

Department of Agriculture

National Directorate Veterinary Services

Notice No. VPN/14/2007-02

TO: STATE VETERINARY OFFICERS

SUBJECT: Standard for Ante and Post-Mortem Meat Inspection and Hygiene Control at Crocodile Meat Establishments

PART I Ante mortem inspection

PART II Post mortem inspection

Schedule 1

PART III Marking, labelling and inspection of export consignments

PART IV Other Veterinary Procedural Notices Applicable for the export of crocodile meat

THIS VPN/14/2007/01 REPLACES VPN/14/2002/01



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Dr. Mpho Maja
Director: Veterinary Services

2007-12-06

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Date

PART I ANTE MORTEM INSPECTION

1. ANTE MORTEM INSPECTION

It is the duty of the Official State Veterinarian to ensure that the following requirements are met:

- 1.1 Moribund, unhealthy and rejected crocodiles may not be slaughtered for human consumption.
- 1.2 A certificate of health and a record of traceability of all crocodiles must accompany all batches of crocodiles received at the abattoir
- 1.3 Systems incorporating disease detection and animal health surveillance must be in place on-farm to ensure that only healthy crocodiles are presented for slaughter.
- 1.4 A system, which ensures that live crocodiles are treated humanely, without causing stress during harvesting.
- 1.5 Crocodiles to be slaughtered may not be fed with categories of condemned material derived from animals containing infectious or zoonotic diseases.

PART II POST MORTEM INSPECTION

2. POST-MORTEM INSPECTION

2.1 Post mortem primary and secondary meat inspection in the true sense as found in the red meat industry does not apply to crocodiles.

2.2 In assessing whether the crocodile meat to be exported is safe and fit for human consumption, the official state veterinarian will evaluate and verify:

- The health status of the crocodile population on the registered farm.
- The affectivity of and degree of compliance to the approved Hygiene Management System implemented at the establishment.
- Compliance to requirements set in the Meat Safety Act of 2000 (Act no. 40 of 2000) and the regulations there under.
- Microbiological test results of the meat and meat products as per VPN15. Weekly tests for Salmonella must be included.

2.3 The Official State Veterinarian may delegate to the Hygiene Manager of the abattoir the responsibility to ensure that carcasses are monitored for signs of disease or conditions that may affect the safety of the meat for human consumption by taking the following into consideration:

- (1) its state of nutrition;
- (2) colour;
- (3) odour;
- (4) symmetry;
- (5) efficiency of bleeding;
- (6) contamination;
- (7) pathogenic conditions;
- (8) parasitic infestation;
- (9) injection marks;
- (10) bruising and injuries;
- (11) any abnormalities of muscles, bones, tendons, joints, or other tissues.

2.4 Carcasses with any condition described above that indicate generalised involvement must be condemned.

2.5 All localised lesions or areas of contamination or soiling must be trimmed off and condemned.

2.6 The Official Veterinarian is the single competent person deciding on meat being fit for human consumption following a sanitary inspection. This inspection includes ante and post mortem inspection and control of the hygienic conditions in the abattoir, cutting plant and meat storage facilities

2.7 Specifically trained auxiliaries and assignees may assist the Official Veterinarian in these tasks as long as the Official Veterinarian is able to supervise them on the spot.

2.8 Only the official Veterinarian is allowed to certify exports

2.9 Requirements for Residue Monitoring

For residue monitoring, please refer to the VPN19 for the standard relating to the national residue-monitoring programme.

No growth hormones are used in crocodiles. The most commonly used antibiotic is oxytetracyclin. No work on residue levels and withdrawal periods has been reported for these substances in crocodiles.

SCHEDULE 1

POST MORTEM INSPECTION

POST MORTEM MEAT INSPECTION – CROCODILES

The Hygiene Manager must inspect the carcass and viscera by observation, palpation and if necessary incision for any signs of disease or condition that may affect the safety of the meat for human consumption by taking the following into consideration::

- (1) its state of nutrition;
- (2) colour;
- (3) odour;
- (4) symmetry;
- (5) efficiency of bleeding;
- (6) contamination;
- (7) pathogenic conditions;
- (8) parasitic infestation;
- (9) injection marks;
- (10) bruising and injuries;
- (11) any abnormalities of muscles, bones, tendons, joints, or other tissues.

Carcasses with any condition described above that indicate generalised involvement must be condemned.

PART III MARKING, LABELING AND INSPECTION OF EXPORT CONSIGNMENTS

3. Health Marking

Removal of unmarked carcasses and meat

- 3.1 No person may remove any carcass, part thereof from an abattoir if not inspected, passed for consumption and appropriately marked, provided that in the case of bulk sales of offal, marks are not required but proof of abattoir of origin may be required.

Re-inspection

- 3.2 The registered inspector may at any time re-inspect a carcass or meat notwithstanding that it may already have been passed for consumption and, if upon re-inspection he/she is of the opinion that it is no longer fit for human/animal consumption, he/she must remove the stamp of approval by trimming and such meat must be condemned.

Specifications for stamps, marks and ink used

- 3.3 All stamps/rollermarks used in the marking of any carcass, meat or meat products must –
- (1) be constructed of a non-toxic, non corrosive material and must be so constructed as to be readily cleanable;
 - (2) be cleaned and sterilized regularly during use;
 - (3) be kept away from the floor;
 - (4) be kept and used under control of the registered inspector;
 - (5) be secured by a registered inspector when not in use and kept in safe custody.
 - (6) never be used at an abattoir where the abattoir number differs from the number on the stamp; and
 - (7) be applied in such a manner that the mark is clearly legible on the carcass or meat.

The following stamp shapes are required:

- 3.4 (1) All species:



- 3.5 The stamp must contain the following information:

- (1) Abattoir registration number; and
- (2) All wording where applicable and shown above, must be in at least 2 official languages one of which must be English.

3.6 Requirements for the minimum size of stamps, marks and letters –

- (1) 60 mm in diameter for the round mark shown in paragraph 8.4 above.
- (2) The letters on the stamps must be easily readable and not be smaller than 8 mm high.
- (3) Marks printed on wrapping material may be smaller than the sizes stated above to suit particular circumstances provided it is approved by the provincial executive officer.

3.7 The marking ink used where stamps are applied to carcasses or meat must be manufactured of harmless edible ingredients approved for use on food stuffs as described in the Food stuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act 1972 (Act No 5 of 1972).

The marks must be placed on either side of the back and the tail of the crocodile provided that if the meat is to be cut and packed for export these marks may be substituted for such marks as required by the importing country –

Wrapping, packing and labelling used for meat and meat products

- 3.8 All labels used on carcasses, meat and meat products must comply to the following:
- (1) Be printed on food grade paper/plastic printing material; and treated in the same hygienic way as in contact wrapping material; and
 - (2) Include the abattoir registration number as well as any information required by the provincial executive officer.
- 3.9 Wrapping bearing the mark of approval may not be re-used after opening.
- 3.10 In the case of bulk packing containers/cartons must be clearly marked with a facsimile of the mark of approval clearly visible and of readable size.
- 3.11 A container must be clearly marked on both ends with the following information as well as any other information required by the Agricultural Products Standards Act, 1990 (Act No.119 of 1990):
- (1) Name and address and registration number of the establishments in which the meat was packed;
 - (2) Net weight of the contents;
 - (3) Accurate description of the contents;
 - (4) Date packaged or a code which enables the date of packaging to be determined;
 - (5) Directions regarding the temperature at which the product must be stored.
- 3.12 Where products are individually wrapped, food grade wrapping material on which the mark of approval is printed or a label, printed with such mark, must be used.

Responsibilities

- 3.13 No person may place a mark on or remove a mark from any carcass, part thereof, meat, or animal product or a wrapping, packing or container, except under the supervision of the registered inspector.
- 3.14 The registered inspector may at any time re-inspect a carcass or meat, in an abattoir, notwithstanding that it may already have been passed for consumption and, if upon re-inspection he or she is of the opinion that it is no longer fit for human or animal consumption, he or she must remove the stamp of approval by trimming, and such meat must be condemned.

4 Export

- 4.1 All cartons must be sealed with stick-on labels with the health mark described below printed on it. All the labels must be numbered with a consecutive serial number. The serial number must be printed outside the pentagon. Furthermore, this health mark may not be printed directly onto the cartons. The labels must be applied to each carton in such a way to ensure that they are torn when the carton is opened.
- 4.2 The operator in charge of the slaughterhouse and cutting plant must record the serial numbers for cartons packed on each day in a register used for this purpose. This is to enable us to identify unauthorised use of the name or allocated number of your farm.
- 4.3 The health mark for the meat must be an oval mark at least **6,5 cm** wide by **4,5 cm** high, bearing the veterinary approval number of the establishment in the centre.

The letters must be at least **0,8 cm** high and the figures at least **1 cm** high.

Example:



5. Inspection Of Export Consignments

- 5.1 All export consignments must be inspected by the Official State Veterinarian before export.
- 5.2 Special attention must be paid to:
- a. Core and surface temperature of products at time of loading;
 - b. Cleanliness of the vehicle/container before loading;
 - c. Temperature of the loading space at time of loading;
 - d. Condition of the cartons to be dispatched.;
 - e. Verify by spot checks that cartons in the consignment are correctly supplied with the establishment number and that the numbers are applied in such a way that they will be destroyed when the carton is opened. Ensure that the number is not pre-printed directly on the cartons. The following information shall also be recorded on the outside of cartons:
 - i. Name of Company.
 - ii. Name of product (including species).
 - iii. Mass.

- iv. Date of production.
- f. Verify the details as supplied on the International sanitary certificate;
- g. Sealing of the loading space must be done under the supervision of the veterinarian.

Under no circumstances may an International export certificate be issued for a consignment not inspected by the Official Veterinarian. This is to ensure compliance with the aforementioned.

- h. A statistical report must be submitted monthly to the Controlling Authority before the 6th of the next month.
- i. The Official Veterinarian is responsible for verification of the Hygiene Management System.

PART VI OTHER VETERINARY PROCEDURAL NOTICES APPLICABLE FOR THE EXPORT OF CROCODILE MEAT

1. VPN/01 Procedure to register establishments.
2. VPN/07 Registration of crocodile farm.
3. VPN/15 Standard for the microbiological monitoring of meat.
5. VPN/16 Standard for the microbiological monitoring of water.
6. VPN/17 Principles of Certification.
7. VPN/18 Law Enforcement at Export Establishments.
8. VPN/19 Standard relating to the National Residue Monitoring Programme.