Simplifications in meat inspection

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EU simplifies inspection of cattle and sheep/goat meat

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/2241 of 5 November 2025 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/627 as regards post-mortem inspections of bovine animals, sheep and goats.

Update

The European Union (EU) has amended its rules on meat inspection in response to practical experience. In particular, it has removed the requirement to palpate the gastric and mesenteric lymph nodes of cattle, and to incise the esophagus of sheep/goats. It has also removed the difference in age requirements for post-mortem inspection of sheep and goats.

Impacted products

Beef, lamb, sheep, goat meat

What is changing?

Regulation 2019/627 sets out how competent authorities must perform post-mortem official controls on animals. This new Regulation 2025/2241 makes the following amendments.

Incisions and palpations

Post-mortem inspection in slaughterhouses may involve incisions and palpations if the veterinarian carrying out controls identifies a possible risk to human health, animal health, or animal welfare. Due to the risk of cross-contamination, these incisions and palpations must only be carried out on organs that allow veterinarians to identify significant diseases. The requirement to palpate the gastric and mesenteric lymph nodes of cattle and to incise the esophagus of sheep and goats during routine post-mortem inspection is now considered unnecessary, and has been removed.

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Young domestic sheep and goats

Post-mortem inspection procedures for sheep and goats differ depending on the age of the animals. Currently, the requirements change when a goat is older than 6 months, but when a sheep is older than 12 months. New data show that this distinction is not justified, and the requirements for goats and sheep should both apply from 12 months.

Why?

The EU makes efforts to simplify legislation where simplifications will not have a negative impact on food safety.

Timeline

The revised rules apply from **26 November 2025**.

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.

Regulation 2025/2241 follows the simplification carried out earlier in 2025 by Regulation 2025/1447 (see Meat inspection procedures: incisions, information, and health marks).

Resources

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).

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Sources

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/2241 as regards post-mortem inspections of bovine animals, sheep and goats.

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