

Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

National Directorate Veterinary Quarantine and Public Health

Notice No. VPN/33/2010-01

To: STATE VETERINARY OFFICERS

SUBJECT: CONTROL MEASURES TO BE TAKEN WHEN EUROPEAN UNION APPROVED MEAT ARE IMPORTED IN SOUTH AFRICA WITH A VIEW TO PROCESS AND EXPORT IT TO THE EUROPEAN UNION MARKET

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Date:

1. **PURPOSE OF THE VETERINARY PROCEDURAL NOTICE**

The purpose of this Veterinary Procedural Notice (VPN) is to prescribe the procedures that must be followed by processors who wish to import European Community (EC) approved meat from countries outside South Africa, for the purpose of processing such imported meat into meat products in South Africa, with a view of exporting the processed products to the EC market.

This VPN aims to provide for official control to export processed meat products to the EC market through further processing in South Africa, from EC approved fresh meat establishments not produced in South Africa.

2. **SCOPE OF THE VETERINARY PROCEDURAL NOTICE**

This VPN will be applicable to all meat products prepared from EC approved meat eligible for exports to the EU that is imported from EC approved plants outside of South Africa, that have been kept separate from non EC approved products throughout its importation, storage, processing and subsequent handling and which have been processed in an approved EC establishment in South Africa. The VPN will cover all meat products prepared from red meat, poultry, ostrich meat, pork, farmed and wild game meat or any other meat as approved by the EU

3. **REFERENCES**

The following had been considered in compiling of this VPN:

Council Regulation 852/2004

Council Regulation 853/2004

Council Regulation 854/2004

The Animal Diseases Act (Act no. 35 of 1984)

The Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act no. 40 of 2000)

The Red Meat Regulations promulgated in terms of the Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act no. 40 of 2000) – Government notice GK 8056

The Poultry Meat Regulations promulgated in terms of the Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act no. 40 of 2000) – Government Notice GK 8402

4. **DEFINITIONS**

Direct contact – take place where exposed carcasses, meat or meat products from different sources (EC and non EC approved), come in direct contact. Meat or meat products wrapped and packaged in such a

way that direct contact with non approved meat products are not possible and which are stored on separate pallets and/or racking shall be deemed to be sufficiently protected from direct contact.

Fresh Meat – meat of all parts fit for human consumption which has not undergone any preserving process: however, chilled and frozen meat shall be considered to be fresh meat.(EU 2004/852)

Farmed game meat – all parts of farmed game which are fit for human consumption.

Import consignment – All meat derived from an importation that took place on the basis of a single Import Permit and a single Import Health Certificate or parts thereof.

Indirect contact – take place where meat from one source come in contact with unclean surfaces, utensils, equipment, rooms, areas, personnel and their protective clothing, that have been contaminated with the remnants of meat from another source. Meat wrapped and packaged in such a way that indirect contact with non approved meat products is not possible and which are stored on separate pallets and/or racking shall be deemed to be sufficiently protected from indirect contact.

Manager – The person in charge of an establishment.

Processed meat – Means meat for which process interventions have irreversibly changed the nature of the meat.

Red meat – all parts of bovine, ovine, porcine and equine which are fit for human consumption. (EU 2004/852)

State Veterinarian – A registered veterinarian who has been authorized by the veterinary administration to perform official functions.

Wild game meat – all parts of wild game which are fit for human consumption.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 Importation requirements

Import consignments of fresh meat imported for the purpose of processing with a view of export of processed products to the EC market must comply with the following:

- 5.1.1 Importation must be from an EC approved abattoir only. The approved EC abattoir must also be listed on the Department of Agriculture Forestry & Fisheries' (DAFF) 'List of Approved Import Establishments'

- 5.1.2 The consignment will be imported on the basis of an official Import Permit issued by the DOA prior to importation as per prescribed import procedure. It is important that the Import Permit issued by South Africa stipulates that an EC export certificate must be issued by the exporting country, rather than the one that will normally be required for importation into South Africa.
- 5.1.3 The import consignment will be stored only in an EC approved cold store during bond or after official release for by an authorized state veterinarian. Where the import consignment has arrived in a refer container and where the intention is to move the refer container directly to the EC approved processing plant without intermediate storage, the same principles of control as mentioned in this section will be applicable to the movement of the import consignment.
- 5.1.4 During receiving, storage, handling and loading of an import consignment at an EC approved cold store full identification/traceability of the meat must be maintained at all times.
- 5.1.5 During receiving, storage, handling and loading of an import consignment at an EC approved cold store measures must be taken to protect the meat from contamination by non EC approved meat or products.
- 5.1.6 The prescribed storage temperature of the import consignment must be maintained through out it's storage at the establishment with proof recorded for export purposes.
- 5.1.7 Only import consignments that have been duly released by the official state veterinarian will qualify for export processing in terms of this VPN. In practise this means that the import consignment has been issued with an Official Import Release Note.
- 5.1.8 Movement from the EC approved cold store to the EC approved manufacturing establishment for processing will only take place on the basis of state veterinary import release (Official Import Release Note) into the country, official state veterinary inspection at loading out from the cold store, official sealing of the transport vehicle and movement with an official Veterinary Movement Permit, attached hereto as Annex A. Movement must be of such a nature that the prescribed storage temperature of the fresh meat is maintained throughout. Temperature maintenance for the duration of the journey must be measured with a thermograph to allow the receiving state veterinarian at the processing establishment to be able to verify such temperature maintenance during transport.
- 5.1.9 A certified copy of the original Import Health Certificate as well as the original Official Import Release Note must also accompany the import consignment to the EC approved processing establishment. The

original Import Health Certificate must be retained by the official state veterinarian for traceability and reference purposes.

5.1.10 Upon arrival at the EC approved processing establishment the import consignment must be released by the official veterinarian responsible for official controls at the plant. He/she will pay particular attention to the following aspects:

- Intact veterinary seal.
- Maintenance of the prescribed storage temperature of the fresh meat during transport. This will be done by studying the transport thermograph as well as measurements of surface product temperatures upon arrival. The original thermograph must be attached to the Movement Permit and kept for auditing purposes.
- No contamination during transport.
- Accompanying Movement Permit
- Accompanying certified copy of Import Health Certificate as prescribed in the official Import Permit.
- Accompanying original/certified copy of the Official Import Release Note.

5.1.11 After the import consignment has been approved for entry into the establishment with a view to process it for export to the EC, the import consignment will be subjected to the set traceability requirements as prescribed in paragraph 5.2.

5.2 Traceability requirements

5.2.1 The manager is responsible for development, maintenance and management of a system of traceability for all import consignments received at the processing establishment. This procedure must be included in the Hygiene Management System (HMS) of the establishment. This will require an excellent stock control system at the establishment.

5.2.2 Each pallet received must be individually identified by the manager of the establishment.

5.2.3 A Traceability Register must be kept by the manager where all identification marks of individual pallets received will be listed. From this list, traceability to both the Movement permit and the Import Health Certificate received with the import consignment must be possible. The list must also indicate the date that the product was used for processing. See Annex B attached hereto.

5.2.4 Production records must be kept for all products manufactured at the establishment. (This will already form part of the establishment's Hygiene Management Programme for traceability). Production records

must indicate the pallet identification marks of the meat that was used in the particular production batches.

- 5.2.5 Processed product traceability at the establishment must link the final product batch number to the individual pallet numbers from which the product has been prepared.

5.3 Handling of EC approved import consignments and EC approved processed products at the processing establishment

- 5.3.1 The following general principle must be adhered to when either EC approved import consignments or finished EC approved processed products are handled at the plant: There must never be any direct or indirect contact between EC approved meat & meat products and other non EC approved meat and products. This will be reflected, but not limited to the following control measures at the establishment:

- Clear identification of raw meat, either as EC approved or not.
- Separate storage of raw meat and processed products (Please read together with the definitions of 'direct contact' and 'indirect contact' under 'Definitions' above) which are either EC approved and those that are not.
- Clear identification of processed meat, either as EC approved or not.

- 5.3.2 For processing establishments where only EC approved import consignments, EC approved fresh meat and EC approved processed products are handled, no special arrangements to ensure complete segregation will be necessary.

- 5.3.3 For processing establishments where both EC approved import consignments, EC approved meat and EC approved processed products will be handled as well as non EC approved meat and processed products, the manager of the establishment must ensure that a programme is included in the establishment's HMS that will allow for complete segregation of raw meat and products as envisioned in paragraph 5.3.1 above.

- 5.3.4 Where contact between EC approved meat/products and EC non-approved meat/products occur the EC approved meat/products will lose the EC approved status and the identifying markings on the product must be changed accordingly by the manager of the establishment. This must be verified by the state veterinarian.

6. Veterinary Checks

6.1 Official import Veterinarian (At the port of entry/cold store)

- 6.1.1 The official state veterinarian will ensure that the requirements of paragraphs 5.1.1 to 5.1.9 are met.

6.2.1 Official veterinarian (At the EC approved processing establishment)

6.2.1 The official certifying veterinarian will ensure that the requirements of paragraphs 5.1.10 to 5.1.11 are met.

6.2.2 The official veterinarian will confirm that the product traceability as prescribed in paragraphs 5.2.1 to 5.2.4 above is met, by performing traceability verification from processed product to Import Health Certificates on a regular basis, but at least weekly, unless there is an indication to do so more often. Records of the traceability verifications must be kept for audit purposes. The procedure followed for traceability verification is as follows:

- Randomly select a unit of processed product and note the traceability code as prescribed in the establishment's Hygiene Management System dealing with Traceability at the plant.
- Trace the product back to the production record for the particular batch. The production record must indicate the identification number of the particular pallet(s) of the import consignment from which the batch was manufactured.
- Go to the establishment's Traceability Register (See paragraph 5.2.3 above, as well as Annex B), locate the particular pallet on the list. Confirm that the processing date recorded in the Traceability Register corresponds to the processing date recorded on the production record.
- From the Traceability Register traceability to the corresponding Import Health Certificate and the Movement Permit (from the cold store) should be possible.

6.2.3 If, and when deemed necessary, the official veterinarian will reconcile existing stock of import consignments at the establishment with the Traceability Register to verify the correct functioning of the traceability system for import consignments at the plant.

6.2.4 If, and when deemed necessary, but at least monthly, the official veterinarian will make a comparison between the total quantity of export product manufactured in a particular batch, and the total quantity of raw meat used, as reflected in the Traceability Register and on the production record sheets. He/she will verify that the quantity of raw meat used from the Traceability Register (see Annex B), as a percentage of the recipe for the product, is correct. This will act as a measure against addition of any unapproved meat. Records of this verification check must be kept for auditing purposes.

6.2.4 The official state veterinarian will confirm the product segregation as prescribed in paragraphs 5.3.1 to 5.3.4 by daily inspections, either by him/her self or his/her meat inspectors.

6.2.5 The official state veterinarian must certify exports of processed meat to the EC, only if the requirements of this VPN had been fully met. He/she must indicate on the export certificate, by means of the traceability system at the plant, the correct EC approval numbers of the abattoirs, deboning/cutting plants and cold stores from where the raw meat, used in the processing of the product, originated.

7. General requirements

It must be noted that compliance with the requirements above does not exclude any other 'own checks' and official control measures applicable to meat processing establishments. The following Hygiene Management Programmes at the establishment are of particular importance:

- Traceability and Recall procedures
- Cleaning procedures, in particular as far as the goals of this VPN are concerned, cleaning between non EC approved batches and processing of EC approved meat. The HMS must also provide for cleaning between batches of meat from different species even if both the meat from both these species are approved for EC processing.
- Supplier quality assurance programmes.

ANNEX A: MOVEMENT PERMIT FOR IMPORTED CONSIGNMENTS

MOVEMENT CERTIFICATE

For the movement of fresh meat ⁽¹⁾ from a harbour/port of entry or from an European Community (EC) approved import cold store to EC approved processing facility

Department: Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries
Directorate: Veterinary Services

I. Identification of meat

Meat of: _____
(animal species)

Nature of cuts:

Nature of packaging:

Number of cuts or packages:

Month(s) and years(s) when frozen (if applicable) ⁽²⁾: to

Net weight:

Identification marks:

Temperature of the meat at the time of loading: _____ °C

Thermograph reading at the time of departure: _____ °C

II. Origin of meat

Address(es) and veterinary approval number(s) of the approved slaughterhouse(s):

Address(es) and veterinary approval number(s) of the approved cutting plant(s):

Address(es) and veterinary approval number(s) of the approved cold store(s):

III. Destination of meat

The meat will be sent from _____
(place of loading, harbour or cold store)

to _____
(processing establishment and place of destination)

at _____
(date and time of departure)

by the following means of transport ⁽³⁾:

Seal number(s):

Name and address of consignor:

Name and address of consignee⁽⁴⁾:

IV. Attestation by the issuing officer

I, the undersigned state veterinarian, certify that:

- (a) the meat described above originated from an approved EC abattoir, was imported into South Africa on the basis on an official Import Permit, has been stored in an approved EC cold storage facility until dispatch to the processing plant, has undergone no interventions other than cold storage, has been kept at the prescribed temperature throughout and has been released for importation into South Africa;
- (b) the transport vehicles or containers and the loading conditions of this consignment meet hygiene requirements and has been loaded and sealed under official supervision and
- (c) the import consignment described on this Movement Permit is accompanied by the original/certified copy of the Import Health Certificate and the Official Import Release Note.

(Place)

(Date)

(Name and signature of the state veterinarian or meat inspector at the EC approved cold store)

- (1) Fresh meat: of all parts fit for human consumption which has not undergone any preserving process: however, chilled and frozen meat shall be considered to be fresh meat.
- (2) Optional.
- (3) In the case of rail trucks and lorries, state the registration number and, where necessary, the number of the container.
- (4) The name and address of the consignee and the name and address of the EC approved cold store must be included if the meat is destined for a cold store prior to processing.

