

March 2023

Export Meat Operational Policy

1.0 Animal welfare



Purpose

This document outlines the department's operational policy to ensure the management of animal welfare at export establishments (processing red meat livestock species and wild game) remains compliant with relevant export legislation, Australian standards, state, and territory legislative requirements, and importing country requirements.

This policy applies to Tier 2 establishments (including those with limited market access) that are under full-time departmental veterinary supervision. Tier 1 establishments are managed by state and territory governments on behalf of the department.

Legislative basis

Under the Export Control (Meat and Meat Products) Rules 2021 (the Rules) and Export Control (Wild Game Meat and Wild Game Meat Products) Rules 2021, red meat abattoirs and game meat processors are bound to comply with:

- their approved arrangement (including animal welfare standard operating procedures)
- the relevant Australian standard that includes animal welfare components
- importing country requirements (including animal welfare standards additional to Australian standards).

Under constitutional arrangements, state and territory governments are responsible for animal production and welfare laws and their enforcement and prosecution.

Principles

- All participants within the supply chain have a duty of care for animal welfare while animals are in their care.
- On export-registered abattoirs, the responsibility for animal welfare begins when livestock arrive on plant and ends at the completion of slaughter. On export-registered wild game establishments, the duty of care is at the point of receival where wild game carcases are monitored for evidence of non-head shot wounds.
- Where animal welfare incidents are identified, action must be taken to ensure that they are rectified immediately and effectively.

Animal handling practices

- The department, through the On-Plant Veterinarian, will verify the animal handling practices conducted at export-registered establishments to ensure that animals are handled appropriately from the point of unloading up to, and including, the completion of slaughter.
- The department, through Area Technical Manager auditors, will verify export-registered establishment's animal handling procedures as detailed in their approved arrangement, at audit. AUS-MEAT will undertake this audit function on behalf of the department for AAWCS-certified export-registered establishments.
- Non-compliance will be managed through corrective action requests.
- Export-registered meat establishments are to adhere to the department's requirements under the Export Meat Operational Guideline 1.1 Animal welfare from arrival to completion of slaughter.

Animal welfare incident identification, response, and reporting

- Export-registered establishments are expected to identify and actively manage animal welfare incidents. The department, through the On-Plant Veterinarian, will direct the establishment to undertake action where an incident has not been identified by the establishment, or where the establishment is not undertaking appropriate action.
- The department, through the On-Plant Veterinarian and central office, will ensure that all animal welfare incident reports are provided to the relevant state/territory authorities.
- The department will assist in the provision of evidence, and professional advice (through the On-Plant Veterinarian) and reporting to the relevant state/territory authorities.
- Establishments are expected to comply with state/territory legislative requirements in regard to animal welfare incidents, and are to follow direction given by the department in order to assist state/territory governments to investigate animal welfare incidents.
- The department will keep a central database of animal welfare incident reports from all export -registered establishments.
- Export-registered meat establishments are to adhere to the department's requirements under the Export Meat Operational Guideline 1.2 Animal welfare incident reporting.

Animal welfare assurance system

- The department recognises the voluntary Australian Livestock Processing Industry Animal Welfare Certification System (AAWCS) and has an agreement in place for AUS-MEAT to audit the animal welfare assurance system in regard to AAWCS-certified establishments, on the department's behalf.
- Where establishments are certified to the AAWCS program, and recognition is captured in the
 establishment's approved arrangement, the department will reduce the audit scope for the
 animal welfare component.
- Export-registered meat establishments are to adhere to the department's requirements under the Export Meat Operational Guideline 1.3 Department-recognised animal welfare system.

Related material

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

- PDF: Export Meat Operational Guideline 1.1 Animal welfare from arrival to completion of slaughter
- PDF: Export Meat Operational Guideline 1.2 Animal welfare incident reporting
- PDF: Export Meat Operational Guideline 1.3 Department-recognised animal welfare system
- PDF: Export Meat Operational Guideline 13.10 Critical incident response
- Webpage: Approved arrangement guidelines Meat
- Webpage: <u>Approved arrangement guidelines Wild game meat</u>
- Webpage: <u>Meat Export Regulatory Action and Sanctions Policy</u>
- Webpage: Quick Reference Card Animal Welfare Regulatory Management
- Webpage: State and Territory Government Animal Welfare Links and Legislation

The following related material is available on the internet:

- Webpage: <u>Export Control Act 2020</u>
- Webpage: Export Control (Meat and Meat Products) Rules 2021
- Webpage: Export Control (Wild Game Meat and Wild Game Meat Products) Rules 2021
- PDF: <u>Australian standard for the hygienic production and transportation of meat and meat products for human consumption</u>
- Webpage: <u>Land Transport</u>
- Webpage: <u>Is the animal fit to load?</u>
- Webpage: <u>The Australian Livestock Processing Industry Animal Welfare Certification System</u>
 (AAWCS)
- Webpage: Industry Animal Welfare Standards Third Edition
- PDF: <u>Is it fit for the intended journey?</u>

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