

Wisconsin's State Meat Inspection Program

Cleanliness. Wholesomeness. Safety. These are the standards of quality found in State of Wisconsin-inspected meat plants and products.

The State of Wisconsin meat inspection program and meat establishments ensure that meat products produced in the state and sold to consumers comply with required standards for safety, purity and wholesomeness set by the state and federal governments. In fact, all products produced in a state-inspected plant must meet or exceed standards set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The Division of Food Safety's Bureau of Meat Safety and Inspection provides many services to its clientele. Those services include:

- **Antemortem inspection** - All live animals sent to slaughter are examined to determine if they have any disease or condition that would make them unfit for human consumption. Animals which show signs of disease are not allowed to be used for food unless checked by a Division veterinarian and passed. Humane handling and slaughter of all animals is required.
- **Postmortem inspection** – State meat inspectors conduct a careful postmortem examination and inspection of the carcasses and parts of all animals slaughtered at state-inspected meat establishments.

After the inspection, the Bureau's inspectors and veterinarians may pass, retain or condemn a whole carcass or any of its parts. More detailed information about this procedure is available from the Division.

- **Sanitary operation of facilities** - The Division regularly inspects meat establishments to make sure the premises are clean and meet state and federal standards for sanitation. Foodborne illness is less likely to occur when the meat plant is clean and has an approved sanitation plan in place.
- **Structure of the facility** - All plants must meet Division construction standards. Plant owners must maintain their buildings to provide for the production of safe and wholesome food. A properly constructed plant facilitates good sanitation, reduces cross contamination and helps ensure a safe food supply.
- **Food labeling** - The Division audits meat labels to make sure they contain appropriate information and comply with labeling laws. Meat and poultry products must meet government standards of identity. Review of product formulas and methods assure that all ingredients are wholesome and used in acceptable proportions, and that the production process is safe.
- **HACCP** - All official meat plants are required to operate in a HACCP system. HACCP (Hazard analysis and critical control points) is a system of food safety procedures designed in the mid-70's to produce safe food for NASA. In HACCP, the production of the meat product from start to finish is analyzed. Points in the process that are considered critical to food safety are identified and monitored to ensure potential problems are prevented.

- **Sampling program** - The extensive sampling program routinely tests meat and meat products for the presence of the pathogenic bacteria, *Salmonella*, *Listeria* and other pathogens. DFS inspectors also check fat and moisture levels, shelf stability in some in ready-to-eat products, and for the presence of illegal drug residues.

- **Voluntary inspection program** - At the owner's request, DFS inspects emu, ostrich, farm-raised venison, buffalo and other "exotic" animals. For more information about this service, contact the nearest regional office.

Performance based inspection system (PBIS)

The Division implemented this inspection method in 1995. PBIS is based on risk to consumers. Inspectors focus on tasks that may have an impact on public health. The intent is to conduct fewer inspections in plants that have high sanitation and facility standards and control over their production process, and more intense inspections in plants that have sanitation, facility or process control problems.

Ritual slaughter

DFS inspectors work with people who perform ritual slaughter to ensure their practices comply with state and federal standards for cleanliness, wholesomeness and safety while respecting the traditions of their culture. For more information about this program, call the Meat Safety and Inspection Bureau at 608-224-4700.

Bureau of Meat Safety & Inspection

Wisconsin's Bureau of Meat Safety and Inspection regulates meat-processing plants within the state. Plants operating under the state inspection program are able to ship their products anywhere within the borders of the state of Wisconsin (intrastate). Products are marked with an inspection legend in the shape of the Wisconsin outline and contain their assigned number and words "Wis. Dept. Agr. Inspected." State plants have the benefit of excellent customer service and quick response from their inspection program.

Federally inspected plants may ship their products interstate. They are inspected and regulated by USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). Their products are marked with a round seal.

Who needs inspection?

Any food business that produces products on a wholesale basis which contain meat would need to be inspected. Wholesale products are those that will be sold again to the final customer. A product containing meat such as pizza, eggrolls, sausages or entrees would require inspection. For example, a restaurant selling pepperoni pizza to another business would be considered a wholesale meat processor.

People interested in starting a meat business or wishing to learn more about the Bureau of Meat Safety and Inspection can contact the bureau at the offices listed in this brochure.

DFS Central Administrative Office
Bureau of Meat Safety & Inspection
P.O. Box 8911
Madison, WI 53708
(608) 224-4700

Northwest Regional Office
3610 Oakwood Hills Parkway
Eau Claire, WI 54701-7754
(715) 839-3844

Northeast Regional Office
200 N. Jefferson Street, Suite 146-A
Green Bay, WI 54301-5100
(920) 448-5120

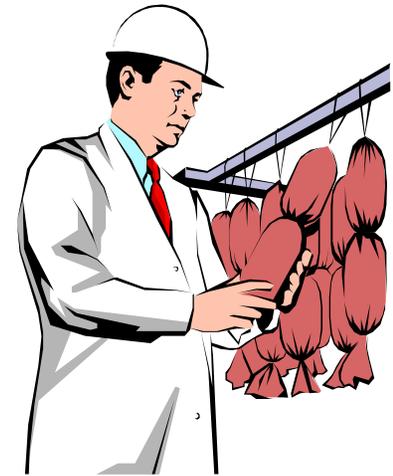
Southern Regional Office
2811 Agriculture Drive
Madison, WI 53718-6777
(608) 224-4661



Division of Food Safety
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture,
Trade & Consumer Protection
P.O. Box 8911
Madison, WI 53708-8911
(608) 224-4700

By electronic mail at food@datcp.state.wi.us
On the Internet at Wisconsin.gov

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From farm to table...

WISCONSIN DIVISION OF
Food Safety