



FOOD UNIT NOTICE

SUBJECT: The Control and Handling of Non-conforming Meat or Meat Products.

Notice Number: 09.01

Date of Issue: 09/04/2009

Distribution of Notice: Western Australian (WA) Meat Businesses (abattoirs, boning rooms, meat processors, meat storage and meat transport proprietors covered by the Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption – AS 4696: 2007 (Standard)), the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, Local Government and Meat Safety Officers (Meat Inspectors).

Purpose

This Notice is to advise meat business proprietors in WA, regarding the disposition of non-conforming product (i.e. meat and meat products not handled, processed or stored in accordance with requirements of the Standard).

Background

Prior to the introduction of the current series of Australian Standards for Meat and Meat Products which incorporated quality assurance arrangements, (now approved arrangements), the handling and disposition of non-conforming products was principally at the direction of controlling authorities after identification and assessment of known factors.

Since then, the onus for decision making (disposition) has moved to management of wholesomeness under an approved arrangement, operated by the proprietor or the person carrying on the meat business (or meat transport business). This change was intended to remove the requirement for approval by the Department of Health (DOH) for individual events.

This is particularly relevant for non-conforming product where meat or meat products are handled, processed, stored or transported at a meat business, and where meat and meat products are rejected from the export stream.

Examples of non-conforming product are animals slaughtered and processed without proper identification and traceability, animals slaughtered and processed without having undergone ante-mortem inspection and disposition, or meat and meat products which exceed the temperature requirements set out in the Standard, or the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*.

Actions

The handling (identification/disposition/traceability) associated with non-conforming meat and meat products is to be included in the meat business's approved arrangement.



All actions taken by the proprietor of the meat business (or meat transport business) regarding the disposition of non-conforming product are to be documented. In all instances when a decision is made and carried out (including product rejected from the export stream) under the meat business's approved arrangement, the DOH is to be notified by either email or facsimile of the decision.

This is necessary to allow ongoing identification and traceability of the product on the domestic market. Information is also expected regarding corrective action to prevent further occurrences. The contact officer's details are provided below.

Notwithstanding the above, advice may be sought from the DOH, in regard to the disposition of non-conforming product.

Useful Resources and Websites

- Department of Health WA www.public.health.wa.gov.au
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au>
- Food Regulation Secretariat <http://www.health.gov.au>
- NSW Food Authority <http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/>
- DHS Victoria <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/>
- DHS South Australia <http://www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/food-index.htm>

Contact Officer:

Rod Dixon

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Any feedback or concerns please utilise the "Food Unit Query" form which can be downloaded from our website: http://www.public.health.wa.gov.au/2/786/3/food_informatio.pm

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Note: The information contained in this document covers the food legislation requirements for Western Australia. It is current on the date of publication but may change without notice. The Department of Health is not liable for any costs arising from or associated with decisions based on information here and users should obtain expert advice to satisfy all requirements of the relevant food legislation applicable.



Government of Western Australia
Department of Health