- The person should be a Muslim who is mentally sound and knowledgeable of the Islamic slaughtering procedures.
- The animal to be slaughtered should be lawful according to Islamic law.



General matters

- DAF-F has noted complexities in regulation of food and food safety, and the related complexities relating to labeling, marketing and potential deception of consumers
- Complex aspects of traditional and religious practices, issues monitoring and certification – and providing such guarantees to an unsuspecting consumers remains a challenge
- A balance will have to be struck as to what extent are “religious practices” can remain operating privately and independent of government while considering protection of public against potential deception
- Such discourse requires dialogue among all role players. The Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has already instructed the Department to look at establishing Inter- Ministerial Committee to look at these matters.



Thank you

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