

New Livestock and Poultry Carcass Grades and Sales Regulation

What you should know if you operate a provincially licensed abattoir that slaughters veal

Infosheet

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On October 1, 2009, new provincial regulations for lamb and mutton, poultry, veal and beef came into effect, which refer to federal grade standards, conditions of grading and grade marking requirements under the Livestock and Poultry Carcass Grading Regulations of the Canada Agricultural Products Act (CAPA).

Accurate, consistent meat grading and identification throughout the processing and retail chain play an important role in maintaining consumer confidence in the quality of Ontario's meat supply. That's why the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) has introduced a new regulation under the Food Safety and Quality Act to simplify provincial carcass grading regulations for the livestock industry by bringing them into line with those of other provinces and the federal government, and bringing together the requirements for different species under one regulation.

Updating provincial regulations to reflect federal grade standards also provides consistent standards for Ontario veal, helping to maintain consumer confidence and increase the competitiveness of the veal and other livestock industries.

How are veal carcasses defined?

The new regulation is now in line with the federal Livestock and Poultry Carcass Grading Regulation, which defines veal carcasses as having a *carcass weight no greater than 180 kg*. The regulation only allows the grading of veal carcasses between 80 kg and 180 kg. Beef carcasses are carcasses *weighing more than 180 kg* or carcasses weighing under 180 kg with specific maturity characteristics set out in schedule II of the federal Livestock and Poultry Carcass Grading Regulation. These maturity characteristics would identify this animal as an older animal that would not qualify as veal.

The definitions of veal and beef carcasses have also been changed in the Weighing of Carcasses Regulation

(R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 55) under the Beef Cattle Marketing Act to be consistent with the new regulation. In addition, other amendments clarify circumstances for the grading of veal and beef carcasses.

What has changed for abattoirs that slaughter veal calves or process or produce veal?

Operators of provincially licensed abattoirs that slaughter veal calves are required to comply with new requirements with respect to grading as well as veal and beef identification.

Grading

Operators are now required to:

- Grade veal in all cases where calves are bought on a carcass weight basis unless
 - 1) they can document that they purchase fewer than an average of 50 veal calves per month on a carcass weight basis, and
 - 2) are exempted in writing by a director
- Engage the services of a grader to grade veal carcasses
- Provide a grading certificate to the producer in specified circumstances
- Be responsible for the accuracy of scales (for beef and veal)

Veal and beef identification

As of October 1, 2009, to continue slaughtering veal, operators must:

- Submit for Regional Veterinarian approval a written procedure describing how the identification of veal and beef (carcasses, parts and cuts) is distinctively maintained in the plant during dressing, processing and packaging
- Be in compliance with the approved written procedure
- Ensure that beef and veal are not commingled (combined) prior to packaging, except for cuts of beef or veal less than 125 cm² in size that are of

manufacturing quality or that are intended for grinding. If such small cuts of beef and veal are commingled, that meat must be labelled as beef when it is packaged.

Mandatory veal grading and exemptions

Carcasses may be graded for two reasons: to identify product quality for the consumer and to evaluate the carcass quality for payment to the producer. Producer payment is based on carcass weight and quality.

Cattle bought based on live weight do not need to be graded. Amendments have been made to Regulation 55 – Weighing of Carcasses under the Beef Cattle Marketing Act to clarify the circumstances for mandatory grading, with some exemptions.

Exemptions

Grading is **not** required for veal:

- when an operator buys less than an average of 50 veal carcasses per month on the basis of the carcass weight and is granted an exemption in writing by a director
- when purchased on a live weight basis

Grading is **no longer** required for cull cows:

- when an operator buys them on the basis of their carcass weight

Requirement to register under the Beef Cattle Marketing Act remains unchanged

Any slaughter plant that is purchasing beef or veal on a carcass weight basis must be registered with OMAFRA under the Beef Cattle Marketing Act. This continues to be a requirement for plants that obtain an exemption from veal or cull cow grading.

This process ensures that the plant's weigh scales are accurate, and the carcass is being dressed to the appropriate standard for producer payment purposes. It is separate from licensing under the Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001 and applies to both federal and provincially licensed slaughter plants.

Plant operators now responsible for accuracy of scales

Under the Beef Cattle Marketing Act, some responsibilities for the accuracy of scales have been transferred to the plant operator.

While plants are responsible for maintaining their scales in a working and accurate manner, OMAFRA continues to monitor compliance with the regulation.

Does compliance with identification protocols have

any weight in a plant's audit rating?

A meat plant's compliance with identification protocols does not affect the plant's audit rating. However, compliance with the protocols is a condition for licensing.

How is the new regulation being enforced?

Meat inspection staff monitor provincially licensed operators' compliance to protocols in place. Weigh and trim inspectors monitor federal and provincial meat plants when conducting inspections pursuant to the Beef Cattle Marketing Act, and OMAFRA may conduct random inspections of further processing plants and retail.

If problems are identified, they will be referred to program management and possibly on to the ministry's Regulatory Compliance Unit.

The Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001 provides for a range of compliance and enforcement tools to ensure compliance with the legislation. This includes the ability to issue a compliance order, detain product and suspend or revoke the licence of licensed meat plants. The Act provides for fines up to \$25,000 per day for individuals and \$100,000 per day for corporations contravening the legislation for a first conviction. Maximum penalties increase for subsequent convictions.

For more information

The full text of provincial regulations can be found at: www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/index.html.

- Livestock and Poultry Carcass Grades and Sales Regulation (O. Reg. 266/09 under the Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001)
- Weighing of Carcasses Regulation (R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 55 under the Beef Cattle Marketing Act)

The federal Livestock and Poultry Carcass Grading Regulations can be found at: www.laws.justice.gc.ca

For more information:
Contact your Meat Inspection Area Manager or
Telephone: 1-888-466-2372 ext. 6-4230
E-mail: foodinspection@ontario.ca
www.ontario.ca/omafra