



April
2025

Export Meat Operational Guideline

3.9 Sourcing of livestock and wild game



Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to outline the department's operational requirements to ensure the suitability of livestock and wild game processed for human consumption at export-registered establishments.

This document supplements both the [Approved arrangement guidelines](#) - for Meat and wild game and is supported by underlying Export meat operational reference documents.

Scope

This guideline applies to both Tier 1 and Tier 2 export-registered meat establishments sourcing livestock for slaughter and harvesting wild game for processing.

Legislative basis

Under the *Export Control Act 2020* and its subordinate legislation, meat and wild game meat establishment occupiers are required to have an approved arrangement that ensures compliance with:

- livestock/wild game sourcing requirements.
- the requirements of the relevant Australian standard [Australian meat standard (AS4696) or the Australian Game Meat Standard (AS4464)].
- importing country requirements.

Under constitutional arrangements, occupiers must also comply with jurisdictional (state and territory) regulations.

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Approved arrangements

The occupier's approved arrangement for the sourcing of livestock or wild game must clearly describe the procedures and processes which when applied ensure that legislative requirements and the outcomes described in the relevant Australian standard are achieved. Adherence to this arrangement, along with departmental audit and verification activities, underpin the certification of meat and meat products for export.

Occupiers must be familiar with the traceability and reporting requirements of their state or territory to ensure compliance with the required performance indicators (See [Related Material](#) for additional resources).

Livestock sourcing, traceability and suitability for slaughter

All livestock must be sourced from holdings where animals were raised and managed according to good husbandry practices. For animals that were wild caught (unhusbanded), the area of capture must be identified.

All animals must not be submitted for slaughter if they are affected by any disease or abnormality that could jeopardise the wholesomeness of meat and meat products derived from them, or if the slaughter and processing could contaminate other animals or meat.

To achieve this, all livestock must:

- be identifiable up to their last holding
- not contain residues more than permitted levels and are not slaughtered while still under a withholding period (WHP) or export slaughter interval (ESI)
- not have been fed feedstuffs that could jeopardise wholesomeness of the resulting meat and meat products
- be free from diseases and/or conditions that could affect their suitability for slaughter
- comply with the importing country requirements of markets that they are intended for.

Livestock movement history must be maintained in the NLIS or PigPass database and management documentation retained for the purposes of traceability and product integrity.

Identification

All livestock must be identified (as outlined in the [NLIS traceability standards](#)) before they are permitted to be transported to a processor; unless transported under a permit or direction of the state or territory authority.

Identification requirements for individual species are summarised in Table 1. However, occupiers should confirm requirements of their relevant state or territory authority and establishment market access requirements.

Table 1: Livestock identification requirements

Cattle and bobby calves	All cattle and bobby calves* must be identified with an NLIS approved device. <small>*When required under the relevant jurisdiction.</small>
Sheep and farmed/managed goats	All sheep and farmed/managed goats born after 1 January 2025, must be tagged with an NLIS-approved species-specific electronic identification (eID) device before leaving their property of birth. If born before 1 January 2025, all transported sheep and goats must be identified with a NLIS approved tag (electronic, breeder, post breeder; leg band for dairy goats). Before 1 January 2027, all sheep and managed goats must be identified with eID before, regardless of age.

	<p>All sheep and goats must be kept in mobs in the establishment lairage according to their PIC of consignment (or saleyard).</p> <p>State and territory requirements are outlined on the Sheep and goat eID National Implementation Plan website.</p>
Pigs	<p>All weaned pigs must be identified by a brand/tattoo or NLIS approved tag.</p> <p>Pigs must be kept in mobs in the establishment lairage according to their PIC of consignment (or saleyard).</p>
Horses	<p>There are no current requirements for identification or movement traceability. However, occupiers should be familiar with any market access requirements.</p> <p>For European Union requirements, please refer to: the Manual of importing country requirements (Micor) and Meat Notice 2015-03.</p>
Farmed deer	<p>There are no current requirements for identification or movement traceability.</p>
Unhusbanded animals (rangeland goats, camels, deer or wild horses)	<p>May require declarations that identify the area (property name/owner, quota management authority property identification number, or PIC) and time of trapping or capture.</p> <p>Harvested rangeland goats (HRGs) must meet certain conditions to allow movement without NLIS identification. A specific HRG NVD must accompany any consignments. Please refer to: NLIS Harvested rangeland goats.</p>

Movement and traceability

Consignments of sheep, goats, cattle and pigs must be covered by jurisdictional approved movement documentation (for example: vendor declarations/waybills/post sale summaries). These documents must be current, completed accurately and in their entirety, and include attestations from a person responsible for the livestock to cover husbandry and veterinary practices

Occupiers must ensure the following:

- All movement documentation and attestations are verified to assess a consignment's suitability for slaughter.
- All supplied source property identification numbers (PICs) are interrogated in the National livestock identification system (NLIS) database. Establishment employees must be trained to verify documentation, interrogate the NLIS database and interpret and take any necessary action resulting from NLIS (device and PIC based) status alerts.
- Operators responsible for scanning individual animal devices are trained to identify and report status alerts; most importantly, those requiring real-time action at ante-mortem or on the slaughter floor [for example: from *Cysticercus bovis* and lead (Pb) alerted properties or devices].
- If livestock are held in nearby or temporary holding paddocks before transfer to the registered establishment for slaughter, the movement must be documented. For further information please refer to [Export meat operational reference: Use of temporary holding facilities](#).

If livestock are held in remote holding paddocks (different PIC to registered establishment) before transfer to the registered establishment for slaughter, movement documentation must be provided to meet state or territory or importing country requirements (for example EUCAS).

Traceability requirements must be maintained for animals, carcasses and carcase parts until the point where a post-mortem disposition is applied.

For more information refer to the [Export meat operational guideline- 2.2 Approved arrangements-meat](#), section Sourcing of Animals for Slaughter.

Animal raising claims

If export-registered establishments are sourcing livestock with animal raising claims or point-of-slaughter certification, the procedures for sourcing, certification and segregations must be described in the approved arrangement. For further information on raising claims and trade descriptions refer to the [Export meat operational guideline: 3.12 Trade descriptions](#).

Wild game sourcing and traceability

Wild game animals sourced for human consumption must be healthy when harvested and sourced from properties or field depot holdings where the management of animals does not jeopardise the wholesomeness of the derived meat. The occupier must have documented sourcing procedures in their approved arrangement to ensure compliance with the following requirements. All wild game must:

- Be sourced from accredited harvesters and field depots.
- Be identified (via an approved tag) to their harvester, time and date of harvesting and harvesting location (PIC or complete property name and address) up until a post-mortem disposition is applied and their integrity is assured.
- Have accompanying field depot chilling records and air temperature records from transport vehicles.
- Not be sourced from areas subject to an official prohibition for the presence of potentially harmful substances.
- Be accurately identified during processing and packaging. The procedure must allow all resulting product to be traceable and recalled.

Approved harvester tags must contain the declaration signed by the harvester attesting that:

- no abnormal behaviour was observed before killing
- no abnormal characteristics were observed during the examination of the body and removal of any viscera
- there is no suspicion of environmental contamination
- if killed during daylight, the carcass was transported to a field depot or wild game meat processing establishment within 2 hours of harvest
- if killed between sunset and sunrise, the carcass was transported to a field depot or wild game meat processing establishment no later than 2 hours after sunrise with a maximum of 12 hours between killing and placing into a field depot.

To verify the harvest information that is necessary to assess the wholesomeness of the meat and meat products to be derived from the sourced wild game, the occupier must ensure that:

- all supplied source PICs are valid in the NLIS database
- no carcass is processed for human consumption if they have exceeded a maximum period of 14 days between harvest and processing.

Provision of information to authorised officers

Occupiers must ensure any relevant information is made available to departmental authorised officers [on-plant veterinarians (OPVs) and food safety meat assessors (FSMAs)], Australian government authorised officers (AAOs) and porcine ante-mortem inspectors (PAMIs) to allow the accurate application of dispositions at ante and post-mortem inspection.

This information may include the following:

- previous treatments or exposures declared in the vendor declaration (NVD/PigPass) or harvester declaration
- holdings identified for surveillance (targeted) sampling
- market access requirements
- animal raising claims or supporting documentation for point-of-slaughter certification.

The NLIS (PIC and device-based) statuses must be reported to all authorised officers if related to an alert that:

- is an early warning 'EW' status
- identifies the animal as not fit-for-slaughter and/or human consumption
- requires the animals and/or carcase and carcase parts to have additional verification or inspection procedures undertaken to determine suitability for slaughter or human consumption. This may include sampling and testing or additional inspection procedures at post-mortem (for example: 'KV' status for bobby calves indicating the need for urine testing or a 'CB' status indicating required additional post-mortem inspection procedures to be undertaken)
- identifies a PIC or device under regulatory control (for example: should not be trading cattle or a device of interest).

Department verification and audits

Departmental officers undertake scheduled verification activities in accordance with the Meat Establishment Verification System. For further information, refer to the [Export meat operational guideline: 9.2 Meat establishment verification system \(MEVS\)- Establishments](#).

Requirements of the Export Control Act are audited as part of the Export Meat Systems Audit Program (EMSAP). These audits will be undertaken by an EMSAP Area technical manager (ATM), who will assess the establishment's documentation, records, operational performance and outcomes in the context of their approved arrangement. Further information can be found in the [Export meat operational guideline: 5.2 Export meat systems audit program \(EMSAP\)](#).

Related material

The following related material is available on the department's website:

- Webpage: [Approved arrangement guidelines – Wild game meat](#)
- Webpage: [Australian standard for the hygienic production of wild game meat for human consumption \(AS4464:2007\)](#)
- Webpage: [Export Control Act 2020](#)
- Webpage: [Export Control \(Meat and Meat Products\) Rules 2021](#)
- Webpage: [Export Control \(Wild Game Meat and Wild Game Meat Products\) Rules 2021](#)
- Webpage: [Export meat operational guideline- 2.2 Approved arrangements-meat](#)
- Webpage: [Export meat operational guideline: 9.2 Meat Establishment Verification System \(MEVS\)- Establishments.](#)
- Webpage: [Export meat operational guideline: 3.12 Trade descriptions](#)
- Webpage: [Manual of Importing Country Requirements](#)
- Webpage: [Export meat operational reference: C. bovis risk management](#)
- Webpage: Export meat operational reference: Use of temporary holding facilities (in development, refer to [Meat Notice 2013-03 and 2015-01](#))
- Webpage: [National Residue Survey \(NRS\)- Residue and residue testing](#)

The following related material is available on the internet:

- Australian standard for the hygienic production and transportation of meat and meat products for human consumption (available for purchase from [SAI global](#))
- Webpage: [Export slaughter intervals and withholding periods](#)
- Webpage: [Maximum residue limits \(Food Standards Australia and New Zealand\)](#)

Other guidance materials may include but are not limited to the following:

- Webpage: [Australia Pork \(PigPass\) Pig identification](#)
- Webpage: [Commercial kangaroo harvesting. Government of South Australia](#)
- Webpage: [Game hunting in Victoria. Victoria State Government](#)
- Webpage: [Harvesting of macropods. Queensland Government](#)
- Webpage: [NLIS Australia's system for identification and traceability of livestock](#)
- Webpage: [NLIS harvested rangeland goats](#)
- Webpage: [NLIS standards](#)
- Webpage: [NLIS State and territory contacts](#)
- Webpage: [Sheep and goat eID National Implementation Plan](#)
- Webpage: [Professional and landholder kangaroo harvester licence. NSW Government](#)
- Webpage: [Terms of use for the National Livestock identification system database.](#)

Attachment 1: Roles and responsibilities

The occupier

- Comply with their documented AA sourcing procedure, ensuring compliance with export legislation, importing country requirements and relevant Australian standards.
- Ensure any relevant information from the vendor declarations, harvester tags and chilling records or ERP PIC status interrogations are promptly communicated to the authorised officers and made available for ante and post-mortem inspection.
- Comply with the state and territory regulations and NLIS Rules.
- Be familiar with the export meat operational reference documents that support this guideline.
- For wild game, report non-compliances (related to sourcing and traceability) to the OPV and state or territory regulatory authority in a timely manner.

On-plant veterinarian (OPV)

- Undertake MEVS activities according to procedures outlined in departmental work instructions.
- Manage non-compliance through the Audit Management System (AMS).
- Maintain knowledge of the NLIS PIC and device-based statuses and action required.
- Be familiar with export meat operational reference documents that support this guideline.

FSMAs, AAOs and PAMIs

- Maintain knowledge of any additional inspection procedures required due to status alerts.
- Follow the directions given by OPVs regarding any actions required due to status alerts.

Area Technical Manager (ATM)

Establishment ATM

- Revise the establishment's approved arrangement and approve amendments considered to be a significant variation.
- Undertake technical verification and support of MEVS activities undertaken by the OPV.

EMSAP ATM

- Verify on-going compliance with requirements through EMSAP.

State regulatory food authority

- Audit Tier 1 establishments to assess compliance with the requirements (as per the service level agreement with the department).
- Notify the department through the Export Regulatory Integrity and Assurance team (ERIA) of any non-compliance with the requirements.

Wild game field depot operators

- Maintain accurate records of air and carcase temperatures and supply records with each load of carcasses.
- Monitor approved tags to ensure they comply with requirements.

Attachment 2: Definitions

Animal raising claims (ARCs)

Animal raising claims are claims made in the trade description or export documentation about the animal or supply chain specifically relating to animal husbandry conditions, feeding, handling, drug treatments and/or geographical reference which are required by an importing country or importer.

Approved arrangement (AA)

An approved arrangement under Chapter 5 of the *Export Control Act 2020*.

An arrangement for a kind of export operations in relation to a kind of prescribed goods approved by the Secretary.

An approved arrangement:

- documents the controls and processes to be followed when undertaking export operations in relation to prescribed goods for export
- enables the Secretary to have oversight of specific export operations.

Area Technical Manager (ATM)

A departmental authorised officer with veterinary qualifications who has responsibility for the supervision, technical performance, assessment and verification of technical standards and operations in a defined group of export meat establishments.

Establishment ATM

ATM with day-to-day on-plant responsibilities, on-plant staff technical review responsibilities and an establishment critical incident response audit (CIRA) audit role.

Approves the establishment's approved arrangement and/or any amendments made to it.

EMSAP ATM

ATM conducting the EMSAP audit at the establishment. This individual has not been the ATM with day-to-day on-plant responsibilities at the establishment being audited during the previous two years (held the establishment ATM role).

Australian Export Meat Inspection System (AEMIS)

The Australian Export Meat Inspection System is an integrated set of controls specified and verified by Government that ensure the safety, suitability and integrity of Australian meat and meat products. Underpinning AEMIS are objective hygiene and performance standards which are continually monitored.

Australian Government Authorised Officer (AAO)

An individual employed by an export-registered abattoir or independent AAO employer, authorised by the department to undertake prescribed functions as an authorised officer under the Export Control Act and subordinate legislation.

Export slaughter interval (ESI)

The minimum time period that must elapse between the use/application of chemicals and slaughter for export.

Extended Residue Program (ERP)

A national residue program that notifies of chemical residue risks or early warning statuses on properties assigned a PIC within the NLIS database.

Field depot

A depot approved by the controlling authority (or any other authority as required under state or territory legislation) in which wild game animal carcasses are held temporarily under refrigeration, pending transport to a wild game meat processing facility.

Field harvester

A person who:

- is given approval by the controlling authority to harvest, conduct harvest inspection, bleeding and field dressing of wild game animal carcasses for human consumption; and
- is considered by that authority to be competent to conduct those activities.

Food Safety Meat Assessor (FSMA)

A qualified meat safety inspector who is authorised under the Export Control Act, to undertake post-mortem inspection. They are employed by the department. The tasks undertaken by an FSMA depends on the Australian Export Meat Inspection System (AEMIS) model operating at the establishment.

Harvester tag

An approved tag that is signed and applied by a state or territory approved field harvester, to the carcass of a wild game animal to:

- identify the place of harvest
- record the date and time of killing
- declare that that no abnormalities in behaviour were observed before killing
- declare that no abnormalities were observed during examination of the body and removed viscera
- declare that the prescribed time requirements between killing and transportation to field depot or wild game processing facility were met.

Holding

As defined in the Australian meat standard (AS4696). It describes the run, station, feedlot, farm or place where the animal is fed, pastured or grazed before it arrives at the slaughter establishment.

Integrity Systems Company (ISC)

ISC manage and delivers the Australian red meat industry's three key on-farm assurance and through chain traceability programs, the LPA program, the LPA national vendor declaration program and the NLIS.

Livestock Production Assurance (LPA)

The Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program is the Australian livestock industry's on-farm assurance program covering food safety, animal welfare and biosecurity. It provides evidence of livestock history and on-farm practices when transferring livestock through the value chain.

National Livestock Identification System (NLIS)

The NLIS tracks devices and associated livestock movements and also records device and PIC statuses for disease control, biosecurity, food safety, market access and other industry related purposes. NLIS is a permanent whole of life identification system that enables individual animals to be tracked from property of birth to slaughter for food safety, product integrity and market access purposes.

National Vendor Declaration (NVD)

NVD is a national accountable form completed by the vendor describing details of a consignment of livestock. A European Union vendor declaration (EUVD) is a variant of the form specifically for livestock consigned for the European Union (EU) market.

Occupier

The individual, corporation or other legal entity (or any combination of these) in whose name the establishment is registered.

On-Plant Veterinarian (OPV)

A Commonwealth authorised officer with veterinary qualifications registrable in a state or territory of Australia who is based on an export-registered establishment.

PigPass

A 'Pig Pass' is the equivalent of cattle/sheep NVD in movement traceability of swine species in Australia.

Point of slaughter certification (PSC)

A legally binding declaration provided by an establishment at ante-mortem inspection that livestock have been sourced under the AA livestock sourcing program and meet the market access requirements for specified raising claims to which the department will be asked to provide certification.

Porcine Anti Mortem Inspector(PAMI)

A meat safety inspector who is authorised, through a deed of obligation under the Export Control Act, to undertake ante-mortem inspection on a pig abattoir under the supervision of the OPV. They are employed either by an establishment or by a third-party service provider.

Property identification code (PIC)

An individual identification code issued to a property by the state or territory.

Tier 1 export-registered establishment

An export-registered establishment that is audited by the relevant State Regulatory Authority on behalf of the department. These establishments export meat and meat products for countries accepting the Australian Standards.

Tier 2 export-registered establishment

An establishment operating under the Export-Registered Australian Standard Meat Establishment (Tier 2) Scheme. Tier 2 establishments have a full-time departmental on-plant presence to ensure maintained compliance.

Vendor declaration (VD)

Include national vendor declarations (NVDs, European Union (EU) VDs, eNVDs, PigPass NVDs), post-sale summaries and vendor declarations for species not covered by the NVD system such as horses, deer and ratites.

Wholesome/wholesomeness

As defined in the Australian Meat Standard (AS4696) and the Australian Game Meat Standard (AS4464), wholesome means that meat and meat products may be passed for human consumption on the basis that they meet all the following requirements:

- are not likely to cause food-borne disease or intoxication when properly stored, handled, and prepared for their intended use
- do not contain residues in excess of established limits
- are free of obvious contamination
- are free of defects that are generally recognised as objectionable to consumers
- have been produced and transported under adequate hygiene and temperature controls
- do not contain additives other than those permitted under the Food Standards Code
- have not been irradiated contrary to the Food Standards Code
- have not been treated with a substance contrary to a law of the Commonwealth or a law of the state or territory in which the treatment takes place.

Withholding period (WHP)

Means the minimum time-period that needs to elapse between the last use/application of a chemical and the slaughtering of an animal for human consumption to ensure the maximum residue limits are not exceeded