

NATIONAL FOOD SAFETY STANDARD FOR MEAT

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), the Australian Government agency responsible for developing national food standards, is currently considering whether additional regulatory requirements are needed for cattle, sheep, goat and pig producers. Before a final decision is made by the FSANZ Board, all businesses involved in meat production and processing (producers, transporters, processors), government agencies and consumers have two opportunities to provide formal comment and input on :

- Current management of food safety hazards
- Adequacy of existing industry schemes and programs
- Existing government regulations
- Proposed options for ensuring food safety management is addressed on-farm and in processing.

Who is affected by this work?

Businesses involved in the production of cattle, sheep, goats and pigs using extensive and intensive farming and meat processing could be affected.

What is being proposed?

Based on the current evidence, FSANZ has determined there are no unmanaged food safety risks for the cattle, sheep, goat and pig sectors. They have identified that the mechanism for updating and reviewing the current government regulation for the processing sector (the Australian Standard *Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption* (AS 4696-2007) no longer exists with the disbandment of the Meat Standards Committee. Three options have been proposed:

- Option 1 is to retain the current self-regulation (and current legislation in place managing animal disease control, animal welfare, animal traceability, use of agriculture and veterinary chemicals and environmental issues) for producers and regulation for the processing sector.
- Option 2 is to retain the current self-regulation for the producer supplemented with incentive and education programs to maximise industry adoption of these quality assurance programs. For processing, the existing state and territory meat safety requirements, embodied in AS4696-2007, would be implemented through a national outcome-based standard, which is not overly-prescriptive, incorporated into the Food Standards Code.
- Option 3 is to develop food regulatory measures in the Food Standards Code which would apply to producers and processors. A primary production and processing standard is a set of food safety obligations specifying requirements from animal production to the processing of meat animals, meat carcasses and meat products for human consumption. The standards may include the implementation of measures to control the food safety hazards and the responsibility to demonstrate compliance.

Has industry been involved?

A Standard Development Committee is advising FSANZ on this work. Members include the major industry associations for the cattle, sheep, goat and pig industries, meat processors, the rendering industry, feedlot industry, stockfeed manufacturers, AQIS, DAFF, State and Territory meat regulators and Country Women's Association of Australia.

Targeted consultations have been undertaken with the cattle, sheep, goat and pig industries through on-site visits to glean first hand perspectives and information and additional targeted consultations will be undertaken.

How do I provide input?

FSANZ has released the First Assessment Report (P1005 Primary Production and Processing Standard for Meat and Meat Products) for a six-week period of public consultation which closes on 4 November 2009. Written submissions must be received by this date to be considered in the next stage of the work. The report is published on the FSANZ website:

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/standardsdevelopment/proposals/proposalp1005primary4220.cfm>

What are the next steps?

FSANZ will consider the submissions and a preferred option will be included in a Second Assessment Report which will be released for public comment in June 2010. A final decision will be made by December 2010.

Individuals and organisations can be placed on the Register of Interested Parties to receive information on the progress of this work and to be notified when public comment is invited. If you would like to be placed on the Register, please send your name, postal address and email address to information@foodstandards.gov.au