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# FOOD SAFETY LEGISLATION

## ANIMAL PRODUCTS: MEAT

Prof. Andrew Aganga  
Principal

Meat Inspection Training Centre  
Lobatse, Botswana



Programme d'appui pour la législation vétérinaire



# Legislation governing meat inspection

- Meat Inspection Act and Meat Inspection Regulation should provide for the licensing of abattoirs and the inspection of meat and meat products.
- This legislation should ensure that the citizenry are provided with safe, wholesome meat and meat products.



# Basic requirements

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## The primary requirements of a Meat Inspection Act:

- Mandatory inspection of livestock before slaughter (cattle, sheep, goats, equines, swine and poultry);
- Mandatory postmortem inspection of every carcass;
- Sanitary standards established for slaughterhouses and meat processing plants in accordance with the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the OIE. HACCP principles playing a significant role.
- Authorized monitoring and inspection of slaughter and processing operations by the Central Competent Authority (CCA).
- Emphasis on primary responsibility of food business operators to produce meat safely



# Meat Inspection legislation should comprise the following

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- **Citation:**
  - This is the legal reference to the legislation
- **Interpretation or definitions** of all technical terms in the legislation
- **Exemptions**
  - This should spell out clearly those aspects that the legislation will not be applicable to such as the slaughter of livestock whose meat is not for commercial purposes.
- **Licensing** of abattoirs, cutting premises, cold storage premises
  - Issue, renewal, transfer, refusal or revocation of licenses
  - Licensing appeals



## Meat Inspection legislation should comprise the following (*contd*)

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- **Supervision and control of Premises**
  - Appointment of official veterinary surgeons (OVS) and meat inspectors
  - Powers of veterinary officers, OVS and meat inspectors
  - Revocation and suspension of designation of OVS
  - Supervision of premises
  - Inspection and health marking of carcasses
  - Notice of operation of licensed premises
  - Personal and process hygiene



## Meat Inspection legislation should comprise the following *(contd)*

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- Admission to, and detention in abattoirs of animals and carcasses
  - Conditions for the admission of diseased or injured animals
  - Period of time for keeping an animal in a lairage and removal of an animal from an abattoir
  - Animals slaughtered outside a licenced abattoir
- Administration, Penalties and Enforcement
  - Records of Inspections
  - Duties and responsibilities of the Food Business Operator
  - Penalties
  - Schedules



# Levels of approval of a meat inspection legislation

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- Consultative process: key to success
  - Local govt
  - Meat processors/food business operators
  - Consumer Associations
  - Local/tribal leaders
  - Law enforcement agencies such as the Police
  - Relevant govt Ministries/Departments such as health; trade and industry; justice; environment and waste management.



# Levels of approval of a meat inspection legislation *(contd)*

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- Drafting of the Bill, with assistance of the justice department legal team for presentation to Parliament
- Publication of the Bill in the Government Gazette for public comments
- Passing of the Bill and enacting it into law as an Act
- Drafting of the Meat Regulation, with assistance of the justice department legal team for presentation to Parliament by the responsible Minister as provided for in the Act





## Possible pitfalls

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- Lack of an inclusive consultation with relevant stakeholders
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- Ignorance or inadequate reference to the guidelines of international standards such as the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the OIE.



## Possible pitfalls (*contd*)

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- Inadequate attention and support by CCA to the OVS and meat inspector in the discharge of their duties
- Conflict of interest by the staff of the CCA
- Unethical behaviour by staff of the CCA



# Possible challenges in enforcement of the law

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- Political influence
- Economic influence
- Inadequate provision of resources for the implementation of the legislation such as:
  - Transport
  - Manpower
  - Information Technology
- Criminal activities of some food business operators



# Conclusion:

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- Legislation should be :
  - Appropriate,
  - Acceptable,
  - Applicable,
  - Sustainable
  - And should be genuinely enforced



## Conformance with WTO obligations:

- The World Trade Organisation (WTO) Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement represents the best efforts of the global community to establish principles and guidelines governing the establishment and implementation of measures to protect public and animal health.



Control and/or reduction of hazards of public health and animal health importance by ante- and postmortem meat inspection is a core responsibility for government veterinary services.



- Veterinary Services should therefore ensure that ante-and post-mortem inspection of slaughter is based on an overall assessment, as appropriate to the circumstances, "of the risks to human, animal, or plant life or health, taking into account risk assessment techniques developed by the relevant international organisations". Further, inspection procedures utilised in import/export programmes should be comparable to those used in domestic programmes<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Information Document prepared by the OIE Working Group on Animal Production Food Safety.

*Control of hazards of public health and animal health importance through ante- and postmortem meat inspection.*

Working Group on Animal Production Food Safety



## Successful implementation of the law will ensure:

- reduced risk of meat-borne diseases;
- increased confidence in the meat supply chain;
- increased market access;
- reduction in production costs;
- improved public health and more efficient and targeted food control.





- Increased consumer awareness on these benefits will serve as the driving force for encouraging meat processing establishments to cooperate in the implementation of the provisions of the law.



# Meat Inspection at MITC abattoir



Thank you for your attention



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12 rue de Prony, 75017 Paris, France - [www.oie.int](http://www.oie.int) – oie@oie.int

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