

Frequently asked questions:

Meat Inspection

Regulation amendments

(2020 and 2021)

On-Farm Slaughter

Can I co-own an animal with someone else and share the meat with their household?

Yes, under some conditions.

Effective December 8, 2021, the sharing of large animals (227 kg/500 lbs live weight) slaughtered under an On-Farm Slaughter Operation licence is permitted. There can be up to four co-owners of the live animal and the resulting meat from slaughter may be shared amongst the households of those co-owners and cannot be further distributed.

Animals smaller than 227 kg (500 lbs) can have only one owner and cannot be shared. The meat resulting from small animals is for consumption by the household of the animal owner and it cannot be sold, bartered, traded or otherwise transferred.

The sale of uninspected meat remains illegal in Alberta; therefore, the animal sharing must be arranged prior to slaughter. Sharing of the meat cannot be arranged after slaughter.

Can I sell waste from my uninspected slaughter operation for use as bait?

Yes. Waste from slaughter consisting of butcher scraps and by-products (excluding Specified Risk Materials or SRMs) from an uninspected slaughter operation (i.e., an On-Farm Slaughter Operation) can be sold to customers as bait. All packages must be labelled with "UNINSPECTED – FOR USE AS BAIT, ONLY."

How else can I dispose of waste from my uninspected slaughter operation?

Uninspected slaughter operations are meat facilities and on-farm slaughter waste must be disposed of according to the Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation, which includes disposal in a Class I or II landfill, burning by incineration, composting in a Class I compost facility or rendering at a rendering plant. Disposal options for On-Farm Slaughter Operations have been expanded to include on-farm burning, burial and farm composting.

How will the amendments help people in urban areas buy meat straight from a farm?

More Albertans can now purchase a live animal from a farmer, have it slaughtered and processed on the farm, then take all that animal's meat home for consumption by their household. This meat is uninspected and cannot be sold, traded, gifted or otherwise transferred to any other individuals.

Why were these amendments introduced?

The changes result in increased availability of local meat for Albertans, as well as new business opportunities for livestock producers. It enables farmers in Alberta to oversee the whole operation from the sale of their live animals through to field slaughter and processing of the carcasses for their customers.

Does a livestock producer require a license for on-farm slaughter?

A livestock producer will need an On-Farm Slaughter Operation licence if they want to sell their animals to customers and provide the slaughter and processing services on-farm.

They do not need a licence to slaughter their own livestock, on their land, for consumption by their own household.

How much will the licence cost?

On-Farm Slaughter Operation licences are \$100 each and are valid for five years.

What services are provided under an On-Farm Slaughter Operation Licence?

The customer(s) can purchase an animal from a livestock producer or they can bring an animal they sourced elsewhere, and have that animal slaughtered on-farm. The licensee can slaughter the animal themselves, hire a skilled individual or allow the customer(s) to slaughter their own animal.

The licence also enables the processing of meat from the uninspected slaughter. The customer(s) can have the animal carcass processed at the On-Farm Slaughter Operation (OFSO), take it to a licensed butcher shop, mobile butcher facility or licensed abattoir to process the animal carcass, or take the carcass home to process themselves.

As an example, a customer can purchase two sheep from a livestock producer, slaughter the animals themselves at the OFSO and take the animal carcasses home right away. The licence holder oversees these activities on-farm while

ensuring that the animals are slaughtered humanely and that the carcass is kept in a safe and sanitary manner.

As another example, a customer can purchase a hog from a livestock producer, have it slaughtered at an OFSO and request that the carcass be processed into meat cuts and sausages. The livestock producer may have the knowledge and skill to slaughter the animal humanely and have the equipment to safely process the meat on-farm.

Are there any recordkeeping requirements for on-farm slaughter?

Quarterly reports of on-farm slaughter activities are required, details of which are [available online](#). The names and contact information for each animal owner and co-owners, if applicable, are included for traceability purposes. If a recall is deemed necessary, this information would be used to contact all affected households.

Is the amount sold limited on a “per customer” basis, or “per licence?”

The animal limit is on an annual, per-customer basis. There are no limits to how many customers an On-Farm Slaughter Operation licensee can have. The limit serves as a mechanism to prevent illicit distribution. If, for example, one customer had 60 cows slaughtered per year, it could be a signal that they are distributing the meat through retail or foodservice, which is illegal under the Meat Inspection Regulation.

Does the customer(s) need to be present on-farm for the slaughter?

No. The On-Farm Slaughter Operation licence holder can conduct the slaughter without the customer(s) on-site.

Are there labelling requirements for uninspected meat?

Uninspected meat must include on its packaging;

- The label “UNINSPECTED, NOT FOR SALE”
- Name of the slaughter operation
- Slaughter date (day, month and year)

Uninspected slaughter waste (butcher scraps and by-products) that are sold as bait must include on its packaging:

- The label “UNINSPECTED – FOR USE AS BAIT, ONLY”
- Name of the slaughter operation
- Slaughter date (month, day, year)

On-Farm Slaughter Operation operators are required to document the CCIA or CSIP tag number, brand or tattoo for the animal and the customer(s) name and

contact information. This information enables traceability if there is a disease or illness issue.

What are the traceability requirements for OFSOs?

On-Farm Slaughter Operation (OFSO) licensees must submit quarterly reports to Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development on the number of animals slaughtered, dates of slaughter and the names and contact information of the customers who purchased the animals. The reporting enables traceability and verification that a customer(s) is not purchasing more than their own household could reasonably consume. Traceability is achieved by:

- Tracing forward: If a disease is traced to a herd, the government is able to contact the purchaser/customer of an animal from that herd.
- Tracing backward: If a customer becomes ill, the government is able to trace back from the customer to the OFSO operator and determine if other carcasses need to be recalled.

The meat from an animal slaughtered on-farm is for the animal owner(s)' household consumption only. It is illegal for the owner(s) of the purchased animal to sell uninspected meat. This limits distribution and the risk of a foodborne illness outbreak.

Why does an inspector need to be present at slaughter activities in an abattoir if they do not need to be present on-farm?

Slaughter and processing activities in an abattoir require ante-mortem and post mortem inspection to allow the meat to be sold. Only meat that is inspected is allowed to be sold, donated, bartered or gifted in Alberta. On-farm, animal owners assume the risks associated with on-farm slaughter and choose to have their animal slaughtered without inspection and the meat from the animal is for their household consumption only. The meat from animals slaughtered on-farm is "uninspected and not for sale."

Why can't mobile butchers perform ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection?

Provincial meat inspectors have the required expertise and training to ensure animal welfare and food safety inspection oversight as per the *Meat Inspection Act* and the Meat Inspection Regulation. Mobile butchers hold a slaughter licence. A licensee performing slaughter cannot provide inspection oversight, as it would be a conflict of interest.

Can the meat from animals slaughtered on-farm be sold to a local restaurant?

Uninspected meat cannot be sold to anyone, including a local restaurant. Animals that have been inspected and approved (i.e., pass ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections performed by an inspector) can be sold to commercial food establishments (retail, wholesale and restaurants), to individuals or at farmers' markets. Alberta Health, through its Food Regulation, regulates the sale of meat and meat products at retail and foodservice.

Can meat from animals slaughtered on-farm be donated to a food bank or other non-profit group?

Uninspected meat cannot be donated or shared with others. If it passes both ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection by a provincial meat inspector, it may be donated. Food banks or other non-profit organizations that distribute and or prepare food products must adhere to Alberta's Food Regulation. The donation of uninspected meat or poultry products is prohibited except for wild game received through the Hunters For Tomorrow and the Alberta Hunters Sharing the Harvest programs.

What are the economic benefits of the amendments for livestock producers?

It is anticipated that on-farm slaughter will increase farm-direct sales of animals as customers would be able to purchase an animal and have it slaughtered on-farm for their own household's consumption.

With the changes, producers would be expected to earn additional profit from selling their animals directly to customers and doing the slaughter themselves. The producer would benefit from the sale price of the animal, as well as a fee for slaughtering and processing the carcass on-farm as additional sources of revenue.

Changes in the requirements for slaughter waste disposal also financially benefit the small slaughter operations. They can now sell the scraps for bait or dispose of them in ways that are less expensive than before, such as on-farm burial, composting or burning.

Who inspects the facility?

The On-Farm Slaughter Operation (OFSO) is uninspected; however, Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development is responsible for the licensing of the OFSO and investigates complaints or concerns.

Where does the on-farm slaughter and processing take place?

On-Farm Slaughter Operation slaughter occurs outdoors and the processing may take place in a building.

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What are the food safety requirements for OFSOs?

The On-Farm Slaughter Operation licence holder must declare that they have read and understand their responsibilities under all applicable legislation. This includes:

- requirements to assure humane slaughter;

- that the carcass is processed by someone who has the knowledge and skill and equipment to do safely; and
- that every carcass is kept in a safe and sanitary manner at a temperature that ensures the meat is free of spoilage and contamination.

Who evaluates the humane handling and slaughter of the animals?

Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development follows up on public complaints.

Who is liable if there is a health concern linked to this licence?

The On-Farm Slaughter Operation (OFSO) licence holder is responsible for sanitary dressing, storage of the carcass and sanitary practices during processing.

If an OFSO licence holder is linked to a foodborne illness, the government of Alberta would work with the operator and Alberta Health Services to help them identify the root cause and take appropriate action.

What are the disposal requirements for specified risk material (SRM) on-farm?

The On-Farm Slaughter Operation licence holder is responsible to comply with all legislation relevant to their business, including the federal Enhanced Feed Ban which outlines the requirements for SRM disposal. Further information can be found on the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency's information on SRMs](#).

A permit is required for transporting and disposing of certain cattle tissues capable of transmitting bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), known as specified risk material (SRM). This allows the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to track and maintain continuous control over SRM to ensure it does not enter livestock feed, pet food or fertilizer.

How does on-farm slaughter impact a poultry producer's quota?

The amendments will not change the requirements outlined in the *Marketing of Agricultural Products Act* or its respective regulations related to poultry production and sales, with the exception that the poultry may now be purchased "live" and slaughtered on-farm.

Chicken and turkey are part of a national supply-managed system, whereby producers must hold quota to participate in the market unless they produce below an exemption amount.

Requirements for exempted production are outlined in plan and marketing regulations. Exempted production enables production and marketing outside of

the quota system and often is described as small-scale production or local food production.

On-farm slaughter is considered exempted production.

Can farmers sell uninspected meat?

The sale of uninspected meat in Alberta is illegal. The Meat Inspection Regulation allows for a farmer to sell an animal direct to a customer(s), have that animal slaughtered on-farm, and all of the meat from the animal goes to that same customer(s) for their immediate household consumption. The meat cannot be sold, bartered or donated.

The only uninspected products that can be sold is the slaughter waste consisting of butcher scraps and by-products from an uninspected slaughter operation for the purpose of use as bait for hunting or trapping.

Video Ante-Mortem Inspection

Why are video ante-mortem inspections being allowed?

Starting January 2022, the Video Ante-Mortem Inspection (VAMI) program allows for animals that cannot be transported to an abattoir, to receive an ante-mortem inspection via video technology and be humanely slaughtered on-site. The carcass would then be transported to a licensed abattoir for post-mortem inspection as per the conventional inspection processes. This inspection process reduces animal suffering because animals do not have to be transported and allows the meat to be inspected according to Alberta's *Meat Inspection Act* and *Meat Inspection Regulation* so that it can be sold.

Can a healthy, normal animal be inspected and slaughtered through video ante-mortem inspection?

This inspection service is for animals that are unfit for transport or in an emergency slaughter situation. Healthy, fit animals are to be transported to an abattoir for conventional ante- and post-mortem inspection.

If an animal has received a video ante-mortem inspection, can I sell the meat?

Yes, if the VAMI carcass is transported to a licensed provincial abattoir for post-mortem inspection by a meat inspector. If deemed fit-for-human-consumption, it will be labelled as inspected and can be sold to restaurants, through retail, direct to the customer or processed further at a provincially licensed facility.

Meat By-Products

How will the amendments impact the use of the whole animal?

These amendments allow provincially licensed butchers to use more of the animal by letting them sell by-products such as the eyes and organs. Less of the animal is wasted and butchers and ranchers can earn more money from the animals they raise.

We already sell meat and poultry by-products. What has changed?

The regulation has been amended to provide more clarity and support increased market access opportunities for abattoirs.

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