

Slaughtering and consumer confidence

Customers buy meat in good faith, believing it to be safe and wholesome

The formal meat industry is structured and organised in such a manner that the consumer is guaranteed a good product. Authorised veterinarians and meat inspectors visit approved abattoirs on a regular basis. In the interest of the producer and customer, only healthy animals are slaughtered at an abattoir.

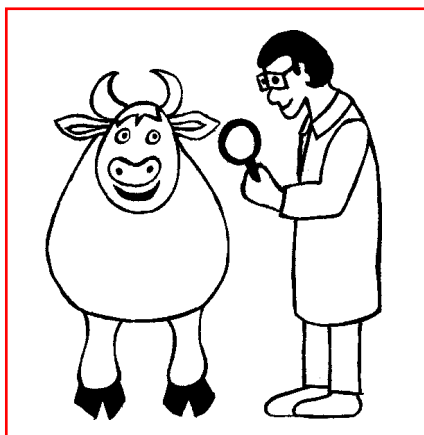
What happens at an abattoir?

Animals are cared for

- Animals are transported, offloaded and kept for slaughter in a manner that does not involve unnecessary pain.
- Clean water is provided continuously.
- Depending on the time they have to wait for slaughtering, food, in accordance with their needs, will be provided.
- The animals are handled in a humane way at all times.

A slaughter examination is done

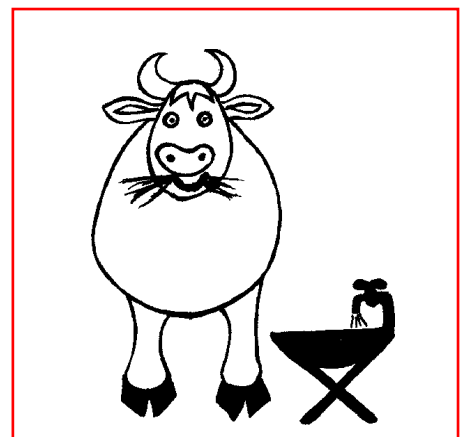
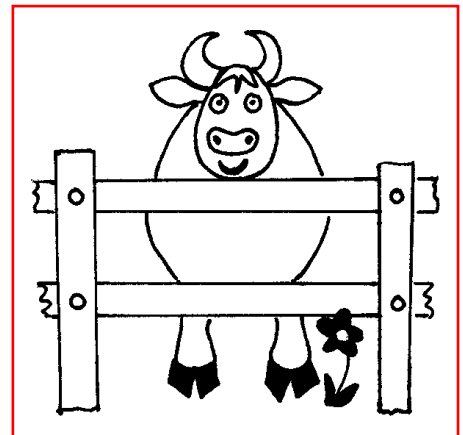
- Inspectors perform an antemortem examination to determine if the animals are healthy and ready for slaughtering.
- Sick animals are isolated and dead animals are disposed of.



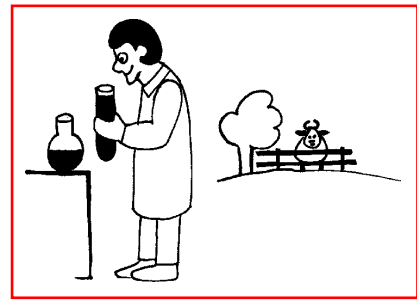
- Injured animals (e.g. lying down, with broken legs or horns) are examined and proper action is taken immediately. The cause of the injury is determined and a veterinarian will decide whether the meat should be disposed of.
- Care is taken that only meat from healthy animals reaches the consumer.

Only clinically healthy animals are slaughtered

All animals are inspected to determine whether they have any latent diseases.



A routine meat inspection is done on the carcass and offal of each animal. This is done by meat inspectors. If they suspect a disease to be present, the specific carcasses are kept for further inspection by a veterinarian. The veterinarian has to decide whether the carcass should be condemned totally or whether the meat can be treated to render it safe. For example, carcasses infected with the larvae of the human tapeworm can be freeze-treated to kill the larvae in the meat.



Carcasses are graded, classified and cooled

After final approval, the carcasses are cooled immediately to stop germs from multiplying or causing accidental contamination. Meat is now kept cold and the temperature is kept constant until the product reaches the consumer.

Meat is handled hygienically

During the entire process

- hands are washed regularly
- instruments are sterilised (boiled)
- clean clothes are worn daily.



All surfaces coming into contact with meat are cleaned and disinfected on a routine basis.

The health care of the workers handling the meat is a high priority to eliminate problems with regard to germs or contagious diseases that can be transmitted to the meat.

A great effort is made to make certain that meat leaving the abattoir is clean, safe, nutritious and in a wholesome condition to ensure a relatively long shelf-life.

What should not be done

- Do not slaughter sick, injured and "downer" animals (e.g. immobile because of disease, close to death, in a coma).
- Animals should not be killed in the veld or kraal and then transferred later to an abattoir to be skinned and the entrails to be removed (cold slaughtering).
- Do not transport carcasses in the back of a pickup without proper protection from contamination.
- The entrails should be removed immediately after slaughtering and not hours after killing.
- Never disregard the basic hygiene requirements, by using rusting equipment, dirt soiling clean meat, absence of a meat inspector, etc.
- Meat should not be handled on the floor.

Slaughtering at abattoirs will always be done in a controlled manner, enabling the consumer to buy meat with confidence.

For further information contact the Directorate Veterinary Services

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