Meat inspection procedures: incisions, information, and health marks

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EU amends certain requirements for meat inspection and health marks

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/1447 of 18 July 2025 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/627 laying down uniform practical arrangements for the performance of official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council

Update

The European Union (EU) has amended its rules:

- on meat inspection – to limit post-mortem inspections using incisions and palpations to those relevant to the abnormalities found, to reduce the possibility of cross-contamination
- on food chain information – to extend the obligation to make available certain information to include cases of emergency slaughter and slaughter on farm, and to extend information requirements for slaughterhouses to include game-handling establishments
- on health marks – to extend the requirements currently in place for slaughterhouses to include game-handling establishments.

Impacted products

Meat

What is changing?

This new Regulation amends the existing Regulation 2019/627, which sets out the requirements for competent authorities performing official controls on animal products.

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Meat inspection

Post-mortem inspection in slaughterhouses involves incisions and palpations if the veterinarian carrying out controls identifies a possible risk to human health, animal health, or animal welfare. Previously, when abnormalities were found, *all* incisions and palpations had to be carried out. As these activities may pose a risk of cross-contamination with pathogens, this new Regulation limits their use to cases where they are specifically relevant to the abnormalities found. These changes apply to inspection of:

- veal, Art. 18(3)
- beef, Art. 19(2)
- lamb, Art. 20(2)
- sheep and goats, Art. 21(2)
- horses, Art. 22(2)
- pork, Art. 23(2).

Food chain information

To improve the efficiency of controls, the EU has established a system of food chain information exchange between the farmer sending animals to slaughter, the slaughterhouse, and the veterinarian carrying out controls (Regulation 853/2004, Annex II, Section III). Animals cannot be slaughtered for human consumption if the compulsory information to be communicated is not available (Regulation 2019/627, Art. 40). The EU has extended these information requirements to include cases of emergency slaughter and slaughter on farm.

Changes introduced in Regulation 2024/1141 allowed game-handling establishments to receive farmed game slaughtered at the place of origin (see Adaptation of food hygiene rules for products of animal origin). This new Regulation (2025/1447) extends the information requirements already established for slaughterhouses to include game-handling establishments.

Health marks

Regulation 2019/627 also sets requirements for health marks – the marks applied after official controls to indicate that meat is fit for human consumption. Currently, these requirements refer only to carcasses cut in the slaughterhouse. The EU has now extended these requirements to also include game-handling establishments (Art. 48(2)).

In zones that are under restrictions due to disease, the requirements regarding the form of the health mark may be replaced by those for special health marks put in place due to the disease in question (modification to clarify 2019/627, Art. 48(3)), in compliance with the Animal Health Law (Regulation 2016/429).

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Timeline

The revised rules apply from **10 August 2025**.

What are the major implications for exporting countries?

Competent authorities of exporting countries are responsible for official controls of meat exported to the EU, and must ensure that requirements equivalent to those set by the EU are met. They need to apply the risk-based approach, food chain information, and health marks (or identification marks) that are indicated in the certificates (see Regulation 2020/2235, Annex III, Ch. I–IV; also see EU official health certificates for exports to the EU – explained).

Background

The overall rules on compliance with food safety and animal health are laid down in the Official Controls Regulation 2017/625. This is complemented by Regulation 2019/627, which lays down specific requirements for official controls on animal products, including meat.

Resources

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/2235 laying down rules for the application of Regulations (EU) 2016/429 and (EU) 2017/625 as regards model animal health certificates, model official certificates and model animal health/official certificates, for the entry into the Union and movements within the Union of consignments of certain categories of animals and goods, official certification regarding such certificates

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/627 laying down uniform practical arrangements for the performance of official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption

Regulation (EU) 2017/625 on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products (Official Controls Regulation)

Regulation (EU) 2016/429 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health (Animal Health Law)

Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin

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Sources

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