



# Local Governments

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## Key Partners

# in Local Meat Production

Meat, eggs and dairy products are an important part of most people's diets. More and more BC consumers want these to be locally produced. This is good news for local governments because local food production supports our communities. It keeps food dollars in the local economy and creates jobs.



Livestock farming is a key contributor to local food production. Farming and food processing go hand in hand - in order to be sustainable and contribute to rural economies at a maximum, local meat production needs local slaughterhouses.

### The Regulatory Environment

In BC, the Meat Inspection Regulation requires slaughterhouse operators to be licensed if they offer slaughter services for livestock owners or produce meat for sale for human consumption. In most parts of the province, this licensing requirement is relatively new. Livestock producers, meat processors and their customers are still adapting to the changes.

Slaughterhouses must also comply with regulations relating to environmental protection, waste disposal, animal health and welfare, labour, workplace safety, the Agricultural Land Commission and Marketing Boards, as well as municipal zoning and other bylaws. This rigorous government oversight makes licensed plants good neighbours in their communities.

### A Role for Local Government

Slaughterhouses require considerable capital investment, and operating costs are very high. Increasing costs of waste disposal, shortages of skilled labour, the current economic climate and uncertainties in the livestock industry are additional challenges. The face of BC's meat processing industry is changing. To remain economically viable, the industry must develop community and regional solutions. Local governments can support this important industry in their community by:

- ensuring that local government **bylaws, official community plans, etc.** support the full range of activities required for local meat production, including the breeding and raising of meat animals, slaughter, processing, distribution and the sale of the meat. For example, in many areas agricultural zoning only allows the operation of a slaughterhouse if the majority of animals to be processed are raised on the same property. This limits community based approaches that can serve the needs of all livestock producers in one area.





- considering the needs of the livestock and meat processing industries in solid and liquid **waste disposal planning**. For example, some, but not all regional landfills accept slaughter waste. Local governments can improve access to landfills for the meat industry, ensure that tipping fees are affordable and that wherever possible landfills obtain the necessary permits to accept Specified Risk Material (SRM).

- promoting understanding and acceptance between the livestock industry and the general public through good **public consultation processes and information**. For example, most people do not know that BC's community based slaughterhouses are typically small and usually part-time or seasonal operations that fit well into their environment. The public is often unaware of existing slaughterhouses operating in their midst until it might be brought to their attention, e.g. through a rezoning process. Local governments can ensure that planning processes allow the public to develop an understanding of the scale and nature of planned projects which can help address public concerns and reduce tensions.



*A small community slaughterhouse.*

- **sharing their knowledge** of local conditions with other levels of government and **facilitating dialogue** between communities and government. Better information about potential impacts on communities allows for the development of better policy.

Consumers want to support their local economy, reduce “food miles” or simply make informed choices about how they spend their food dollars by interacting directly with the farmer. Consumers want local food production in their communities. Local governments can help make it happen.

### For Further Information:

The **BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport (MHLS)** is responsible for provincial leadership and direction that includes food safety and food security. The Meat Inspection Regulation, enacted under the Food Safety Act (2004), governs the slaughter of animals in provincially licensed abattoirs. MHLS provides provincial leadership and direction in food security.

[www.hls.gov.bc.ca/protect/ehp\\_foodsafety.html](http://www.hls.gov.bc.ca/protect/ehp_foodsafety.html)



The **BC Center for Disease Control**, an agency of the **Provincial Health Service Authority (PHSA)**, is responsible for issuing licences to slaughterhouses in BC and for administering the inspection service to these facilities to ensure that the meat they produce is safe to consume.

[www.bccdc.org/content.php?item=144](http://www.bccdc.org/content.php?item=144)

The Population and Public Health Program of the PHSA plays a provincial role in promoting and supporting food secure communities in BC.

**The BC Food Processors Association** is a not-for-profit organization representing the food processing industry, including slaughterhouses. It administers the Meat Industry Enhancement Strategy and the Meat Transition Assistance Program, joint government – industry initiatives to enhance licensed meat processing capacity in BC. For further information, please contact: [info@bcfpa.ca](mailto:info@bcfpa.ca) or 604-504-4409. [www.bcfpa.ca](http://www.bcfpa.ca)