

NEWS RELEASE



Canada's Meat Industry Amongst World's Safest

OTTAWA, Ont., Monday August 25, 2008- Canadian consumers should be assured that Canada's meat supply is recognized amongst the safest in the world.

Our collective processing industry has worked in collaboration with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to put in place scientifically robust, innovative and world recognized food safety and quality systems to the benefit of our valued customers and consumers at home and abroad.

Most importantly, as federal establishments, we are governed intensely by Canada's Meat Inspection Act and Regulations and the highly prescriptive and comprehensive CFIA Manual of Procedures. We are also inspected regularly, and randomly audited by highly professional and trained Veterinarians and Meat Inspectors. All of which is undertaken to ensure Canadian meat products remain among the highest in quality and safety in the world.

Canada's meat processors all adhere to current good manufacturing practices (GMPs), sanitation standard operating procedures (SSOPs), and HACCP process controls. We are all subject to the CFIA's Compliance Verification System and work is continually taking place to control, detect and eliminate the incidence of all the food spoilage organisms and food pathogens including *Listeria monocytogenes*, *E coli* 0157:H7, *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* and to continuously improve the food safety and wholesomeness of the Canadian meat supply.

To date, hundreds of millions of dollars have been invested in laboratory testing, plant sanitation, equipment, conveyances, packaging, leading edge technology, research and development. To support these commitments, meat processing facilities employ highly qualified and professional food science and microbiology experts to manage their food safety programs and many firms have PhDs and veterinarians on staff.

Overall, Canada operates an internationally recognized science-based risk analysis food safety system in our meat industry. Meat processors, governments and consumers all play an important role in constantly improving and maintaining the quality and safety of our food supply.

Despite the tremendous protective layers of safeguards and improvements in processing technologies, post-processing contamination- even in the consumer's home - remains a potential risk. The potential for contamination by various bacteria dictates that proper food handling procedures and sanitation are

essential at any step of the food chain for protecting at-risk consumers from this pathogen.

How can consumers reduce their risk?

Keep foods out of the temperature danger zone (between 4°C and 60°C or 40°F and 140°F). Keep the refrigerator at 4°C (40°F) or colder. Refrigerate food promptly. Thoroughly cook or boil foods such as hot dogs and poultry products until they are steaming hot. Use a meat thermometer and cook raw hamburger to at least 71 C.

Wash hands before, during and after handling any type of food, especially raw meat and poultry.

Clean all utensils, cutting boards and work surfaces with a mild bleach solution (5 ml/1 tsp. bleach per 750 ml/3 cups water) before and after using. Separate utensils for raw and cooked foods.

Follow “best before” dates especially on packaged goods with a long shelf life and use immediately after opening.

The Canadian meat industry is the largest of our food processing sector with some 67,000 employees and gross annual sales of pork, beef, veal, lamb and poultry of over \$ 20.5 billion. Last year Canada exported over \$1.3 billion of beef and over \$2.4 billion of pork to over 150 different countries around the world.

The Canadian Meat Council and its members are dedicated to consumer safety and will continue to work directly with CFIA, related health agencies and the Government of Canada to remain vigilant and proactive to provide Canadians and our valued international markets the highest level of food safety and quality each and every day.

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