

Australian Export Meat Inspection System (AEMIS)

Post-mortem inspection roles of the Food Safety Meat Assessor (FSMA) in red meat processing establishments

Policy Objective

This policy outlines:

- The circumstances in which a departmental Food Safety Meat Assessor (FSMA) will be allocated to a red meat processing establishment.
- The regulatory inspection activities that will be undertaken by the FSMA

This policy seeks to ensure the efficient deployment of departmental FSMAs in a manner enabling inspection activities to be undertaken consistent with the *Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption* (AS 4696).

Background

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

The *Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption* (AS4696) requires that a suitably qualified meat inspector performs post-mortem inspection and make decisions on each carcass and its carcass parts.

In the case of meat and meat products being prepared for export, inspection activities are delivered by Official Meat Inspectors (a competent person who is appointed, by the competent authority to perform official meat inspection activities on behalf of, and under the supervision of the Department of Agriculture Water and Environment (the department).

Inspection activities on export registered meat establishments are delivered either by department officials called Food Safety Meat Assessors (FSMAs) or Australian Government Authorised Officers (AAOs). The latter are employed by the establishment or by a department approved service provider, such as an independent AAO employer, to satisfy importing market requirements for Australian Government health certification.

In October 2020, the Australian Government announced a new set of reforms and investment designed to enable a substantive modernisation of Australia's export meat systems. These modernisation activities were largely informed by a review of AEMIS

conducted in 2019 in conjunction with the Australian Meat Processor Corporation (AMPC).
https://www.ampc.com.au/uploads/cgblog/id443/AEMIS_Review_Recommendations_Report_FINAL_191215.pdf

- This AEMIS review found that a lower than projected uptake of the AAO model, since its introduction in 2011, has limited the cost effectiveness of this model for the broader industry. As such, the department and industry leaders agreed and committed to the full implementation of the AAO model. This commitment meant the department will no longer provide FSMA's where the function could otherwise be provided by AAOs. Instead, the department will only continue to provide a government veterinarian and a FSMA where required to fulfil certification obligations under importing country requirements. This in turn prompted a review and clarification of the role of the FSMA where they are working alongside AAOs in a multi-person chain.

Regulatory inspection activities undertaken by Departmental FSMA's:

From 1 October 2021, regulatory inspection activities will be delivered by FSMA's only where it is required by an importing country that the task be undertaken by a departmental officer.

- The department will not provide FSMA's where regulatory inspection activities could otherwise be provided by AAOs.

The department will continue to provide an FSMA for inspection purposes beyond carcase inspection (i.e., head and/or viscera), in circumstances where an export registered meat establishment currently requires, due to importing country market access requirements, an FSMA to undertake carcase and/or carcase part inspection, and:

- is utilising a single FSMA, and,
- has been built to support a single inspector undertaking all inspection points (ie carcase, head and viscera); and
- its throughput is not at a level that inhibits the single inspector model

Positioning of the FSMA

Where an FSMA is required to perform carcase inspection activities or carcase assessment to fulfil certification obligations under importing country requirements, the FSMA will be situated at either:

- the carcase post-mortem inspection position (subject to MISS Standard); or,
- the end of chain carcase assessment position.

When the FSMA is located at the end of the chain carcase assessment position, an AAO must be positioned at the carcase post-mortem inspection position.

Establishments seeking to move departmental officers between the carcase post-mortem inspection and end-of-chain carcase assessment positions, must document the circumstances within their Approved Arrangement (AA).

Principles

1. The establishment operating a multi-person chain will be required to advise and seek approval from the Department of their intent to implement this inspection arrangement. Where an FSMA is to be positioned will be approved by the Department and documented in the establishments AA.
2. An establishment operating a multi-person chain/s, may utilise the FSMA to undertake either:
 - Post-mortem inspection on carcase
 - End of chain carcase by carcase assessment
3. The FSMA can rotate between the carcase post-mortem inspection and end of chain carcase assessment position. Movement may occur daily, or during a shift where there's a change of stock class (e.g., lamb to mutton). Establishment management, consistent with current practice, is required to provide a daily kill sheet identifying species and category (i.e. lamb or mutton). This is provided to the OPV at Ante Mortem and to the FSMA.
4. Where the FSMA is located at the carcase post-mortem inspection position, the establishment must present each class of stock in 100% groups (e.g. 100% lamb or 100% mutton).
5. Where the FSMA is located at the end-of-chain carcase assessment position, MISS does not apply and mixing of stock classes e.g. sheep/lamb can occur.
6. An establishment's proposed inspection model must be clearly documented in their AA and submitted to the department for assessment and approval.
7. The FSMA at either inspection positions will only undertake regulatory functions, consistent with the overarching FSMA inspection policy.
8. The department will not provide regulatory inspection activities where they could otherwise be provided through the use of AAOs
9. Where the FSMA is positioned at the carcase post-mortem inspection point(s), MISS will determine chain speeds. MISS must be applied across the regulatory team (AAO and department FSMA) including all positions where an AAO is making primary post-mortem disposition.
10. AAOs and FSMAs are not interchangeable.
11. Recalculations according to MISS must be applied as appropriate and WH&S requirements upheld at all times.

Management of the retain rail

The retain rail to be cleared in accordance with departmental instructional material. The following principles apply:

1. Where the FSMA is at the carcase post-mortem inspection position, they are unable to leave this position to clear the retain unless the chain stops.
2. All ECA 2 and ECA 3 tags that are placed on a carcase or carcase parts can be removed and cleared by an AAO the FSMA or the OPV
3. All ECA 4 tags that are placed on a carcase or carcase parts can only be removed and cleared by an FSMA or OPV.