

DAFF PRESENTATION TO THE JOINT PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND
FISHERIES (DAFF), DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH)
AND DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY (DTI)**

**Focus on meat inspection, application of carcass marks (labeling)
and inspection of imported meat**

26 MARCH 2013



**agriculture,
forestry & fisheries**

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Purpose

To provide the PCs with the background on meat inspection and matters connected thereto with specific focus on:

- ✓ The legislative matrix in food safety;
- ✓ Meat Safety Act;
- ✓ Agricultural Product Standard Act;
- ✓ Importation of food of animal origin;
- ✓ Matters related to horse meat scandal; and
- ✓ Emerging Challenges: Stellenbosch and UWC studies

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With specific emphasis on
domestic controls



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

- ❑ Foodstuffs, Cosmetics Disinfectants Act, 1972 (Act 54 of 1972) DoH
 - Regulate food ingredients, additives and labelling
 - now also regulates hygiene requirements for transportation and premises handling food (R962 of the 23rd Nov 2012)
- ❑ 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)



Meat Safety Act requirements - Introduction

- ❑ The abattoir owner must “procure meat inspection service” (section 11(1)(b), and that meat inspection function must be performed independently of the abattoir (section 11(1)(c), and meat inspection may only be performed by:
 - National Executive Officer (NEO) – National Department (DAFF)
 - Provincial Executive Officer (PEO) – Provincial Departments (PDAs)
 - Assignee – established in terms of section 4 of the Act
 - Authorized person – as contemplated in the Act
- ❑ A person performing meat inspection service shall be registered in terms of the Act, and such registered inspector may be:
 - Meat Inspector (Environmental Health Practitioners)
 - Meat Examiner
 - Veterinarian
 - Persons with relevant bioscientific qualification (e.g. Animal Health Technicians)



Meat Safety Act - Ante-mortem inspection

- ☐ All animals presented for slaughter at the abattoir shall be inspected while alive to ensure that no diseased animals are admitted into the food chain
- ☐ Ante-mortem inspection include
 - Evaluation of health declarations records (e.g. treatments used, withdrawal times)
 - Visual inspection of the animals in larynges
- ☐ Decisions made in ante-mortem include
 - Approved slaughter
 - Emergency slaughter
 - Delayed / separate slaughter
 - Post mortem



Meat Safety Act - Primary inspection

- ☐ Each carcass shall be examined by a registered inspector
 - Inspector may cut/ trim any part of the carcass
 - Registered inspector must apply an approval stamp to each carcass that has been examined and approved
 - Each stamp is unique for that abattoir, and has the abattoir registration number
- ☐ If the inspector is not satisfied about the carcass, such carcass is detained for secondary inspection



Meat Safety Act - Secondary inspection

- ☐ Performed by a veterinarian ONLY
 - For all detained carcasses , to make/ or confirm the diagnosis
- ☐ Decisions made at the end on meat inspection include:
 - Approve carcass or conditionally approve carcass
 - Total condemnation or partial condemnation
- ☐ All meats leaving abattoirs have stamps of approval - meat is safe
- ☐ Once the meat leaves the abattoirs, it enters the custody of the other statues/ Departments
- ☐ Butcheries, meat processing plants, retailers are not regulated by the Meat Safety Act



Agricultural Product Standards Act

The objective of the APS Act – ensure that quality standards are applied in order to provide for:

- Consumer confidence; and
- Fair trade practices.

Criteria used are:

- Classification/grading based on a number of measurable factors, e.g. identification of a carcass, age of a carcass, fatness, etc.
- Labelling/ marking to provide the consumer with accurate and relevant information on a product.



Agricultural Product Standards Act - Inspection on regulated meat

Types of meat products that are regulated:

- ☐ Red Meat – meaning those parts of a carcass which are normally sold for human consumption:
 - Carcass of bovine;
 - Carcass of sheep; and
 - Carcass of goat.,
- ☐ Poultry meat
 - Carcass of fowls;
 - Ducks and muscovies; and
 - Turkeys.



Agricultural Product Standards Act - Point of application and enforcement agencies

- ❑ Abattoirs – Only registered abattoirs provided they have a registration certificate in terms of Meat Safety Act (Red meat)
- ❑ Poultry point of application is at:
 - Abattoirs; and
 - Retailers
- ❑ Enforcement agencies –
 - South African Meat Industry Company (SAMIC) – Red Meat
 - Audited by the DAFF
 - Authorized Departmental personnel/inspectors for Poultry meat



Agricultural Product Standards Act - Elements of labelling and the purpose thereof

- Country of origin
- Product identification as part of classification
- Class/grade identification
- To complement compliance with the Foodstuff, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act and Trade Metrology Act in terms of food safety (declaration of food additives) and weight or mass declaration respectively

The express purpose is to:

- Protect the consumer against from false claims
- Provision of enabling situation for fair trade practices
- For provision of information to consumers



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 product is safe



Procedures for the importation of food of animal origin

- ❑ 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 or take decisions based on their evaluation of documentation or consignment (return or destroy)
- ❑ Once released to the importer – the consignment assumes the status of “domestic food” and is regulated by statutes governing all local foods –
- ❑ DAFF does not have Meat Inspectors at facilities handling/ processing imported meat



Matters related to “horse meat scandal” – links to Europe

- ❑ South Africa, as a global player in the international trade, is involved in the export and import of various foods of animal origin
- ❑ However, the importation of animal products is very stringent – the veterinary authorities currently allow importation of “recognisable cuts” of beef and certain beef products
- ❑ Where processed meat products are imported, it is required that the raw meat used in those processed meat products shall be sourced within the country of origin of the consignment and shall be independently certified by the veterinary authorities of the country of origin



Presence of equine meat in South Africa

- ❑ In 2012, 150 tonnes of horse meat was imported under a valid Veterinary import permit from Brazil
- ❑ For domestic production; 3 Abattoirs are registered for slaughter of Horse meat (1 Gauteng and 2 in Free State provinces)
- ❖ Other Equines such as Zebra, donkey, mules are processed in other abattoirs across the Country --- all these species are permitted in terms of schedule 1 of the Meat Safety Act
- ❖ Zebra meat is mainly exported to Europe



Emerging Challenges – Stellenbosch and UWC studies

- ❑ The scientists reported that “unconventional” species such as donkey, goat and water buffalo were discovered in 68 percent of 139 meat samples from shops and butcheries.
- ❑ University of the Western Cape researchers also indicated that of 146 samples biltong tested in RSA between 2009-2012, over 100 contained undeclared meat species.
- ❖ The Department is of the view that with the exception of few, the species mentioned in the study are species regularly sold and consumed in this country
 - they are normally slaughtered in registered abattoirs or imported



Emerging Challenges – Stellenbosch and UWC studies

- ☐ The meats mentioned are also sometimes processed / sold in the same premises
 - hence possibility of unintended cross-contamination and – to us, positive samples of their DNA is not a surprise
 - ☐ A testing for presence of DNA alone is not a confirmation that there is a deliberate mislabelling or acts of adulteration – one must test for quantities of the inclusion of these in order to conclude that there are deliberate acts of mislabeling
 - ☐ Cabinet resolved to request for the investigation by NCC – such work is aimed at going deeper
 - ☐ It is hoped that such clarity will provide some light on the general practice – if methodologies are correct, one can separate from unintended accidental contamination, from deliberate cheating
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Conclusion

- ❑ DAFF 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 finalisation of the Food Safety Policy and the Food Safety Agency are paramount



Thank you



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