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# Export Meat Operational Guideline

## 3.4 Post-mortem inspection



### Purpose

This document outlines:

- principles of post-mortem inspection and disposition that apply to export-registered abattoirs and wild game, rabbit and ratite processing plants
- roles and responsibilities of Authorised Officers who perform and/or oversee post-mortem inspection on registered establishments
- principles of conducting post-mortem inspection and making disposition judgments.

### Legislative basis

Under the *Export Control Act 2020* ('the Act') and its subordinate legislation:

- Export Control (Meat and Meat Products) Rules 2021
- Export Control (Wild Game Meat and Wild Game Meat Products) Rules 2021
- Export Control (Rabbit and Ratite Meat and Rabbit and Ratite Meat Products) Rules 2021.

In relation to ante- and post-mortem inspection, the respective meat commodity rules give certain powers to authorised officers (for example On-Plant Veterinarians (OPVs) and Food Safety Meat Assessors (FSMAs) / Australian Government Authorised Officers (AAOs) acting under the supervision of a veterinary officer) including:

- animal inspections, decisions and dispositions
- animal inspections, decisions and dispositions on restricted slaughter animals, their carcass and carcass parts
- inspection and retention of animals, carcasses and carcass parts for the purposes of additional inspection and disposition.

## In this document

Principles .....	3
Requirements for authorised officers undertaking post-mortem inspection.....	3
Post-mortem inspection.....	3
Presentation of carcasses for post-mortem inspection .....	3
Site preparation for post-mortem inspection .....	4
General guidelines for observation, palpation, and incision .....	4
Observation .....	5
Palpation .....	5
Incision .....	5
Managing contamination risk during post-mortem inspection .....	5
Post-mortem disposition .....	6
Determining dispositions .....	6
Disposition categories .....	6
Disposition – passed for human consumption.....	6
Disposition – passed for human consumption and unsuitable for export .....	6
Disposition – passed for human consumption and unsuitable for export to a specified country .....	6
Disposition – retained for final disposition.....	6
Retention and trimming of pathology.....	7
Disposition – conditional slaughter (suspect or emergency slaughter).....	7
Disposition – recovered for animal food or pharmaceutical material .....	7
Disposition – condemned.....	8
Condemned material.....	8
Condemnation certificates .....	8
Application of official marks .....	9
Related material .....	9
Attachment 1: Roles and responsibilities.....	10
Roles and responsibilities .....	10
Australian Government Authorised Officer (AAO) .....	10
Food Safety Meat Assessor (FSMA) .....	11
On-Plant Veterinarian (OPV) .....	11
Attachment 2: Legislative framework .....	12
Export Control Act 2020 .....	12
Export Control (Meat and Meat Products) Rules 2021 .....	12
Export Control (Wild Game Meat and Wild Game Meat Products) Rules 2021.....	13
Export Control (Rabbit and Ratite Meat and Rabbit and Ratite Meat Products) Rules 2021 .....	13
Attachment 3: Definitions .....	14

## Principles

The following principles underpin post-mortem inspection at export meat establishments:

- Post-mortem inspection is to be undertaken using organoleptic inspection techniques in line with:
  - the requirements of the relevant Australian Standard and
  - any importing country requirement.
- In accordance with the outcomes of the Australian meat standard (AS4696) and Australian wild game meat standard (AS4464), post-mortem inspection is to be conducted at export meat establishments to ensure that unwholesome meat is excluded from the human food chain and disposed of separately.
- Post-mortem inspection must be conducted by persons who have the appropriate qualifications and experience to conduct the inspection, this may vary depending on the nature of the carcass or carcass parts that are presented for inspection.
- Post-mortem inspection of conditional slaughter animals must be performed by the OPV or performed under direct supervision of the OPV.

## Requirements for authorised officers undertaking post-mortem inspection

The qualifications required for both FSMAs and AAOs is either a:

- Certificate IV in Meat Processing (Meat Safety) or
- Certificate III in Meat Processing (Meat Safety) at the beginning of their employment as an authorised officer and then obtain within 12 months a Certificate IV.

Through the above recognised qualifications, authorised officers must understand the differences between pathology, minor pathology and food safety pathology and be diligent in their conduct of correct hygiene procedures so as to reduce the risk of contamination.

**Note:** There are a number of important terminologies that are applied to post-mortem inspection that are contained in the definition section of this guideline. The terms contaminate, incise and palpate have also been defined.

## Post-mortem inspection

### Presentation of carcasses for post-mortem inspection

Export abattoirs and wild game processing registered establishments are required to have systems for the identification and handling of animals to be slaughtered (or for wild game, carcasses to be skinned) up to the point where a post-mortem disposition is applied by an authorised officer. This is so:

- each carcass and its carcass parts are identifiable back to the source property or harvest (for wild game)
- any necessary information about the condition, treatment, exposure and slaughter (or harvest for wild game) is available to assess the wholesomeness of carcasses and carcass parts of each animal that is processed.

Carcasses and carcass parts must be presented to the authorised officer in a manner and condition that enables inspection to be effectively performed.

Prior to post-mortem inspection the authorised officer must be presented with:

- details of inspection and disposition applied to the animal from which the carcase and its parts were derived (i.e. the ante-mortem card)
- for cattle and buffalo, information about animal exposure to *Cysticercus bovis* risk properties that will require specified inspection procedures to be applied
- all information known to the registered establishment about any disease or other abnormality affecting or suspected of affecting the carcase and its parts and the animal from which they came.

### Site preparation for post-mortem inspection

Prior to the commencement of the kill (or dressing of wild game) it is essential that a post-mortem inspection station is constructed and set up for operation, as prescribed in the meat commodity rules. Each inspection position must have:

- adequate lighting (greater than 600 lux)
- operational hand wash facilities with warm water between 35 °C and 46 °C
- knife sanitiser with water at least 82 °C (or equivalent method of sanitising)
- condemn stamps and ink pads in position and ready for use.

### Inspection procedures

The relevant Australian Standard prescribes the specific inspection procedures for heads, viscera and carcasses of meat (AS4696) or wild game (AS4464) species presented for slaughter. For ratites and rabbits, the specific inspection procedures are outlined in Schedule 1 of the Export Control (Rabbit and Ratite Meat and Rabbit and Ratite Meat Products) Rules 2021.

Post-mortem inspection may comprise three separate inspection points including heads, viscera and carcase. For some species, inspection of heads is not required if material from the head is not to be recovered for human consumption.

Establishments must ensure that the carcase and all its parts remain correlated until after a disposition has been applied to the carcase and all its parts. This may not be possible if product to be retained for further inspection/disposition. If so, the approved arrangement is to demonstrate correlation procedures of the required carcase and carcase parts. In some cases, material recovered for human consumption early in the dressing process (for example: feet, small stock tongues, whole small stock heads skin-on) may be batch correlated with the associated carcasses.

Inspection procedures should involve routine checking by authorised officers of the presentation and correlation of carcase, head and viscera of individual animals. Where non-conformity in either presentation or correlation is found, this must be brought to the notice of the production supervisor so that immediate corrective action can be taken.

### General guidelines for observation, palpation, and incision

When examining abnormalities identified during post-mortem inspection, the general rule is to observe first, then palpate and finally incise. It is important to minimise unnecessary mutilation of the carcase or carcase part whenever tissue is incised during inspection.

Where a condition and/or pathological change is suspected, lymph nodes, tissues and suspect lesions may be palpated and/or incised to detect a suspected disease condition and/or pathological change taking care not to contaminate surrounding tissues.

### Observation

All exposed tissue surfaces should be observed for colour, symmetry, odour and general condition.

Where appropriate the examiner must be observant of:

- body fluids
- ear canals
- nasal, buccal and oral cavities
- tonsils
- cut surfaces of muscle and bone
- external/incised surfaces of lymph nodes and other tissues
- thoracic and abdominal cavities
- organs and intestines
- tails
- suspect lesions so as to detect disease and/or the extent of pathological change.

### Palpation

Whenever and wherever **palpation** is specified, it must be carried out diligently and be seen to include observation, and where required, access incisions.

Organ palpation should be applied firmly by the fingers, thumbs and the palms of the hands over the entire organ surface. Organs should be tightly grasped with both hands, squeezing it from above, downwards to the end so as to locate any hard lump or fluctuating fluid area. When palpating the liver, also express contents from incised bile ducts.

### Incision

In regard to incision during post-mortem inspection:

- Any and all access or specific incisions must be made in accordance with sanitary dressing procedures.
- Clean and healthy tissues should not be cross contaminated during the inspection process.

In regard to examination and incision of lymph nodes during post-mortem inspection:

- Under the Australian Export Meat Inspection System (AEMIS), lymph nodes are to be exposed and not routinely incised unless there is reason to do so (for example for animals passed for conditional slaughter as suspect or emergency slaughter animals).
- Whenever lymph nodes are incised (either directly or inadvertently) the authorised officer must follow correct hygiene procedures before continuing with inspection. **Note:** Lymph nodes can be a source of microbiological contamination.

## Managing contamination risk during post-mortem inspection

The following principles should be applied to reduce the risk of cross-contaminating carcasses and carcase parts while conducting post-mortem inspection:

- Wash hands whenever they become contaminated and before handling edible material to minimise cross contamination.
- Wash and sanitise knife and/or inspection hook in water at least 82 °C (or equivalent method of sanitising) whenever they become contaminated and before further use on edible material (including after incision of lymph nodes).
- Sanitise knife in water at least 82 °C (or equivalent method of sanitising) after removal from knife pouch and before using on edible material.

- Sanitise knife in water at least 82 °C (or equivalent method of sanitising) after steeling.

## Post-mortem disposition

### Determining dispositions

In determining the final disposition that can be applied, authorised officers must:

- follow disposition procedures that are detailed in the relevant Australian Standard for post-mortem disposition (or for rabbit and ratite detailed in Schedule 1 of the Export Control (Rabbit and Ratite Meat and Rabbit and Ratite Meat Products) Rules 2021)
- ensure any applicable importing country requirements as detailed in the Manual of Importing Country Requirements (Micor) are met
- follow departmental work instructions.

### Disposition categories

The dispositions that can be applied to a carcase (or wild game carcase) and its parts are:

- passed for human consumption and eligible for export
- passed for human consumption and unsuitable for export
- passed for human consumption unsuitable for export to a specified country
- passed for human consumption subject to further treatment
- retained for final disposition
- conditional slaughter (suspect or emergency slaughter)
- unfit for human consumption and may be recovered for animal food
- unfit for human consumption and may be recovered for pharmaceutical material (except not for wild game carcasses and parts)
- condemned.

### Disposition – passed for human consumption

If the carcase and carcase parts are inspected and found wholesome and fit for human consumption no further action is required. The meat/meat product are processed in accordance with the establishment's approved arrangement.

### Disposition – passed for human consumption and unsuitable for export

If the carcase and carcase parts are inspected and found wholesome and fit for human consumption but are deemed not suitable for export, the carcase is suitable for the domestic market. The meat/meat product are processed in accordance with the establishment's approved arrangement for product unsuitable for export.

### Disposition – passed for human consumption and unsuitable for export to a specified country

If the carcase and carcase parts are inspected and found wholesome and fit for human consumption, but are deemed not suitable for export to a specific country, the meat/meat product are processed in accordance with the establishment's approved arrangement for product for the country of export for which the product is eligible.

### Disposition – retained for final disposition

If there is uncertainty about the disposition and/or reasons to doubt the significance of the findings, the carcase and/or its parts should be retained for further inspection and disposition by the OPV. In these cases, the other authorised officers on the chain must be informed in order that they can retain the correlated carcase and/or its parts.

Carcases and carcase parts identified for retention for final disposition are to be:

- diverted by establishment employees to a designated retain rail and/or physically separated from carcasses that have been passed as fit for human consumption
- retained separate until the final disposition is determined by an authorised officer.

#### *Retention and trimming of pathology*

Where carcasses have been passed for human consumption subject to the condition or requirement that minor pathology is removed, it can be removed by trained establishment operators provided an authorised officer has identified the defects requiring removal.

Minor pathology can be removed either:

- on the processing line
- on the retain rail, or
- in the boning room, provided the procedure to be used is documented in the occupier's approved arrangement.

Unless there is a documented procedure in the approved arrangement that allows establishment operators to clear trimmed product on the processing line or off the retain rail, an authorised officer must assess the effectiveness of trimming when it is completed or before the product leaves the retain rail.

If, during post-mortem inspection, an authorised officer is unsure of the cause of an abnormality or they suspect a notifiable disease, they must ensure:

- the carcase and its parts are retained
- to record the details of their findings against the lot or individual animal number
- to notify the OPV as soon as possible for further action.

In some circumstances (for example suspect eosinophilic myositis) a carcase may be retained for 'boning under supervision' in the boning room, before the final disposition can be applied. Establishments are required to have a documented program in the approved arrangement for this practice.

### **Disposition – conditional slaughter (suspect or emergency slaughter)**

- During ante-mortem inspection animals may be passed for slaughter subject to conditions.
- Conditional slaughter may be as a 'suspect' or an emergency slaughter animal.
- In both cases the animal and its carcase are identified to the point of post-mortem inspection by a conditional slaughter card (previously known as an ECA-1 card).
- Authorised officers must maintain control over the disposition of the carcase and carcase parts until a final disposition is applied by the OPV.
- A record of the post-mortem examination findings and disposition is to be written and signed by the OPV on the reverse side of the suspect card.

### **Disposition – recovered for animal food or pharmaceutical material**

Carcasses and carcase parts classified with a disposition of unfit for human consumption, but which may be recovered for animal food or pharmaceutical material (where approved) are to be marked appropriately and diverted by establishment operators to the particular end use determined by the authorised officer conducting post-mortem inspection. The method of identification used to identify animal food and pharmaceutical material at post-mortem inspection should be documented in the occupier's approved arrangement.

## Disposition – condemned

The policy on condemnation certificates is as follows:

- Only animals entering the registered establishment boundaries alive are applicable for a condemnation certificate.
- Condemnation certificates are not to be provided where the animal is dead on arrival, or is located outside the registered establishment boundaries.

### *Condemned material*

Processing of condemned carcasses and carcase parts occurs as follows:

- A mark is applied with the condemn stamp using specified condemned ink.
- Product is diverted (i.e. condemned product chute or otherwise) for further treatment or disposal.
- Details of condemned carcasses including the lot or individual animal number and reason for condemnation are recorded.
- These details are provided to OPVs for recording purposes, regardless of whether a certificate is issued.

### *Condemnation certificates*

In relation to condemnation, a department employed authorised officer (for example OPV or FSMA) may give a certificate of condemnation (EX83) for an animal, carcase or carcase part.

An AAO can issue an approved company condemnation certificate, provided it is documented and approved in the approved arrangement and does not purport to be a government certificate.

A condemnation certificate may be issued by an authorised officer if all of following conditions are met:

- the establishment occupier requests a condemnation certificate in writing via a request from within one month of the day after the animal, carcase or carcase part was condemned  
[Note: once a condemnation certificate is requested by the establishment in writing (with necessary justifying information), the authorised officer is required to provide the certificate within 7 days from date of notification]
- the animal(s) entered the registered establishment boundaries alive
- the OPV has seen the animal(s)
- the animal(s) can be appropriately identified (the holder of the approved arrangement must have the relevant records to demonstrate the ownership of the relevant animal, carcase or carcase part that was condemned)
- records support that the carcase was condemned.

Where a condemnation certificate is issued:

- The animal(s) identification is recorded on the certificate
  - for cattle (and Victorian sheep/goats) this is the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) tag number/ radio frequency identification device (RFID) number
  - for small stock, sheep/goat ear tag number(s) or suitable documented sourcing information such as National Vendor Declaration (NVD), deer/ratite vendor declaration is acceptable.



## Application of official marks

The application of official marks occurs as follows:

- The appropriate official mark is applied (in a site and manner that ensures it is legible) by designated establishment staff as soon as practical after the carcass and carcass parts are dressed and before they are removed from the establishment, unless the approved arrangement expressly specifies that official marks do not have to be applied to carcasses and carcass parts.
- The establishment may apply appropriate inspection stamps to edible offal and individual wrapped meat cuts that are capable of bearing a legible impression (this is not a responsibility of department authorised officers).

The types of inspection official marks applied to a carcass/side/carton of meat passed as fit for human consumption following post-mortem inspection include:

- **Australia Inspected** (for AS 4696 meat species)
- **Australia Approved** (for wild game meat species)
- Lamb – Australia Inspected (for lamb)
- Australia Inspected (for ratites)
- **Lamb – Australia Approved** (for lamb derived from registered establishments that are under a State/Territory audit and inspection arrangement)
- **Australia Approved** (for AS 4696 meat species derived from registered establishments that are under a State/Territory audit and inspection arrangement)
- **Approved for Export** (for wild game meat species derived from registered establishments that are under a State/Territory audit and inspection arrangement).

## Related material

The following related material is available on the department's website:

- Webpage: [ELMER 3 – Electronic legislation, manuals and essential references](#)
- Webpage: [Approved arrangement guidelines – Meat](#)
- Webpage: [Approved arrangement guidelines – Wild game meat](#)
- Webpage: [Approved arrangement guidelines – Poultry](#)
- Webpage: [Export Meat Regulatory Action and Sanctions Policy](#)
- Webpage: [Eligibility criteria for Tier 2 export establishments to move to an annual audit frequency](#)
- PDF: [Export Meat Operational Guideline 3.15 Retention](#)

The following related material is available on the internet:

- Webpage: [Export Control Act 2020](#)
- Webpage: [Export Control \(Meat and Meat Products\) Rules 2021](#)
- Webpage: [Export Control \(Wild Game Meat and Wild Game Meat Products\) Rules 2021](#)
- Webpage: [Export Control \(Rabbit and Ratite Meat and Rabbit and Ratite Meat Products\) Rules 2021](#)
- Webpage: [Export Control \(Poultry Meat and Poultry Meat Products\) Rules 2021](#)
- PDF: [Australian standard for the hygienic production and transportation of meat and meat products for human consumption \(AS4696\)](#)
- PDF: [Australian standard for the hygienic production of wild game meat for human consumption \(AS4464\)](#)

# Attachment 1: Roles and responsibilities

## Roles and responsibilities

Post-mortem inspection is conducted by either Food Safety Meat Assessors (FSMAs) and/or Australian Government Authorised Officers (AAOs) depending on the particular inspection model the export establishment operates under the Australian Export Meat Inspection System (AEMIS). An OPV may also conduct post-mortem inspection.

Where the establishment has either an OPV or FSMA(s) performing meat inspection, the chain speed must be set in accordance with the Meat Inspection Staffing Standard (MISS).

The following table outlines the roles and responsibilities undertaken in this guideline.

## Australian Government Authorised Officer (AAO)

- Check ante-mortem cards or other approved notification for the lot, or in the case of wild game harvester carcass tags, on arrival at the inspection point and verify that the animals were passed for slaughter (or skinning).
- Store the ante-mortem card in a place where it may be readily seen.
- Monitor carcasses and carcass parts to ensure that they are correlated until a post-mortem disposition has been applied.
- Notify the relevant establishment personnel of any non-conformity in either carcass and carcass part presentation or correlation so that immediate corrective action can be taken.
- Conduct post-mortem inspection of carcasses and/or carcass parts in accordance with this guideline, the relevant Australian Standard, department-issued post-mortem work instructions and importing country requirements.
- Make dispositions on carcasses and/or carcass parts relevant to the post-mortem inspection findings and in accordance with the relevant Australian Standard and/or importing country requirements.
- Under the supervision of an OPV, undertake post-mortem examination on animals that are presented for conditional slaughter as a suspect or emergency slaughter animal.
- Under the supervision of an OPV, apply final dispositions to the carcass and carcass parts of animals with an ante-mortem disposition of conditional slaughter as a suspect or emergency slaughter animal.
- For condemnations, record the animal identification and reasons for condemnation.
- Issue and sign approved company condemnation certificates.
- Retain animals, carcasses and carcass parts for further inspection and disposition.
- Apply retain tags.
- Remove retain tags after further inspection and disposition have been applied (except for department-issued Department Retention Tags).

## Food Safety Meat Assessor (FSMA)

- Check ante-mortem cards or other approved notification for the lot, or in the case of wild game harvester carcass tags, on arrival at the inspection point and verify that the animals were passed for slaughter (or skinning).
- Store the ante-mortem card in a place where it may be readily seen.
- Monitor carcasses and carcass parts to ensure that they are correlated until a post-mortem disposition has been applied.
- Notify the relevant establishment personnel of any non-conformity in either carcass and carcass part presentation or correlation so that immediate corrective action can be taken.
- Conduct post-mortem inspection of carcasses and/or carcass parts in accordance with this guideline, the relevant Australian Standard, department-issued post-mortem work instructions and importing country requirements.
- Make dispositions on carcasses and/or carcass parts relevant to the post-mortem inspection findings and in accordance with the relevant Australian Standard, post-mortem decision notes or importing country requirements.
- Under supervision of an OPV, undertake post-mortem examination on animals that are presented for conditional slaughter as a suspect or emergency slaughter animal.
- Under supervision of an OPV, apply final dispositions to the carcass and carcass parts of animals with an ante-mortem disposition of conditional slaughter as a suspect or emergency slaughter animal.
- For condemnations, record the animal identification and reason(s) for condemnation.
- Issue and sign department-issued EX83 condemnation certificates.
- Retain animals, carcasses and carcass parts for further inspection and disposition.
- Apply retain tags.
- Remove retain tags after further inspection and disposition have been applied.

## On-Plant Veterinarian (OPV)

- Ensure authorised officers, departmental and AAOs are provided with the resources and conditions necessary to conduct post-mortem inspection in accordance with the relevant department work instructions.
- Provide short-term relief (for emergency situations) of post-mortem inspection where it is performed by FSMAs.
- Make disposition decisions, in conjunction with other authorised officers, relevant to post-mortem inspection findings on carcasses and/or carcass parts.
- Undertake post-mortem examination on animals that are presented for conditional slaughter as a suspect or emergency slaughter animal.
- Apply final dispositions to the carcass and carcass parts of animals with an ante-mortem disposition of conditional slaughter as a suspect or emergency slaughter animal.
- Issue and sign department-issued EX83 condemnation certificates.
- Maintain records of conditional slaughter animals.
- Apply retain tags.
- Remove any retain tag after further inspection and disposition have been applied.

## Attachment 2: Legislative framework

The following tables outline the legislation and standards that apply to post-mortem meat inspection and disposition judgements.

### Export Control Act 2020

**Table 1 Export Control Act 2020**

Relevant legislation	How it applies
Section 291	Authorisation of authorised officers with powers specified in the instrument.
Section 112(2)(d)	Requires an occupier to have an approved arrangement that describes how they will prepare meat and meat products for export.

### Export Control (Meat and Meat Products) Rules 2021

**Table 2 Export Control (Meat and Meat Products) Rules 2021**

Relevant legislation / standard	How it applies
Sections 4-3, 5-6	Requirements of the Australian Meat Standard other than exempted clauses must be met.
Chapter 9, Part 4, Division 2	Confers powers and functions on authorised officers for carrying out or giving effect to the Act for inspections, decisions, dispositions, audit and other functions of authorised officers.
Chapter 9, Part 4, Division 2, and Section 9-34 And Chapter 9, Part 4, Division 2 of the <i>Export Control Act 2020</i>	Outlines the functions and directions powers of authorised officers.
Chapter 9, Part 4, Division 2, section 9-24	Outlines the requirements for post-mortem inspection procedures and disposition criteria to be applied to carcass and carcass parts by authorised officers.
Australian standard for the hygienic production and transportation of meat and meat products – AS4696:2023 (Australian Meat Standard), Schedules 2 and 3	Outlines the post-mortem inspection procedures and disposition criteria to be applied by authorised officers.

## Export Control (Wild Game Meat and Wild Game Meat Products) Rules 2021

**Table 3 Export Control (Wild Game Meat and Wild Game Meat Products) Rules 2021**

Relevant legislation / standard	How it applies
Sections 4-3, and 5-5	Incorporates the Wild Game Meat Standard and modified Australian Meat Standard.
Chapter 9, Part 4, Division 2, and section 9-32 And Chapter 9, Part 4, Division 2 of the <i>Export Control Act 2020</i>	Outlines the functions and powers of authorised officers.
Chapter 9, Part 4, Division 2, section 9-22 and Australian standard for the hygienic production of wild game meat for human consumption – AS4464:2007 (Wild Game Meat Standard), Appendices	Outlines the post-mortem inspection procedures and disposition criteria to be applied by authorised officers.

## Export Control (Rabbit and Ratite Meat and Rabbit and Ratite Meat Products) Rules 2021

**Table 4 Export Control (Rabbit and Ratite Meat and Rabbit and Ratite Meat Products) Rules 2021**

Relevant legislation / standard	How it applies
Sections 4-3, 5-5	Requirements of the Australian Meat Standard other than exempted clauses must be met.
Chapter 9, Part 4, Division 2	Confers powers and functions on authorised officers for carrying out or giving effect to the Act for inspections, decisions, dispositions, audit and other functions of authorised officers.
Chapter 9, Part 4, Division 2, and Section 9-36 And Chapter 9, Part 4, Division 2 of the <i>Export Control Act 2020</i>	Outlines the functions and directions powers of authorised officers.
(Rabbit) Chapter 9, Part 4, Division 2, sections 9-24, 9-25, and Schedule 1, Part 1	Outlines the requirements for post-mortem inspection procedures and disposition criteria to be applied to carcass and carcass parts by authorised officers.
(Ratite) Chapter 9, Part 4, Division 2, sections 9-24, 9-26, and Schedule 1, Part 2	Outlines the requirements for post-mortem inspection procedures and disposition criteria to be applied to carcass and carcass parts by authorised officers.

## Attachment 3: Definitions

### Animal food

As defined in the Australian standard for the hygienic production and transportation of meat and meat products for human consumption (AS 4696:2023) means:

- a part of the animal or a meat product to which a disposition has been applied enabling it to be recovered for animal food; and
- inedible material for use for food for animals.

### Ante-mortem card

A department-issued card signed by an authorised officer to identify animals that have passed ante-mortem inspection and are deemed fit for slaughter for human consumption.

There are two types of ante-mortem card in use:

- buff coloured for non-European Union animals
- blue coloured for European Union-eligible animals.

### Approved arrangement

An approved arrangement under Chapter 5 of the *Export Control Act 2020*.

An arrangement for a kind of export operations in relation to a kind of prescribed goods approved by the secretary.

An approved arrangement:

- documents the controls and processes to be followed when undertaking export operations in relation to prescribed goods for export
- enables the Secretary to have oversight of specific export operations.

### Australian Export Meat Inspection System

The Australian Export Meat Inspection System (AEMIS) is an integrated set of controls specified and verified by Government that ensure the safety, suitability and integrity of Australian meat and meat products. Underpinning AEMIS are objective hygiene and performance standards which are continually monitored.

### Australian Government Authorised Officer (AAO)

Means an authorised officer who is authorised under Chapter 9 Part 4 of the Export Control (Meat and Meat Products) Rules 2021 to perform the services for the purposes of the Australian Export Meat Inspection System (AEMIS). AAOs conduct authorised officer functions described in the Australian Meat Standard as permitted by the AAO's instrument of authorisation.

### Australian Meat Standard

The Australian standard for the hygienic production and transportation of meat and meat Products for Human Consumption (AS 4696:2023).

### Australian Wild Game Meat Standard

The Australian standard for the hygienic production of wild game meat for human consumption (AS 4464:2007).

### Authorised officer

Means (except as provided by section 324) a person who is authorised under section 291 to be an authorised officer under the *Export Control Act 2020*. This includes OPVs and FSMAs employed by the department and AAOs.

### **Bone under supervision**

Is a retain classification used in situations where carcase/carcase parts have been identified during the slaughter as potentially having a condition whereby, for disposition purposes:

- the extent of the lesion(s) is unable to be immediately determined on the slaughter floor
- that may warrant total or partial condemnation depending on the extent of the condition within the carcase/carcase parts.

The boning process is undertaken under the supervision of an authorised officer.

### **Condemnation certificates (EX83)**

A department-issued certificate signed by either an FSMA or an OPV, at the request of the establishment management, which is used to declare the post-mortem inspection disposition that resulted in a carcase being condemned.

### **Condemned material**

For a red meat species means, an animal, carcase, carcase part, meat or meat product (including part of a carcase or carcase part) that is condemned under the Australian Meat Standard or to which one of the following dispositions is applied:

- unfit for human consumption and may be recovered for animal food
- unfit for human consumption and may be recovered for pharmaceutical material, or
- condemned.

For a wild game carcase or wild game carcase part, means that the carcase or carcase part is not suitable for human or animal food and requires destruction.

### **Conditional slaughter card**

The Conditional slaughter card is a department-issued card signed by the OPV, which identifies an animal that has been given a disposition during ante-mortem inspection as passed for conditional slaughter. It is used to identify suspect and emergency slaughter animals.

These animals become 'retained'. A conditional slaughter card with identification details and ante-mortem remarks accompanies the animal and the animal's carcase (following slaughter) to the post-mortem inspection point.

Conditional slaughter cards have post-mortem findings and disposition of the carcase and carcase parts recorded on the reverse of the card and are retained for auditing purposes.

Note: Not applicable to a wild game carcase and its parts.

### **Contaminate**

Means to directly or indirectly transmit objectionable matter, whether visible or invisible, to a meat or meat product (or wild game/ratite meat/product) and includes:

- to transmit the matter to any animal from which meat and meat products (or wild game/ratite meat/products) are derived, or
- to any surface that may directly or indirectly come into contact with meat or meat products (or wild game meat/products).

### **Contamination**

The presence of objectionable matter may include:

- residues
- micro-organisms
- matter subjected to ionising radiation contrary to the Food Standards Code
- any substance which may compromise food safety or wholesomeness.

### **Emergency slaughter**

As defined in Australian Meat Standard means slaughter by necessity of any animal that:

- has recently suffered traumatic injury or is affected or suspected of being affected by a disease or other abnormality; and
- is in pain or is likely to deteriorate unless it is killed immediately.

### **Food Safety Meat Assessor**

Commonwealth authorised officer who has meat inspection qualifications and works on export-registered slaughtering establishments. The tasks undertaken by an FSMA is dependent upon the particular AEMIS model that the establishment runs.

### **Food Safety Pathology**

A pathological condition that could result in condemnation of the carcase and/or its parts and that poses a risk to human health. For example, signs of:

- septicemia/toxaemia
- pyaemia
- viable *Cysticercus bovis*.

### **Food Standards Code**

The Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

### **Harvester carcase tag**

An approved tag that is signed and applied by a state or territory approved field harvester, to the carcase of a wild game animal to:

- identify the place of harvest
- record the date and time of killing
- declare that that no abnormalities in behaviour were observed before killing
- declare that no abnormalities were observed during examination of the body and removed viscera
- declare that the prescribed time requirements between killing and transportation to field depot or wild game processing facility were met.

### **Incise/incision**

In relation to post-mortem inspection, means to examine by observation and multiple slicing.

### **Meat safety inspector**

As defined in the Australian Meat Standard 2023 means an individual who:

- (a) is given approval by the controlling authority to inspect animals, meat and meat products and to apply dispositions; and
- (b) holds qualifications that are approved by the controlling authority as being qualifications required for the purpose of the inspection of animals, meat and meat products, the making of dispositions and the control of hygiene.

### **Minor pathology**

Small areas of circumscribed pathology, which can be easily identified and removed (for example adhesions, small area of pleurisy, fractured rib and grass seeds).



**Official mark**

A stamp, seal, label or mark applied by a method permitted by the export legislation. The dimensions and design of official marks are described in the legislation.

**On-Plant Veterinarian (OPV)**

A Commonwealth authorised officer with veterinary qualifications registrable in a state or territory of Australia who is based on an export-registered slaughtering establishment.

**On-plant regulatory team**

The on-plant regulatory team includes the OPV and FSMAs. It also includes AAOs during performance of their official duties.

**Organoleptic inspection**

To grossly examine a carcase or carcase part using the senses of sight, touch and smell.

**Palpate**

In relation to post-mortem inspection, means to examine by observation and palpation. Palpation uses the sense of touch and pressure to feel surface and deep structures in viscera or muscle to detect any abnormality.

**Pathology**

Changes to normal tissues, structures or bodily functions, including pathological conditions due to infectious, neoplastic, parasitic, metabolic or physical causes.

**Pharmaceutical material**

A part of any animal or a meat product to which a disposition has been applied enabling it to be recovered for pharmaceutical material.

Inedible material for pharmaceutical use.

Note: Not applicable to a wild game carcase and its parts.

## Retain tags

There are three types of official retain tag as detailed in the following table.

**Table 5 Retain tags**

Retain tag	Definition
Conditional slaughter card (former ECA-1)	A department-issued card signed by the OPV, which identifies an animal that has been given a disposition during ante-mortem inspection as passed for conditional slaughter. It is used to identify suspect and emergency slaughter animals.
Stock retention tag* (former ECA-2 and ECA-3 tags)	A department-issued tag that is applied by an authorised officer to a small stock or large stock carcass and/or carcass parts for the purpose of further inspection to make a final disposition.
Department retention tag Rejected/Retained (former ECA-4 tag)	<p>A department-issued tag that is applied by an authorised officer to a carcass and/or carcass parts for the purpose of further inspection to make a final disposition.</p> <p>These tags can also be used to retain/reject products (including ingredients and additives), equipment, work areas or rooms and stock pens or races.</p> <p>Note: This tag can only be removed by a department OPV or under their supervision.</p>

\* Only one type of 'stock retention tag' will be used for both small and large stock and will replace the ECA-2 (small stock retention) tag and ECA-3 (large stock retention) tag. Refer to [Export Meat Operational Guideline 3.15 Retention](#).