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Guideline for Handling and Labelling of Meat that is Not Government Inspected

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Prepared by:

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Services, BCCDC, and the Regional Health Authorities:
First Nations Health, Fraser Health, Island Health, Interior Health,
Northern Health and Vancouver Coastal Health

INTRODUCTION

When purchasing meat in British Columbia, customers likely assume the meat they buy at grocery stores, restaurants or from food processors has been federally or provincially inspected (unless otherwise indicated). For this reason, it is important to identify meat that is not government inspected and have a system in place to keep it separate from inspected meat. Therefore, proper handling and labelling practices are critical from **Farmgate Plus** Slaughter Establishments to the final purchaser (e.g., food processor, retail establishment and food service establishment).

Meat from a **Farmgate** Slaughter Establishment is not government inspected and is intended to be sold directly to consumers, or for personal use. Alternatively, this meat may first go to a cut and wrap premises for further processing and eventual return to the producer for sale to consumers. The guidelines described in this document still apply to this Farmgate sourced meat which is processed at a food premises and/or sold at farmgate or farmers' markets.¹ The Meat Inspection Regulation describes further labelling requirements for meat sourced from a Farmgate Slaughter Establishment in [section 29.4](#).

NOTE: For the purposes of the remainder of this document, "meat that is not government inspected" only refers to meat that comes from farm-raised animals that were slaughtered on a Farmgate Plus Licensed Slaughter Establishment. It does not include meat from harvested/hunted/wild game.

The Guidelines for Cutting and Wrapping Carcasses that are Not Government Inspected provide further direction on handling and labelling of harvested/hunted/wild game meats.

Principles:

- 1) Consumers have a right to know if they are purchasing meat that is not government inspected.
- 2) Meat product traceability is critically important, especially with respect to recalls and foodborne illness investigations.
- 3) If any amount of meat that is not government inspected is comingled with inspected meat, the inspected meat must be handled as and labelled "Not Government Inspected". Maintaining identity and segregation practices is important to ensure the presence of not government inspected meat is always declared (see 1 and 2).

(Inspected Meat + Not Government Inspected Meat = Not Government Inspected Meat)

¹ For more information about selling foods at farmers markets, please see [Temporary Food Markets Guideline for the Sale of Foods at Temporary Food Markets](#)

The sections 29.3 to 29.6 of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries' Meat Inspection Regulation provide details on the labelling requirements for meat and meat products at the slaughter establishment through to all food premises that purchase and/or resell meat that is government inspected as well as meat that is not government inspected.

The identity of meat that is not government inspected needs to be maintained during its time at the food premises, from receipt to storage, processing, labelling and shipping, up to and including point of sale (e.g., serving to a patron, food donations, retail packaging, food samples). This requirement applies to meat and meat products that are packaged and not packaged (e.g., restaurant meals and deli counter meat).

PACKAGED PRODUCT LABELLING

As per section 29.4 of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries' [Meat Inspection Regulation](#) under the *Food Safety Act*, a packaged not government inspected meat product must be labelled with:

- the name and address of the slaughter establishment;
- the ID number of the slaughter establishment;
- a description of the contents of the package;
- the net weight or volume of the contents of the package; and the words, "Not Government Inspected"

[According to federal regulations](#), all mandatory information required on prepackaged foods must be clearly and prominently shown, and in characters of at least 1.6 mm in height. All other relevant federal labelling requirements will also apply (e.g., nutrition facts table, ingredient declaration, storage instructions, etc.). Federal labelling resources are provided under the heading "Additional Resources" below.

Meat that is not government inspected must:

- be properly labelled – the packaging must include the statement "**NOT GOVERNMENT INSPECTED**" on front of package.
- Include the statement "NOT GOVERNMENT INSPECTED" as part of, or directly next to the common name of the product. The statement must be as prominent as the common name of the product (e.g., in the same type, height and font) so that it is easy for consumers to read and identify.
- Include the statement "NOT GOVERNMENT INSPECTED" in the ingredient list directly following any sources of meat that are not government inspected.
- not contain additional information or claims combined with the statement "Not Government Inspected".

Example:

*The examples below are **not** acceptable ways to declare "Not Government Inspected". The statement must be **as prominent** as the common name, **next to the common name** and **not** be combined with claims.*



LOCALLY SOURCED, NOT
GOVERNMENT INSPECTED
SAUSAGES



FULLY COOKED SEASONED
PORK SIDE RIBS*

NEW FLAVOUR!

**not government inspected*

The examples below show acceptable ways to declare a common name and corresponding product ingredient list. A claim such as "locally sourced" may appear elsewhere on packaging if it is truthful and not misleading. "Not government inspected" needs to be included in the ingredient list in a way that clearly identifies which ingredient(s) is not government inspected.



SAUSAGES - NOT
GOVERNMENT INSPECTED

Locally Sourced!



INGREDIENTS: PORK (NOT GOVERNMENT INSPECTED), BEEF, CORN SYRUP SOLIDS, SALT, SUGAR, SODIUM PHOSPHATE, SODIUM ERYTHORBATE, SODIUM DIACETATE, SPICE, SODIUM NITRITE.

NOTE:

- If the food is a multi-component product, such as a lasagna, casserole or meat pie, it should be made clear that the meat is the component which is not government inspected.
- If the food is made with meat from various farmgate plus slaughter establishments, all corresponding slaughter establishment ID numbers, names and addresses are required on the label.

EXAMPLE OF MULTI-COMPONENT PRODUCT NAME:

The example on the bottom left is not acceptable because it does not indicate which part of the lasagna is not government inspected, while the example on the right clearly states that the meat is the component which is not government inspected. Another acceptable name would be "LASAGNA – WITH CHEESE AND NOT GOVERNMENT INSPECTED MEAT".



CHEESE AND MEAT LASAGNA
– NOT GOVERNMENT
INSPECTED



CHEESE AND NOT
GOVERNMENT INSPECTED
MEAT LASAGNA

EXAMPLE OF MULTI-COMPONENT PRODUCT INGREDIENT LIST:

The examples below show two versions of an ingredient label for a lasagna made with pork that is not government inspected. The top (acceptable) list clearly labels pork as the ingredient which is not government inspected, and as per [federal requirements](#), it appears in descending order by weight as compared to the other ingredients. In this case, the common name would inform the consumer that the lasagna contains cheese as well as meat that is not government inspected. The consumer could then look at the ingredient declaration for further information on the meat. The bottom example does not provide adequate information about which meat in the ingredient list is not government inspected.

✓ INGREDIENTS: **SAUCE:** BEEF, NOT GOVERNMENT INSPECTED PORK, CHICKEN, TOMATOES, WATER, OIL, CARROTS, SALT, ONION, CELERY, ROMANO CHEESE AND/OR PARMESAN CHEESE, SPICE. **NOODLES:** ENRICHED FLOUR, WATER, EGGS. **TOPPING:** MOZZARELLA CHEESE, CHEDDAR CHEESE. CONTAINS: WHEAT, MILK, EGGS

✗ INGREDIENTS: **NOT GOVERNMENT INSPECTED MEAT SAUCE:** BEEF, PORK, CHICKEN, TOMATOES, WATER, OIL, CARROTS, SALT, ONION, CELERY, ROMANO CHEESE AND/OR PARMESAN CHEESE, SPICE. **NOODLES:** ENRICHED FLOUR, WATER, EGGS. **TOPPING:** MOZZARELLA CHEESE, CHEDDAR CHEESE. CONTAINS: WHEAT, MILK, EGGS

POINT OF SALE COMMUNICATION

Any sources of meat that are not government inspected need to be clearly identified as “Not Government Inspected”. This is true for meat and meat products that are packaged and not packaged.

Communication about sources of meat that is not government inspected and not packaged (e.g., served directly to the consumer or patron) can be made through menus, sandwich boards, point of sale materials, and other consumer-facing product descriptions that are not primary food packaging. **Product descriptions must be legible to the purchaser under the customary conditions of purchase and use.** Sharing additional information (e.g., the slaughter establishment ID number and the name and address of the farmgate plus slaughter establishment where the meat originated) with the customer or patron is optional. For example:

- Appearing directly on a menu, e.g.: “LOADED NACHOS – topped with seasoned **ground beef that is not government inspected**, cheese, olives, green onions...”.
- Appearing as a prominent catch-all statement on a menu or sandwich board that would be easily visible to all patrons, e.g., “ALL OF OUR BEEF IS NOT GOVERNMENT INSPECTED”.
- Appearing as a disclaimer, e.g.: “LOADED NACHOS – topped with ground beef*, cheese, olives, green onions...” “*some of our beef is not government inspected. Please ask your waitstaff for more information”. The patron would then ask waitstaff, who could provide an answer verbally. Note that in this case, waitstaff would be required to know which menu items use meat that is not government inspected and be prepared to answer the question factually.
- Patrons may be referred to a separate document:

1. Example 1:

- Menu: “LOADED NACHOS – topped with ground beef*, cheese, olives, green onions...”
- Separate document would be provided WITH menu, and provide source information: ***beef is not government inspected**, it is sourced from Ben’s Happy Cows

2. Example 2:

- Menu: “LOADED NACHOS – topped with ground beef*, pulled pork*, ground chicken, cheese, olives, green onions...”
- Separate document would be provided WITH menu, and provide source information, such as: **“*beef and pork are not government inspected**, it is sourced from Greener Pastures Ltd.” The food premises operator may also choose to include information on the inspection source (i.e., from a provincially or federally inspected slaughter establishment) of the ground chicken if the information is presented in a way that does not mislead consumers to believe that the ground beef and pulled pork are from an inspected source.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please contact [Karl Martinson](#) at the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries for questions about labelling requirements under the provincial Meat Inspection Regulation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please reach out to your local [Canadian Food Inspection Agency Unit](#) for questions about federal labelling requirements

[Federal Labelling Toolkit](#)