

EXPORT OF PIG MEAT TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR OFFICIAL VETERINARIANS AND FOOD BUSINESS OPERATORS ON THE COMPLETION OF CHECKLISTS FOR PREMISES INTENDING TO EXPORT TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

INTRODUCTION

Background

1. All premises in the chain of supply of pigmeat - slaughterhouses, boning or cutting plants, meat processing plants and cold stores must be specifically approved for export to the Republic of Korea (RoK).

Revised Premises Checklists

2. Revised premises checklists have been drafted in accordance with documents sent by the Korean authorities and are considerably more detailed in their requirements than previous versions. The English translations provided from Korea have been retained wherever possible. Additional clarification has been obtained where the English translation from the original Korean text was unclear.

3. Prior to a premises commencing export, the relevant checklist(s) must be completed by a Local Veterinary Inspector (LVI) appointed to the appropriate export panel. In the case of premises supervised by the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS), the veterinarian responsible for completing the checklist will usually be the Official Veterinarian (OV) appointed by the MHS to supervise the premises. In the case of standalone cutting and processing premises and cold stores, the checklist will be completed by an LVI.

Charging by the Official Veterinarian

4. Veterinarians completing the checklists do so in their capacity as a Local Veterinary Inspector (LVI) of Defra. Any fee charged for completion of the checklists is a matter between the exporting company and the veterinarian carrying out the approval. Such fees do not fall within the scope of inspection charges levied by the Meat Hygiene Service.

Pigs of UK Origin - Traceability and Audit Chain

5. Export certificate 1171EHC for export of pig meat to the RoK states that the meat was derived from animals which have been reared in the UK since birth. No meat derived from pigs not of UK origin must be included.

6. In order to provide the necessary assurance to Korea that only meat of UK origin is included in the consignment, exporters must also provide a description of the system in place at the exporting premises to assure traceability of pigmeat throughout the slaughter and production process through to dispatch. This description should be forwarded together with the completed checklist(s).

Specimen Health Certification for Exports of Pigmeat to RoK

7. Plant Operators / Official Veterinarians should contact their local Animal Health Divisional Office if they wish to see a specimen copy of the export health certificate for the export of pigmeat to the RoK and accompanying notes for guidance.

COMPLETING THE CHECKLISTS

8. Four checklists are now available for premises wishing to export pig meat to the RoK. A separate checklist is required for each type of premises as follows:

- slaughterhouse - swine
- boning or cutting plant
- meat processing plant
- cold store

9. As mentioned previously, the new checklists are more detailed than the previous versions. Each checklist is subdivided into five parts;

- General Information
- Facilities Standards
- Sanitary Operation Procedures
- HACCP System Management (not cold stores)
- Evaluation Summary

10. For items that comply with checklist requirements, Official Veterinarians should enter 'O' in the left column under check results. Items not fully complying should be marked 'X' in the right column. Any comments should be entered in the remarks column.

11. Original copies of the completed checklists, signed by the Official Veterinarian and bearing the 'Official Veterinarian' stamp are sent to Defra for assessment and then forwarded to the RoK authorities for their consideration.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

12. Part 1 should be completed with details of the premises approval number, name and address, the number of employees and date established (the date on which the premises was first licenced).

13. The 'approved work' column should be completed with a description of the work carried out at the premises on pigmeat intended for export to RoK, e.g. slaughtering / cutting / processing / storage of pigmeat. The 'approved item' means the actual cuts processed for export to RoK. In order to complete this section, the Official Veterinarian should obtain a description of the nature of the goods to be sent to the RoK from the plant operator.

14. The checklists also require details of the number of inspectors (including the OVS) and details of processing and chilling capacity. The number of inspectors means the number of inspection posts, not the number of individuals actually employed.

15. In addition, the slaughterhouse sections require a breakdown of the inspection personnel, the number of days of operation and shift patterns per week and the countries for which the premises holds specific approvals for export.

Flow Charts and CCPs

16. The Korean authorities require a copy of the process flow chart at the premises, together with a summary of the critical control points. The full HACCP plan is not required.

Checklist for Export Premises – Slaughterhouses only

17. This extra checklist was included in recent correspondence with the Korean authorities and should be completed in respect of average and maximum production at the premises.

Checklist for Storage Facilities – Storage Temperatures

18. This information was also a late addition to the premises checklists and, in the case of slaughterhouses, requests further details of chiller operating temperatures and chilling times after slaughter. It also requests details of blast freezer temperatures and time that the products remain in the blast freezer prior to reaching the desired core temperature.

19. The Korean authorities provided the following additional guidance:

Storage Temperature for Frozen Meat: Core temperature of -18°C

The process of quick freezing is required for meat to become a frozen product because of its long transportation time and circulation period (usually 2 years). The final product of frozen meat should have a core temperature of -18°C and the temperature should be maintained when stored at the freezer.

We recommend that the temperature of quick freezing room be -35°C and below and the freezing time be 48 hours. However, it is possible to review your different suggestions concerning the temperature and the length of time of the quick freezing process for the UK's export meat to the Republic of Korea if they are submitted with scientific evidence or international standard.

20. We have received veterinary advice from the FSA that some blast freezers may not achieve temperatures of -35°C as required by the Korean authorities. The actual temperature / time data should be entered into this section. Evidence (e.g., thermographs, internal carton temperature records) should also be provided to demonstrate the time taken for the boxed meat to reach a temperature of -18°C. This will be considered by the Korean Authorities during the approvals process.

21. Exporters should note that there may be a delay in approval of the premises if the Korean authorities request further information regarding scientific evidence or international standards.

FACILITIES STANDARD

22. This section describes the standards of construction, layout and water supply of meat premises. Other points for clarification include;

Location of Cutting Plants

23. Co-located cutting plants will meet this condition provided that layout and drainage is sufficient to avoid contamination of the cutting plant entrances and exits by effluent, animal waste or chemicals originating from the lairage or slaughterhouse.

Windows

24. This refers to any window in the rooms in which meat is handled, processed or stored.

Lighting

25. The RoK authorities specifically require that meat must be protected from the possibility of contamination by glass from broken light bulbs etc. The provision of plastic diffusers protecting fluorescent strip lights would meet this requirement, but Official Veterinarians must ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to protect meat from the risk of contamination by fragments of glass from exposed strip lights and other light fittings.

2. SANITARY OPERATION PROCEDURES

26. This new section lays down the requirements for the hygienic operation of the premises and now includes detailed questions concerning the implementation of Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs).

27. Food business operators are expected to provide suitable hygiene training to all staff working in the establishment. Evidence of such training must be provided to the Official Veterinarian in the form of a training manual or record of employee attendance at appropriate training courses.

28. Operators of cutting / processing plants and slaughterhouses must provide in-house hygiene guidelines or a manual, with auditable evidence of regular hygiene inspections taking place in the premises. Records of inspections must be retained for at least six months. In addition, there must be suitable procedures in place to ensure that adverse findings during such inspections are rectified as soon as possible.

Temperature of Hot Water Sterilisers

29. EU and domestic legislation require hot water sterilisers in meat plants to be supplied with water 'maintained at a temperature of not less than + 82°C'. The RoK authorities require a temperature 'above 83°C'. Official Veterinarians should note this requirement when monitoring the temperatures of hot water sterilisers for premises exporting to RoK.

Testing for Antibiotic Residues

30. The RoK authorities recognise the UK veterinary residues surveillance scheme as meeting the requirements of this paragraph. Official Veterinarians may wish to annotate this paragraph 'in accordance with UK statutory veterinary residues surveillance scheme' in the Remarks column. No additional residues testing is now required for exports of pigmeat to the RoK.

3. HACCP

31. This section deals with the HACCP plan and its implementation at the establishment. It focuses on the establishment and monitoring of critical control points (CCPs), corrective actions in the case of non-compliances, and calibration of instruments such as thermometers, verification and record keeping.

4. EVALUATION CRITERIA

32. There is a separate 'Evaluation Criteria' box at the end of each of the facility standard, SOP and HACCP sections of the checklists. These highlight the stipulation that new approvals will not be given to any establishment for which an X value, representing non-compliance, has been entered in the preceding section.

33. Official Veterinarians and premises operators must, therefore, ensure that the premises meets all of the requirements laid down in each of the checklists before submitting them to IAHD Page Street for forwarding to the RoK authorities.

5. EVALUATION SUMMARY

34. This box should be completed by the Official Veterinarian after he or she is satisfied that the premises meets all the conditions in the relevant checklist. The 'opinion of the evaluator' should contain a statement to the effect that

'[name, address and approval number of establishment] has been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the checklist and no non-compliances have been demonstrated. This establishment is recommended for approval to export [type(s) of commodity] to the Republic of Korea'.

The statement should be signed, dated and stamped with the Official Veterinarian stamp.

6. ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

35. Considerable delays were caused during the last approval exercise by incomplete and/or incorrect completion of the checklists. The following extra points may help to prevent potential errors before the checklists are forwarded to Defra:

- keep remarks to a minimum;
- fill in every 'O' and 'X' in the checklist;
- Note that there cannot be any 'X' non-compliances for new approvals. An 'X' means approval cannot be given and the checklist should not be sent to Defra.
- Approval numbers must be in the format UK/*****/EC;
- Complete the 'Totals' columns in numerals – i.e. for facilities standards in the slaughterhouse checklist, enter the number 25 as the number of 'O's and 0 (zero) as the number of 'X's. The remaining 'Totals' boxes should be filled in numerically with the appropriate number of 'O's and 'X's in the section to which it refers.
- Operators must provide a description of procedures in place to guarantee that only meat of UK origin is included in the consignment and also of systems in place to assure traceability of pigmeat throughout production on farm, slaughter and processing through to dispatch.
- Evidence of controls on non-UK pig meat in storage areas should be provided, together with a description how non-UK meat is prevented from possible accidental introduction into consignments intended for export to Korea. This might include a dedicated, clearly delineated storage area within a chamber for goods intended for export to RoK.
- in order to minimise the risk of damaged or out of date products being present in the same cold store chamber as goods for export to RoK, we would further recommend that written procedures be put in place for the immediate removal of such product to another chamber or separate area;
- The 'opinion of the evaluator must contain a recommendation for approval. We would suggest the wording given in paragraph 34.

PROCEDURE FOR PREMISES APPROVAL

36. The documents indicated below should be returned to Animal Health at Carlisle for onward transmission to Defra Global Animal Health:

- original completed checklist(s), signed stamped and dated by the Official Veterinarian / LVI;
- process flow chart with a summary of CCPs;
- details of traceability and controls throughout the process to ensure that meat derived from pigs not of UK origin cannot be exported to RoK;
- procedures to remove out of date products;
- evidence of time taken for boxed meat to reach a core temperature of -18°C in premises where blast freezers do not operate at -35°C.

The outside of the envelope should be marked 'Korea Meat Premises Approval'

37. The completed checklist will then be assessed prior to being sent to the RoK authorities for their consideration. Plant operators should be advised that additional delays may be incurred prior to approval for export being granted. Defra will notify FBOs of the decision of the RoK authorities as soon as it is received.

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