

Chapter 7:

It's the Law II!

Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, you will be familiar with:

- The legislation that applies to the safety of meat and poultry products
- The different responsibilities of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and the Regulatory Services Division of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) in regards to meat and poultry products
- The legislation/regulations that apply if you are selling meat and poultry products interprovincially

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Mike and Elizabeth Learn the Regulations

In order to comply with legislation and regulations, Mike and Elizabeth must plan carefully and make a number of important decisions.

The food safety committee of the urban market at which Mike and Elizabeth sell requires all meat vendors to provide proof of inspected slaughter and processing. Most market days the market manager checks the meat and poultry products for proof of inspection.

Proof of inspection is easy for their poultry because each bird comes from the processor with a colored metal inspection tag attached to the wing or label on the plastic bag. However, Mike and Elizabeth realize that they need some form of proof for their individual pork products because only the carcass is stamped by the inspector. They talk to their processor who refers them to the Alberta Agriculture inspector. The inspector informs them that they can be issued a small inspection stamp for use on the butcher wrapped cuts, but nothing is available for use on the cryovac sausage packages.

In evaluating the opportunities at the farmers' market in British Columbia, Mike and Elizabeth realize that since this market and the urban market both run on Saturdays, they will have to purchase a second vehicle. They will have to increase their on-farm storage as well. They need to talk to their local health inspector to determine if their food establishment permit will cover the second vehicle and to discuss the requirements for the on-farm storage.

Then Mike and Elizabeth learn that to sell their products in British Columbia, the animals have to be slaughtered, and the meat processed and stored in federally registered facilities in Alberta. They find a federal facility for their pork but not for their poultry. One way around this problem is to take their live birds to a provincially registered facility in British Columbia for slaughter and processing. The frozen poultry will need to be stored in a British Columbia permitted facility and sold only in that province.

Mike and Elizabeth are currently evaluating the costs/benefits of all their options.



The Alberta Meat Inspection Act and Meat Inspection Regulation govern the slaughter and processing of meat and poultry products in Alberta. The Canada Meat Inspection Act and Regulations applies to the slaughter and processing of meat and poultry products in federally registered facilities for sale beyond Alberta.

Legislation and Related Regulations

This resource discusses only those regulatory requirements that pertain to food safety, especially those food safety issues specific to farm direct marketing channels. It is up to you to research and follow *all* the regulations that pertain to your farmers' market or farm direct business from production through processing and marketing.

As noted in Chapter 6, the *Food and Drugs Act* is the primary legislation that applies to all food sold in Canada, whether imported or domestic. Producers and processors should be aware there is also federal and provincial legislation specific to the slaughter and processing of meat and poultry products.

Meat Inspection Acts

The Alberta *Meat Inspection Act* and Meat Inspection Regulation apply to the slaughter and processing of meat and poultry products in Alberta. The federal legislation, the Canada *Meat Inspection Act* and Meat Inspection Regulations, applies to the slaughter and processing of meat and poultry products for sale interprovincially and internationally.

Both pieces of legislation govern the registration and licensing of facilities and prescribe requirements for the facilities and equipment to be used. Procedures and standards for registered establishments to ensure the humane treatment and slaughter of animals and hygienic processing and handling of meat products are also outlined.



For more information on the Canada *Meat Inspection Act* and regulations visit the CFIA website at www.inspection.gc.ca/english/reg/rege.shtml

Information on the Alberta *Meat Inspection Act* and regulation can be found on the website for the Alberta Queen's Printer at www.qp.gov.ab.ca/catalogue/catalog_results.cfm?frm_isbn=0779722493&search_by=link

or Ropin' the Web at [www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/acts6137](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/acts6137)

The Alberta *Meat Inspection Act* defines the following:

Abattoir – “any premises or facility, including a multi-location abattoir, where animals are slaughtered, or where animals are slaughtered and any or all of the following take place: meat is cut, wrapped, frozen, cured, smoked or aged.”

Multi-location abattoir – “an abattoir that is portable and that may be mounted on a vehicle.”

Section 5 of the Alberta *Meat Inspection Act* reads as follows:

“No person shall sell, offer for sale, transport or deliver meat to any person unless...

- a. The animal from which the meat was obtained was inspected by an Inspector.*
- b. The slaughter of the animal took place at a provincial abattoir or at a federal establishment.*
- c. There was a post-mortem inspection of the carcass of the animal from which the meat was obtained, conducted by an Inspector immediately after the slaughter of the animal.*
- d. The meat is judged by an Inspector to be healthy and fit for human consumption and that the meat is stamped with an inspection legend.”*

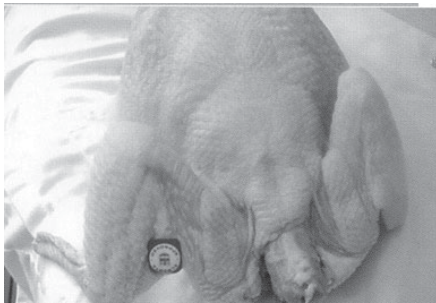


Figure 7.1 **Chicken with Provincial Inspection Tag and Close Up of Inspection Tag**

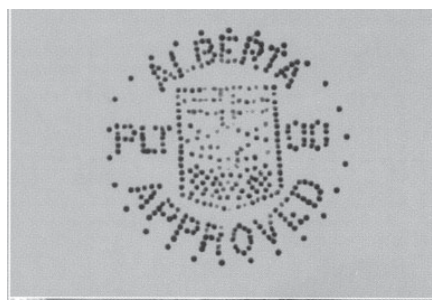


Figure 7.2 **A Side of Beef Being Inspected and a Close Up of the Provincial Inspection Stamp**

The Canada *Meat Inspection Act* guides federal meat inspectors who inspect all packing plants registered under the act. The regulations in the act also outline how animals and meat are to be handled at all stages of processing. All meat shipped outside of Alberta but within Canada or into the USA **must** be slaughtered and processed in federal plants. Food industry and retail meat buyers may also demand federally inspected meat.

If a farm direct marketer or Alberta Approved Farmers' Market vendor is selling meat products interprovincially, the food establishment will need to be inspected and approved by the CFIA.

Meat intended for sale must be slaughtered and processed in an approved facility. Uninspected meat cuts from an approved facility will have the word(s) “uninspected” or “uninspected not for sale” stamped on the wrapping and cannot be sold. Be prepared to provide proof, such as copies of your kill slips or invoices, that the animals were processed at an inspected facility.

With respect to processed meat products, the *Canada Meat Inspection Act* is designed to ensure consumers get safe, non-adulterated and correctly labelled meat products of Canadian and foreign origin. Meat inspectors regularly visit meat processing plants to assess processors for:

- Formulation control
- Preparation methods
- Use of restricted ingredients
- Food safety practices

All processed meat and poultry products must be properly labelled.

Public Health Act

All direct to consumer sales of meat in Alberta are governed by the *Public Health Act* under the Food and Food Establishments Regulation. Develop a good relationship with your public health inspector who can help you interpret the regulations.

Contact the regional health authority in the area where you plan to sell your meat. Inform them of the following:

- Where you want to sell
- Products you are selling
- Your sampling practices
- How far you live from the market
- How you plan to ensure the safety of the meat during transportation and while at the market

The regional health authority or market manager may ask you to provide proof, such as copies of your kill slips or invoices, that the animals were processed at an inspected facility.

Processed meat products – products where there has been a substantial change in the appearance or nature of a meat cut by deboning, slicing, fragmenting, thermally processing, preserving, dehydrating, fermenting or adding an approved ingredient. It does not include dressing, trimming, refrigerating, freezing or defrosting.

Adulterated food – food that has been contaminated to the point that it is considered unfit and not safe for human consumption.

Food Establishment Permit

If you sell any meat direct to consumers in Alberta, whether from the farm gate, at a farmers' market or to a restaurant, you need a food establishment permit from the regional health authority. The food establishment permit ensures that the market venue, vehicle used to transport the food and the on-farm food storage facility meet the requirements of the Food and Food Establishments Regulation.

You **must** store frozen meat in a separate freezer licensed by the regional health authority under the food establishment permit. You cannot store the meat with your family's food. Keep the freezer in an area that is clean and free of rodents, pets, gas and oil, paint and any other potential food safety hazard. Store frozen meat products at a temperature that is maintained at or below -18°C and transport them frozen.

Levels of Meat Inspection

Any meat, such as beef, pork, lamb, bison, poultry and farmed deer and elk being offered for sale in Alberta **must** be government inspected and approved fit for human consumption. Beef, pork, lamb, bison or poultry for personal consumption only does not have to be processed in an inspected facility.

The appropriate governing body **must** approve blueprints for an inspected facility prior to construction. The Regulatory Services Division, AAFRD approves provincial facilities while the CFIA approves federally registered facilities.

There are three types of meat inspection based on where the meat will be marketed. If you sell your meat:

- Within Alberta, you **must** use facilities that are provincially inspected, federally inspected or European Union approved and permitted to slaughter meat for resale
- In other provinces or the USA, you **must** use either a federally inspected facility or a European Union approved facility
- Into the European Union, you **must** have your animal slaughtered and your meat processed in a European Union approved facility

Inspection Requirements

- *Provincial inspection for meat sales within Alberta*
- *Federal inspection for meat sales interprovincially or into the USA*
- *European Union approved facility for meat sales into the European Union*

Meat from animals slaughtered by a mobile butcher can only be used for personal consumption and can't be sold unless inspected prior to slaughter and again as a post mortem inspection at an approved facility.

Regardless of where you intend to market your meat, the inspector **must** be on site to inspect the slaughter of the animal and conduct a post mortem inspection of the carcass after slaughter. Each carcass **must** be stamped to indicate it has passed inspection and is fit for human consumption.

Penalties are very severe if inappropriately inspected meat is transported across a provincial or federal border. Failure to comply with the meat inspection requirements can result in serious fines and imprisonment.

You should choose a facility based on the market requirement of the meat being slaughtered. Thus, if your prime cuts will be sold into the European Union but the lesser cuts sold direct in Alberta, the animal **must** be slaughtered and processed in a European Union approved facility.

Mobile Butchers

Provincially licensed mobile butchers are allowed to slaughter animals intended for sale on your farm *only* if the animal is inspected before and after the slaughter. This emergency situation exists for an animal that is unfit for transport, such as an animal with a broken leg. In this case, special arrangements are made to have an inspector examine the animal while it is still alive. This is done at the producer's expense. A mobile butcher can then slaughter the animal on the farm, and the carcass is taken to an approved facility for the rest of the slaughter and post mortem inspection.

Livestock Industry Diversification Act

According to the *Livestock Industry Diversification Act*, all game production animals, such as deer and elk from licensed farms, **must** be slaughtered in an approved facility. The onus is on the animal owner to ensure that all regulations and associated policies are adhered to when meat from game production animals is meant for human consumption. Selling meat from game production animals outside the province of origin may require additional permits from the province you are selling into. Check with local authorities.

Post mortem inspection – examination of the carcass, blood or parts of the carcass of a food animal by an official veterinarian or by an inspector under the supervision of an official veterinarian.

Livestock and Livestock Products Act

The Purchase and Sale of Eggs and Processed Egg Regulation falls under the *Livestock and Livestock Products Act*. This regulation came into effect in the spring of 2004 and affects the sale of eggs directly to consumers.

According to the new regulation, uninspected eggs can be sold, from the farm gate or at an Alberta Approved Farmers' Market, directly to consumers for their own personal use provided that the eggs are:

- Produced on the producer's own farm
- Clean, have no visible cracks and are not leaking
- Kept at an ambient temperature of 7°C or less until sold
- Packed under sanitary conditions in clean containers that are conspicuously labelled with the word "UNINSPECTED" in letters that are at least 2 cm in size



Figure 7.3 Properly Labelled Used Egg Carton

Egg containers can be recycled provided they are clean and free of contaminants. If uninspected eggs are sold in recycled cartons, any information relating to the grade or a grading station **must** be covered up.

Since the eggs **must** be kept at an ambient temperature of 7°C or less, all of your eggs should not be sitting out on the sales table because the ambient air temperature is too warm. Hold eggs for sale in a cooler or refrigeration unit that can maintain the cool temperatures.

Uninspected eggs can be sold at Alberta Approved Farmers' Markets as long as certain requirements are adhered to.

Eggs must be clearly labelled as UNINSPECTED.

Eggs must be held at temperatures at or below 7°C.



For more information on the sale of uninspected eggs, visit Ropin' the Web at [www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/acts9204?opendocument](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/acts9204?opendocument)

Transportation

It is your responsibility to ensure that vehicles used for transporting meat and poultry products are sealed, designed for the purpose, appropriately inspected and can maintain the proper temperatures for potentially hazardous products. This applies to meat that has already been processed (cut and wrapped) as well as meat that is being taken to another facility for further processing.

In Alberta, the vehicle used to transport provincially inspected meat to market requires a food establishment permit. All vehicles should be thoroughly cleaned prior to loading for each market. Never allow pets in the vehicle while transporting food products.



For more information on transporting meat and other food products see Chapter 11: Transportation.

Labelling

All meat products, including those sold at a farmers' market, **must** be appropriately labelled according to the regulations under the federal *Food and Drugs Act* and the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act*. The detail that **must** be included on the label depends on the type of food and marketing channel used.

Labelling Requirements

- Common name of the product
- Net quantity (metric)
- Contact information including name and address to ensure postal delivery. Including supplementary information such as e-mail address, 1-800 number or other contact details is recommended but not required.
- List of ingredients in descending order of amount; include water, artificial flavors, preservatives, etc. Food used as ingredients in other foods must be listed in their component ingredients.
- Durable life date, if shelf life is 90 days or less
- Storage instructions (if required)
- “Previously frozen” identification on meat, poultry, fish and their byproducts as specified in section (see Food and Drug Regulations Division 1 section B.01.080)
- Bilingual, unless specifically exempt
- Nutrition information (Exemptions may exist for some small processors until December 12, 2007. If making a health claim, nutrition labelling **must** be included.)

All meat and poultry products must adhere to the labelling requirements outlined in the Food and Drugs Act and the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act.



Basic labelling information can be found in the 2003 Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising Chapter 2.

Check it out at

www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/labeti/guide/toce.shtml

Nutrition labelling is found in the 2003 Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising Chapters 5 through 8 at

www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/labeti/guide/toce.shtml

Contact either of the CFIA Regional Offices, Fair Labelling Practices Program for information on food labelling or nutrition labelling. Call (780) 495-3333 (Edmonton) or (403) 292-4650 (Calgary)



Identifying Relevant Legislation

List the pieces of legislation and regulations that apply to your business or market. Make sure you understand your responsibilities under each one.

Staff Training

Train key staff on the legislation that applies to your particular business. As a market manager or a farm direct marketer, you and your staff need to know:

- The federal legislation and applicable regulations that apply to your business
- The provincial legislation and applicable regulations that apply to your business. Remember, legislation varies among provinces – each province has its own requirements.
- Legislative requirements change with the marketing channel being used (i.e., farmers' market, farm gate, restaurant, etc.) even though your product has not changed
- The provincial Food and Food Establishments Regulation sets the minimum standards. Each regional health authority can establish additional requirements



Food Safety Plan – Meat and Poultry Legislation

Legislation serves to protect the public. Keeping food safe is not only your legal obligation, it's good for business. It is your responsibility as a food producer and marketer to adhere to the various federal and provincial acts and regulations that impact your business.

Take the time to continue developing your food safety plan. In the Legislation section of your binder, make a list of all the meat and poultry regulations that apply to your business. Update this list annually. Use this list as a checklist when training staff.

Summary

Selling meat and poultry products directly to consumers can be very rewarding. It is critical that you know *all* the federal and provincial legislation that applies to your farm direct marketing or farmers' market operation.

Market Manager Responsibilities

As an Alberta Approved Farmers' Market manager, your responsibility is to:

- Know the federal and provincial legislation that applies to all meat and poultry products sold in your market
- Develop operational guidelines that incorporate the regulations associated with the different pieces of legislation. Ensure all vendors know the guidelines
- Inspect vendors' tables to ensure compliance
- Work closely with your inspectors to ensure that the regulatory requirements are being met regarding the sale of meat and poultry products
- Ensure all animals are slaughtered and meat is processed at appropriately inspected facilities

What's Next

What is a premise? Did you know that there is a list of materials approved for use within the interiors of a food establishment? The next chapter introduces you to the term "premises" and describes how premises impact food safety and how you can avoid some food safety hazards.



Resources

Copies of provincial legislation and related regulations can be obtained from Queen's Printer, the official source of Government of Alberta laws and publications www.qp.gov.ab.ca/index.cfm

Copies of federal legislation and related regulations can be obtained from the Canadian Department of Justice canada.justice.gc.ca/en/

Meat Facility Standards

This manual is available on line at [www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/afs7147](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/afs7147)

Meat Hygiene Manual of Procedures

This manual of procedures is intended as a reference source for inspection personnel. It is intended to be used in conjunction with relevant legislation, textbooks and other appropriate source materials to provide an extensive information base to assist inspection personnel in the performance of their duties. It is available online at www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/meavia/mmopmmhv/mane.shtml

Meat Processing Facilities in Alberta: Regulations, Technology and Design

This is the manual of standard practice for Alberta meat processors. It is designed to provide an orderly approach to regulations and technology required for the development of safe, efficient abattoirs and meat processing facilities. This priced publication can be obtained from

Alberta Food Processors' Association
Meat Industry Committee
(403) 556-8283 or (403) 556-4792

Alberta's Agricultural Processing Industry Directory

This directory contains a list of provincially and federally inspected meat plants. It can be obtained from

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
(780) 422-2535 (for toll free calling, dial 310-0000 first)
It is available online at www.agric.gov.ab.ca/food/process/fdprdir/

For more information contact:

Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Calgary

Floor 1, Room 102
110 Country Hills Landing NW
Calgary, Alberta, T3K 5P3
Phone: (403) 292-4650

Edmonton

7000 – 113 Street, Room 205
Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6
Phone: (780) 495-3333

Regulatory Services Division, Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural
Development

Airdrie Office

Airdrie Agriculture Centre
909 Irricana Road NE
Airdrie, Alberta, T4A 2G6
Phone: (403) 948-8515

Edmonton Office

6909 - 116 Street, Room 925
Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 4P2
Phone: (780) 427-7011

Grande Prairie Office

Provincial Building
10320 - 99 Street,
Grande Prairie, Alberta, T8V 6J4
Phone: (780) 538-6208

Lethbridge Office

3115 - 5 Avenue N, Main Floor
Lethbridge, Alberta, T1J 4C7
Phone: (780) 382-4261

Vermilion Office

Box 24
4701 - 52 Street,
Vermilion, Alberta, T9X 1J9
Phone: (780) 853-8113



Chapter Review

Review the chapter by answering True or False to the following statements.

1. You need a food establishment permit from the regional health authority to sell any meat or meat product direct to consumers in Alberta, whether from the farm gate, at a farmers' market or to a restaurant. _____
2. Uninspected eggs sold at a farmers' market should be appropriately labelled according to the regulations under the federal *Food and Drugs Act* and the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act*. _____
3. A farmers' market manager has the authority to confirm that poultry sold at the market has been inspected. _____
4. The public health inspector enforces the Alberta *Meat Inspection Act*. _____
5. Meat and poultry products processed in a provincially registered facility in Alberta can be sold in Yellowknife, NWT. _____
6. Chickens slaughtered on the farm cannot be sold at a farmers' market. _____

Answers to Chapter Review

1. **True**
2. **False**, egg sales fall under the Purchase and Sale of Eggs and Processed Egg Regulation of the *Livestock and Livestock Products Act* (Alberta).
3. **True**, as a manager you can ask a vendor for proof of inspection
4. **False**, inspectors from AAFRD enforce the *Meat Inspection Act*
5. **False**, any meat or poultry product that crosses provincial boundaries must be processed at a federally registered facility
6. **True**, all animals intended for sale must be slaughtered and processed in inspected facilities.