	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE DIRECTORATE VETERINARY SERVICES ANIMAL QUARANTINE AND INSPECTION SERVICES</b></p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PROCEDURE MANUAL: INSPECTION PROCEDURE FOR IMPORTED MEAT</b></p>
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## A. PURPOSE

To lay down the necessary actions to be taken by officials during the inspection of imported unprocessed/raw meat\* to ensure the compliance with import requirements as stipulated on the relevant import permits and in legislation mentioned below.

(\*As defined in the Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act 40 of 2000))

## B. SCOPE

All ports of entry and inspection sites.

### C. LEGISLATION

- The Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act No 35 of 1984) and Regulations promulgated there-under.
- The Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act 40 of 2000) and Regulations promulgated there-under.

The Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act No 35 of 1984) is available on the following website: <http://www.nda.agric.za/vetweb/> → Animal Health → Legislation.

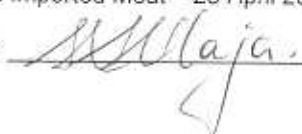
Copies of the Animal Diseases Act, 1984 and the regulations promulgated there-under can also be obtained by contacting Ms Ramos at Tel 012 319 7405 (International tel. +27 12 319 7405), [AnnaR@nda.agric.za](mailto:AnnaR@nda.agric.za) or fax no 012 329 0499. (Please note that Ms Ramos is not responsible for any other enquiries concerning imports)

The Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act 40 of 2000) and the Regulations promulgated there-under are available on the following website: <http://www.nda.agric.za/vetweb/> → Import → Meat Imports.

Copies of the Meat Safety Act, 2000 and the regulations promulgated thereunder can also be obtained by contacting Mrs Viviers at tel 012 319 7700 (International tel. +27 12 319 7700), [ElmarieV@nda.agric.za](mailto:ElmarieV@nda.agric.za) or fax no 012 329 6892.

### D. QUALIFICATIONS, ADDITIONAL TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE OF OFFICIALS

1. Only State Veterinarians, meat inspectors, environmental health officers and animal health technicians who have received the relevant training in meat examination and are employed by the Department of Agriculture, Directorate Veterinary Services and authorised in terms of the above legislation may carry out the inspection of meat.
2. Only state veterinarians, suitably trained animal health technicians and meat inspectors and authorised officials, who have been designated in writing to perform this function on behalf of the supervising state veterinarian, may sign red cross permits, movement permits and release documents. These documents must be regularly audited by the supervising state veterinarian to ensure that the required conditions and standards of importation are being maintained.
3. At offices where state veterinarians are stationed, only state veterinarians may sign rejection certificates. Where state veterinarians are not available, specific suitably trained officials may be authorised in writing by the DD:AQIS to sign rejection certificates.
4. Refresher courses and additional training should be ongoing for all personnel. (Line-function & administrative staff)





## G. INSPECTION METHODS AND PROCEDURES

### 1. Inspection at land border posts

Red Meat Regulations Part X 126(3)(a) and Poultry Meat Regulations Part X 97(3)(a), "Confirm a positive link between the meat and the import permit as well as all other documentation pertaining to the inspection;"

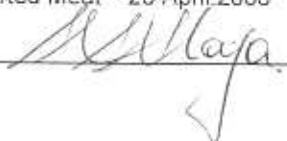
- The veterinary import permit, veterinary health certificate from the exporting country, non-manipulation certificate (where applicable), and other relevant documents must be checked.
- Product descriptions on veterinary import permit, veterinary health certificate, bill of entry and other relevant documents must correspond.
- Product description must also be checked to ensure that the product is allowed from that particular country.
- Consignments will only be allowed into South Africa if an original veterinary import permit and an original veterinary health certificate are presented.
- Copies of the documentation must be made and filed.
- The stamped and signed original documents must be handed back and allowed the truck/container to proceed.
- A properly completed red X permit must then be issued.
- The red X permit must be faxed to the state veterinarian at final inspection site.
- The authorised officer must write on the health certificate and veterinary import permit "*checked at (name) border post*"
- The driver must be reminded to proceed directly to the final inspection site.

In exceptional cases it might be deemed necessary to open a truck/trailer at the land border post for inspection purposes. This may only occur with permission of the Deputy Director: Animal Quarantine and Inspection Services (DD:AQIS). Care must be taken not to leave the doors of the refrigerated compartment open for longer than is necessary, as this will cause a break in the cold chain. The documents and seal numbers on the truck must be checked. After completing the required inspection on the content, the APIS official must reseal the truck/container. The new seal number must appear on all relevant documentation together with the authorised officer's signature, rank and name in print. An official and date stamp must be applied.

### 2. Communication between land border post and final inspection sites

The APIS border official must fax the red X permit to the state veterinarian at final destination and the details of the consignment must be phoned through to the state veterinarian at final inspection site.

If the consignment didn't arrive within the expected time the state veterinarian at the final inspection site must inform the DD:AQIS.

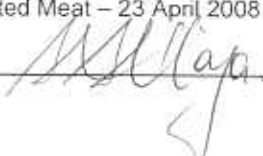


### 3. Checking of documents and conditions on veterinary import permits

Red Meat Regulations Part X 126 (3) (a): *"Confirm a positive link between the meat and the import permit as well as all other documentation pertaining to the inspection;"*

and Red Meat Regulations Part X 126 (3) (f): *"confirm that all other conditions stated on the import permit have been complied with;..."*

- Consignments will only be released to the importer if original documents or certified copies of original documents or replacements certificates are presented and verified.
- After the inspection of the consignment has been completed, the documentation must be filed and where necessary copies must be made.
- In certain circumstances (e.g. Incomplete or incorrect information on the original veterinary health certificate) a faxed copy of a veterinary health certificate may be accepted but only if this is faxed directly from the certifying veterinarian to the veterinary inspection office at the port of entry. No faxed copies received via the trade may be accepted. In all other cases permission must be obtained from the DD:AQIS.
- The veterinary import permit (original), veterinary health certificate from the exporting country (original) and bill of entry (copy) and supplier's invoice (copy), where applicable non-manipulation certificate (original), and other relevant documents must be checked. For a specific import the above documents must refer to the same veterinary import permit number.
- The documentary check must include the following:
  - that the veterinary import permit is still valid.
  - that the veterinary import permit and veterinary health certificate are originals and are correctly completed.
  - that the veterinary health certificate either conforms to the required conditions as stipulated on the veterinary import permit or is a negotiated veterinary health certificate. The Import Export Policy Unit (IEPU) must provide the ports of entry with updates of newly negotiated model certificates. The ports of entry must ensure that these copies are retained in such a manner so as to ensure that they are kept up to date and easily accessible to the inspection staff.
- Product descriptions on veterinary import permit, veterinary health certificate, bill of entry, suppliers' invoice, other relevant documents and label on the carton must correspond.
- Product in the carton must be checked against description on the carton.
- Product description must be checked to ensure that the product is allowed from that particular country. The Head of the Office must ensure that all personnel have access to notices concerning updates on bans/suspension of trade. (Can be posted on a notice board in the office). The Import Export Policy Unit is to provide the inspection sites with a regularly updated list indicating which products are approved for importation from the various exporting countries.
- Plant numbers must be checked to ensure approval.
- Production / slaughter / packing dates must be checked to ensure compliance.
- If a problem is noticed with the expiry date or tariff heading of a product, the matter must be referred to the Department of Health, or SARS, respectively, for further decision.





#### 4. Detention of Meat

All meat imported into the Republic of South Africa will be under detention until an official Release Notification is issued by a designated official of the national executive officer.

No container may be removed from the quayside/docks, unless it is going to a cold store approved for that purpose and a movement permit has been issued by a veterinary official (Refer to Section D on qualifications)

If volumes of meat are imported that exceeds the availability of space in suitable cold storage facilities, the product will not be released from the container depot and any costs incurred will be the importer's responsibility.

In certain circumstances, e.g. where a consignment arrives before the original documents, permission may be granted for consignments of meat to be moved to a veterinary approved cold store and detained there; providing copies of the documents have been received. These consignments will only be released on presentation of the prescribed original documents. This concession will only be granted in specific circumstances and only if sufficient control can be applied.

A system to ensure proper control and recordkeeping of the consignments must be implemented by the state veterinarian at the inspection site. The officer writing the removal permit must keep accurate records in a register of documents pending original paperwork before handing over the documents to the relevant inspection staff, i.e. inspection staff should not receive documents until all paperwork is in order.

Consignments must remain sealed in the container either at an approved container depot or, if there is sufficient control and plug-in points at approved import cold store. The contents may not be off-loaded until the correct original documents are presented. If the official veterinarian at the cold store is satisfied that sufficient control can be applied at the import approved cold store, it may be off-loaded but the consignment will not be inspected before the original documents are presented.

#### 5. "Extended releases"

"Extended releases" refers to cases where products are moved from the point of entry (ie Durban) for inspection at an inspection site within the country (ie City Deep).

No "extended releases" will be allowed for meat from overseas countries.

Meat must be inspected at the port of entry. This includes the inspections in terms of the Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act 40 of 2000), including sampling where required. By "port of entry" we understand the harbour, e.g. Durban, not the "port of entry" as identified by SARS, e.g. City Deep.

## 6. "Tailgate Inspections"

"Tailgate inspections" means the consignment is not completely unpacked at a veterinary approved cold store, but only a few cartons are inspected as a representative sample, while the rest of the consignment remains in the truck/container.

No tailgate inspections will be allowed. All containers must be completely unpacked at veterinary approved cold stores for full inspections before being released at the inspection site

## 7. Storage of Meat

All meat imported into the Republic of South Africa must be stored in accordance with Section 13(6)(d) of the Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act 40 of 2000) and Red Meat Regulation 126 (2): "...

*(a) the imported meat must be stored in such a way as to ensure –*

- (i) that no contamination, soiling or deterioration thereof in any way may take place; and*
- (ii) such imported meat cannot possibly contaminate other products in the cold store;*

*(b) security measures must be in place to prevent any part of the consignment being removed before final release thereof; and*

*(c) all documentation relevant to a consignment must be held by the owner of the cold store for inspection by the state veterinarian or his/her representative."*

Meat may only be stored in a veterinary approved cold store.

## 8. Checking of container and seal numbers

The container and seal number on the veterinary health certificate must correspond to the container and seal number on the reefer container.

## 9. Checking of the Temperature of the Meat and the Container

*Red Meat Regulations Part X 126 (3) (b): "Examine the maintenance of the temperature of the meat during transportation;"*

Cartons must be checked for signs of thawing of meat; or thawing and re-freezing.

Temperatures of the product in the consignment must be checked. At least 3 representative deep core temperatures are to be taken in such a manner as to be considered representative of the entire consignment.

Where applicable, thermographs must be checked for maintenance of the prescribed temperature during transport and storage.

Although the temperature stipulated on the veterinary import permit of meat imported from overseas countries is minus 18°C (-18°C), meat may still be accepted if the temperature is minus 10°C (-10°C) or below.

For chilled meat the temperature requirements on the veterinary import permit must be complied with. (As a general rule: The product temperature of chilled meat must not exceed 4°C. Trimmings should only be imported if frozen).

If a break in the cold chain is suspected and/or the appearance of the product is not acceptable, bacteriology should be carried out to determine whether the meat is safe for human / animal consumption. The tests, number of samples to be taken and limits for MRM would apply. The cost incurred will be for the importer's account.

## 10. Visual Inspection

### *Checking of packaging*

Plant numbers, production / slaughter / packing dates, product description and shipping marks on packaging must be checked to ensure compliance & correlation with the documentation.

### *Contamination*

Red Meat Regulations Part X 126 (3) (c): *"confirm that no soiling, contamination or deterioration of the meat in any way took place during transportation prior to storage."*

The nature and condition of the packaging must be inspected and evaluated in relation to internationally accepted standards as well as the conditions stated on the veterinary import permit and the veterinary health certificate. The packaging must be done in such a manner to prevent contamination through contact with other animal products, inanimate surfaces and human contact.

### *Correlation of Product & Documents*

The contents of the cartons must be identified and must correspond to the product description on the various documents and the label on the carton. Where possible, the tariff heading should also be checked. If a problem is identified with the tariff heading, the matter must be referred to the SARS officials for further decision.

## 11. Sampling

Red Meat Regulations Part X 126 (3) (d): *"remove samples for examination;"...*

Red Meat Regulations Part X 126 (3) (e): *"examine test results pertaining to samples taken from the consignment;"*

### *Routine Sampling*

Cartons must be selected randomly from a container. Pre-marked boxes are not acceptable for sampling purposes.



During sample-taking general principles and techniques of sampling should be adhered to. Contamination should be avoided at all times.

The inspector should remove only a portion of the content of a carton aseptically. The cartons must be sealed again and marked "opened for inspection".

#### *Non-routine sampling*

*Red Meat Regulations Part X 126 (3) (g): "conduct any other action necessary to ensure that the meat is safe and suitable for human consumption and poses no threat of transmitting a contagious animal disease."*

Samples may be taken on occasion from any imported product, if deemed necessary by the inspecting official. The taking of non-routine samples must be scientifically justifiable and must be done with notification to the DD:AQIS. Detailed documentation must be kept of why such samples were taken, which tests were done and the results of such tests and must be forwarded to the DD:AQIS.

#### 12. Required Bacteriological and Residue Testing and Other Testing Deemed Necessary, e.g. De-Frosting, Boiling & Frying Tests, etc.

All tests required on the veterinary import permit will be performed on the imported meat.

Additional tests may be performed on imported product, if deemed necessary by the inspecting official. The reason for performing such tests must be scientifically justifiable and the details of tests performed and results thereof must be recorded.

The details of bacteriological testing of imported meat are described in the Standard Operating Procedure on Bacteriological Testing of Imported Meat.

#### 13. Handling of rejected consignments

Rejected consignments will be handled in accordance with the options provided in the rejection certificate.

Consignments with unacceptable bacteriological results will NOT be released for heat treatment or irradiation. (The Directorate Veterinary Services does not have the personnel resources to monitor the transport and treatment of the meat.)

Consignments that were refused importation into South Africa will NOT be allowed to be exported to neighbouring countries by road.

### **G. ENTRY AND SEARCH OF PREMISES**

Refer to Section 16 of the Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act 40 of 2000).

The Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act 40 of 2000) can be obtained as explained in Section C: LEGISLATION of this document.

## H. RECORDS AND DOCUMENTS

Records and documents must be kept for at least 5 years. If documents older than 5 years are disposed of, this must be done in a manner that preserves the confidentiality of the documents.

## I. CONDUCT

Care should be taken to always act professionally, consistently, uniformly and impartially.

## J. CONFIDENTIALITY

Section 17(1) of the Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act 40 of 2000) stipulates:  
*No person may disclose any information which relates to any person and which was acquired by him or her in the performance of his or her functions in terms of this Act, except—*

- a) in so far as it may be necessary for the application of this Act;*
- b) for the purposes of any legal proceedings under this Act;*
- c) when required to do so by a competent court;*
- d) if the Minister, in the public interest, authorises the disclosure thereof; or*
- e) to the extent necessary in order to comply with a law dealing with access to information.*

If officials are requested to provide confidential information to another regulatory body (ie SARS, Dept of Health, Agri-Inspect, SAMIC, etc), they should first obtain permission to do so from the Director Veterinary Services, through the DD:AQIS.

## K. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

The importer/agent has the right to appeal against a decision.

Any appeal must be done in writing to the Director Veterinary Services stating in full the reason(s) for the appeal.

## L. TRANSGRESSIONS

Please see Section 19 of the Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act 40 of 2000):

