



## Meat notice

<b>Meat notice number:</b>	<b>2016/04</b>
<b>Meat notice title:</b>	<b>Changes to the Thermal Process Approval arrangements for low acid canned foods containing meat</b>
<b>Category:</b>	Instructions to departmental staff and meat industry

NSFS reference	Issue date	Date of effect	Review date
24	20 July 2016	Immediate	20 July 2018

Contact officers	Distribution categories
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### Implementation schedule (to be completed by the departmental on-plant officer)

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_ Date discussed with Est. management: \_\_\_\_\_

Initial implementation date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Management representative initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. on-plant officer initials: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. Purpose

To advise the meat industry conducting thermal process operations that they need to appraise the trial thermal process data for new canned products and approve their Thermal Process Applications (EX30) through a qualified approved cannery person (Approved Person). The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (the department) will verify the process through periodic audits.

This meat notice supersedes 2009/10.

#### 2. Scope

This notice applies to export registered canning establishments conducting thermal processing for low acid canned foods containing meat in hermetically sealed containers where thermal processing results in commercial sterility.

### 3. Background

The Clauses 13.10 to 13.13 of the *Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption (AS 4696:2007)* require the canned meat products to be wholesome, commercially sterile, shelf-stable and stored in a hygienic environment. To ensure compliance with the above requirements, meat notice 2009/10 required that all establishments producing thermally treated and hermetically sealed products submit their trial thermal process data to a departmental nominated Approved Person in the Central Office for appraisal and approval.

The department in consultation with the meat industry decided that the establishments would take on the responsibility of initial approval of the thermal processes. Such approvals must occur through an Approved Person (i.e. a qualified approved cannery person who has successfully completed the 'Approved Persons Course for the Thermal Processing of Low Acid Foods' or equivalent), by employing directly or taking the services of an external Approved Person. All training records and/or qualifications must be kept and made available on request during audit.

### 4. Responsibilities

#### 4.1. Export Registered Canning Establishments:

##### 4.1.1. Establishments that are currently approved to conduct thermal processing:

- Must conduct thermal process heat penetration trials and process calculations for new low acid canned food products containing meat as the minimum validation data that underpins the company HACCP program.
- Must be able to demonstrate that the thermal processing of low acid canned foods containing meat is conducted in accordance with a validated thermal process.
- All validation of data must be performed by an Approved Person.
  - The Approved Person must have demonstrated capability to conduct thermal process trials and validation of trial data.
- Deviations to any scheduled thermal process must be assessed and records must include a clear determination of the final disposition of the assessment outcome, including evidence that the product is commercially sterile and safe to eat.

##### 4.1.2. Establishments that are not currently approved to conduct thermal processing:

- Establishments wishing to start conducting thermal processing or other new processes for canned export products for the first time must seek approval of the arrangement from the department (departmental auditor) prior to implementation, which will involve:
  - Submission of a new arrangement (or variation to an arrangement) for approval (including thermal processing procedures)
  - Inspection of equipment, premise and process by the departmental auditor (Food Safety Auditors) and the formal approval of the arrangement
  - Once the arrangement is approved, follow the steps as given in 4.1.1 above.

**4.1.3.** Establishments will be responsible for ensuring the scheduled thermal processes conducted meet the requirements for thermal processing and results in commercially sterile thermally processed foods. To meet the requirements, establishments must maintain:

- Personnel records including skills and knowledge of all Approved Persons (company employed and/or external)
- Validation data for each thermal process (including heat penetration trials, thermal process calculations) that has been signed off by the Approved Person
- All other relevant records as required in accordance with the approved arrangement, including calibration and critical control point monitoring records (e.g. cooling water seam and can inspection records).

#### **4.2. Departmental on-plant officers (if appointed):**

- Provide establishment management with a copy of this meat notice as soon as possible
- Verify the establishment responsibilities and actions of this meat notice have been included in the establishment's arrangement
- Verify the establishment complies with the requirements of this notice.

#### **4.3. Senior Food Safety Auditors:**

- Provide establishment management with a copy of this meat notice where there is no permanent on-plant departmental officers appointed
- Review and approve the establishment's approved arrangement or amendment to the existing approved arrangement
- Verify through audits the establishment's new and existing thermal processes for compliance with relevant export legislation, importing country requirements and Australian standards
- Ensure the Approved Person is appropriately qualified.

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