

AQIS Notice Meat: 97/38	NFS: 8
Title: Use of the word "Natural" in trade descriptions applied to meat	
Contact Officer: Neville Spencer, Technical services branch, Meat Inspection Division, PH (02) 62716650 Fax (02) 62725226	
Date of effect: Immediate	Date of Expiry: UFN
CO File No:	
* Central & Area Office *OIC Inspection Staff Meat Establishments *Meat Inspection Staff * State/Territory Departments Responsible for Agriculture	Last Notice 97/37 Last Notice 97/37 Last Notice 97/37 Last Notice Last Notice
	*Managers, Export Registered Meat Establishments * Managers, Domestic Meat Establishments * Managers Export Slaughtering Establishments * AUS - MEAT
	Last Notice 97/37 Last Notice Last Notice 97/35 Last Notice 97/35

PURPOSE

To advise of AQIS policy in regard to approval and to use of the word "natural" as part of the trade description applied export meat.

BACKGROUND

AQIS has received several approaches from industry re use of the word "natural" to trade describe export meat. Provision currently exists at sub-order 66.1 of the *Prescribed Goods (General) Orders* [PGGOs] that requires any additional information (other than that specified in orders) to be approved before use

"66.1 Where the trade description to be applied to prescribed goods contains information in addition to that specified in orders that apply to the goods, the trade description shall be approved by the Secretary, by instrument in writing, before it is applied to the goods."

Implications to describing export meat as "natural" have been discussed by the Export Meat Industry Advisory Committee and it has been agreed that AQIS should not be involved other than by approving applications for the purposes of trade description where this was required by the competent authority of the country of importation.

SITUATION

Where required by an importing country, AQIS will approve application for use of the word "natural" to label and to export certify meat provided the meat is subject to minimal processing

- approval may also include additional words in the form of explanatory statements that establish the basis for describing the meat in this way.

Approval is conditional on the meat complying with any requirements of the importing country that may apply in regard to labelling meat as natural, including the systems of animal production and/or slaughter processing used.

Except where importing country requirements expressly require AQIS to be involved or to export certify meat as "natural", AQIS will not be involved in ensuring that any special arrangements/processes/procedures that enable meat to be described as "natural" are in place or are effective.

As an alternative to AQIS approval, a general exemption has been issued in regard to PGGO 66.1 as it applies to use of the word "natural" (Attachment)

- the exemption will provide for any situation where an importing country authority does not require AQIS approval or certification as to the term "natural"
 - .. exporters are exempted from the requirement to obtain prior approval for the use of this term in trade descriptions.

If no AQIS approval applies, meat cannot be export certified as being "natural"

- this means no reference can be made to the word "natural" in any of the AQIS export certificates (including the description details).

APPLICATIONS

Enquires as to importing country requirements and applications for approval should be directed to the Technical Services Branch, Meat Inspection Division (AQIS Central Office) in the first instance.

Brian Macdonald
Director, Meat Inspection Division

25th November 1997

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
EXPORT CONTROL ACT 1982
PRESCRIBED GOODS (GENERAL) ORDERS
EXPORT MEAT ORDERS

INSTRUMENT OF EXEMPTION

I, ROBERT RICHARD BIDDLE, delegate of the Secretary, pursuant to order 12 of the *Prescribed Goods (General) Orders*, hereby specify that the provisions specified in Schedule 1 of this Instrument need not apply to, or in relation to, the prescribed goods specified in Schedule 2 of this Instrument subject to the conditions specified in Schedule 3 of this Instrument.

SCHEDULE 1

Sub-order 66.1 of the *Prescribed Goods (General) Orders* only as it relates to the use of the word "natural" as part of the trade description applied to prescribed goods.

SCHEDULE 2

Goods prescribed by the Export Meat Orders comprising only meat, edible offal, meat products or halal meat.

SCHEDULE 3

1. If any prescribed goods of the kind specified in Schedule 2 of this Instrument are to be labelled with the word "natural" as part of the trade description, goods of that kind may only be permitted export if, and only if -
 - (a) the goods; and
 - (b) use of the word "natural" in the labelling; and
 - (c) any reference to the word "natural" in the trade description affixed or applied to the goods,as the case may be, is in compliance of the laws and rules of the importing country as they relate or apply to use of the word "natural" either generally or in relation to goods of that kind.
2. The export of the prescribed goods specified in Schedule 2 of this Instrument is at the exporter's risk and AQIS is unable to intercede on behalf of the exporter should problems be experienced with the goods due to, or arising from, any reference to the word "natural" in the description applied to the goods.

This Instrument remains in effect until such time as it is revoked.

DATED THIS 21st DAY OF November 1997

ROBERT RICHARD BIDDLE
Assistant Director, Food Policy Branch
Policy and International Division
Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
Department of Primary Industries and Energy
Position Number 15373