

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Trader Notice MH 1/2018

To: Food Business Operators at Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine approved Equine Slaughter Premises

Subject: Equine Slaughter

EU Regulations require that Food Business Operators (FBOs) at approved Equine slaughter premises must take responsibility for the production of safe food. This means that FBOs must have documented HACCP based procedures (SOPs) that cover all aspects of equine slaughter and processing from intake to dispatch.

1. Animal Intake

All equine animals presented for slaughter must have a unique equine life number (UELN) also known as the passport number. In addition, all equine animals registered after 1st July 2009 must be implanted with a transponder/microchip. Where required, the microchip number must be recorded on the passport and on the central equine database. There may be a commonality between the UELN and the microchip number. All equines presented for slaughter must be registered on the AIM Database (Central Database).

The FBO must provide adequate facilities and the required assistance to DAFM to facilitate Ante-Mortem Inspection (AMI). The FBO must have a documented procedure, describing intake of equines to the slaughterhouse, which must include at a minimum, the following points:

1. At intake, the FBO must ensure that, in respect of each equine presented:
 - the equine has been moved from a premises registered with DAFM,
 - the equine has a valid passport and is properly identified,
 - the corresponding record has successfully passed the initial AIM online document pre-clearance check confirming that the required registration details of the equine are recorded on the central equine database in DAFM and, based on the data notified to the central equine database, the animal is eligible for slaughter for human consumption,
 - parts 1 and 2 of EqFCI-1 document have been completed,
 - the equine does not come from a holding or an area subject to a movement prohibition or other restriction for reasons of animal or public health, except when the competent authority so permits,
 - the equine is clean,

- the equine is healthy, as far as the food business operator can judge, and
- the equine is in a satisfactory state as regards welfare on arrival at the slaughterhouse.

AIM Pre-Clearance

Before accepting any equine for slaughter, the FBO must undertake a documentary check on AIM, ensuring that the database records in respect of that animal indicate that the equine is suitable for the food chain.. Only those equines in respect of which a positive outcome has been received from AIM can be cleared to be presented for slaughter. Documentary pre-clearance is provided on the basis that the data recorded on AIM at a particular point in time, in respect of the queried UELN, indicates that there is no impediment to the presentation for slaughter of the animal for the food chain. A copy of the pre-clearance obtained should be kept on file (paper or electronic) for future reference.

Passport Check

The FBO must check each passport to ensure that the passport is valid

The security features of all passports must be checked on presentation.

The FBO must also check that there is no indication on the passport, especially in the medicines section, that the equine is not eligible for the food chain.

Evaluation of the EqFCI-1

The FBO must ensure that Parts 1 and 2 of the Food Chain Information Document (EqFCI-1) are fully completed, and signed by the owner and the transporter.

Acceptance onto Premises

Once the FBO is satisfied that there are no impediments to the presentation for slaughter of the equine animal for human consumption, the equine owner can be instructed to bring the equine to the slaughter house. Once the equine animal arrives in the slaughter house it cannot leave alive except to be transferred to another approved slaughter house in the event of a breakdown. If the equine is deemed ineligible for the food chain, it will be euthanased and disposed of as Cat 1 Animal By-Products (ABP). Once in the slaughterhouse holding, the FBO becomes the keeper and is responsible for its welfare.

Identity Checks

Once the equine has arrived on the premises, the FBO must check that the equine presented (breed, colour, sex, markings, age and height) matches the equine passport submitted. The neck of all equines must be scanned for the presence of microchips. If there is any discrepancy between the microchip details on the passport and the microchip(s) in the animal, then this animal is not eligible for the food chain unless the PIO who issued the passport or AIM Division can clarify the discrepancies to the satisfaction of the Veterinary Office. Any equine animal, in the opinion of DAFM staff, whose microchip/markings/identity do not match those on the passport will be deemed ineligible for human consumption and will be euthanased and disposed of as Cat 1 Animal By-Products (ABP).

Animal Health and Welfare Check

The FBO must assess the health and welfare of each equine as detailed in the EqFCI-1 form. If the FBO has any concerns with regard to the equines' health or welfare, they must immediately notify the Veterinary Office.

Sign Part 3 of the EQFCI-1

If the animal is being presented for AMI tick the box in part 1, if the animal is NOT being presented for slaughter a single line must be drawn through the UELN of that animal. Once the FBO is satisfied that Parts 1 and 2 of the EqFCI-1 document have been fully and accurately completed and that there are no animal health or welfare issues, they must complete and sign Part 3 of the EqFCI-1 document.

Presentation of the FCI, Passport and Equine to DAFM

The fully completed EqFCI-1 document, passport and equine must be presented to DAFM for inspection.

Presentation for Slaughter

Any equine failing AMI must be disposed as Cat 1 ABP. The FBO must only slaughter equines when satisfied that the OV has signed part 4 of the EqFCI-1 document indicating that the equine has not failed AMI.

Disposal of Microchips

All microchips must be removed from the carcasses by the FBO following final PMI and disposed of as Cat1 ABP. Any carcass where a microchip, identified in the lairage, cannot be recovered following final inspection must be recorded by the FBO.

NOTE: Passing identification and AIM clearance checks does not mean that equines are automatically fit for slaughter.

2. Animal Welfare

The FBO must ensure that all equines accepted for slaughter are in a satisfactory state as regards welfare.

Handling and slaughter of equines must be done in accordance with [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 1099/2009](#) and [Trader Notice 15/2014](#).

Every person handling equines from the point of unloading to the death of the animal must hold a Certificate of Competence in the relevant operations.

3. Presentation for Ante Mortem Inspection

The FBO must have an up to date Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on ante – mortem detailing:

1. Their documented systems and procedures used to achieve compliance with regulations.
2. The provision of facilities which allow for the carrying out of ante-mortem inspection
3. The provision of a detention pen with hygiene facilities when necessary
4. How the FBO ensures that only equines that have passed ante-mortem examination are slaughtered for human consumption.
5. How the FBO ensures the proper disposition of the equines that do not pass ante mortem examination.

It is the responsibility of the FBO to ensure that **all equines** presented for slaughter are subjected to veterinary ante-mortem inspection prior to slaughter.

4. Presentation for Post Mortem Inspection

The FBO must have a written SOP, in consultation and agreement with the Veterinary Inspector (VI), before slaughtering of equines can take place.

The protocol or SOP must specify at least the following:

1. All animals slaughtered will be presented for post-mortem inspection.
2. Stunning, bleeding, skinning, evisceration and other dressing will be carried out without undue delay and in a manner that avoids contamination of the meat.
3. There is transparent traceability, labelling and correlation of carcasses, meat and offals at all stages up-to and including presentation for post-mortem.
4. There is a procedure to harvest and handle offal during slaughter.
5. Satisfactory facilities for final carcass inspection, time, and assistance to allow for the carrying out of post-mortem inspection will be provided.
6. Meat and offal which is intended for human consumption, must be presented as to allow the (T)VI to carry out the specific post-mortem activities necessary (e.g. lungs, liver, stomach, intestines)
7. Only meat and offal from animals, which have been harvested hygienically and which have passed post-mortem inspection, may enter into the food chain.
8. Detained meat and offal will be held securely as directed by the VI.
9. There will be systems in place to ensure that contamination detected at DAFM final carcass inspection can be removed promptly.
10. There is a procedure to segregate and identify offal in the slaughter room, where applicable
11. There is a procedure used to dispose of blood and offal's from carcasses declared unfit for human consumption.

Carcasses that pass post-mortem inspection must be stamped with the approval number of the equine slaughter plant and are deemed fit for human consumption.

5. Labelling and Traceability of Equine Meat

Health Marking of Equine Carcasses

The health mark can only be applied to domestic equines, which have undergone ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection in accordance with Regulation (EC) 854/2004 and where there are no grounds for declaring the meat unfit for human consumption. However, the health mark may be applied before the results of any examination for trichinosis is available, if the OV is satisfied that meat from the animal concerned will be placed on the market only if the results are satisfactory.

Health-marking must take place on the external surface of the carcass, by stamping the mark in ink or hot branding, and in such a manner that, if carcasses are cut into half carcasses or quarters, or half carcasses are cut into three pieces, each piece bears a health mark. The health mark must remain legible.

Labelling

Article 18 (1) of Regulation 178/2002 requires that the traceability of food shall be established at all stages of production, processing and distribution.

Equine Carcasses

- Species
- Date of Slaughter
- Name of Slaughter Premises
- FBO ID Mark
- Carcase number (or other means of tracing back to animal)
- Weight of each side
- if frozen, the date of production, and the date of freezing if different from the date of production, must be made available to the food business operator to whom the food is supplied and, upon request, to the competent authority. (853, Section IV of Annex II)
- All mandatory and voluntary food information must be conveyed to the next FBO in the supply chain either on commercial documents or on other documents (may be electronic) sent with the food or in advance.

Packaged Equine Meat

1. For Sale to meat industry for further processing

Packaged equine meat must comply with Regulation 853/2004, Regulation 178/2002 and Regulation 1169/2011. Therefore, labels must bear:

- ✓ Species
 - ✓ Date of Slaughter
 - ✓ Date of Cutting
 - ✓ Name of Cutting Premises
 - ✓ Weight
- Identification Mark:

The ID mark must be applied to a label fixed to the packaging, or printed on the packaging, in such a way that it is destroyed when the packaging is opened.

- Batch Number:

To ensure that the meat can be traced back to a batch of equine carcasses

- if frozen, the date of production, and the date of freezing if different from the date of production, must be made available to the food business operator to whom the food is supplied and, upon request, to the competent authority.
- Voluntary Food Information, if supplied must not mislead the consumer, must not be ambiguous or confusing, and where applicable must be based on relevant scientific data.

2. For Sale to mass caterers or the ultimate consumer

Packaged equine meat for sale to mass caterers or the ultimate consumer must comply with Regulation 853/2004, Regulation 178/2002 and Regulation 1169/2011. Therefore, labels must bear:

- Species
- Identification Mark:

The ID mark must be applied to a label fixed to the packaging, or printed on the packaging, in such a way that it is destroyed when the packaging is opened.

- Batch Number:

To ensure that the meat can be traced back to a batch of equine carcasses

- FIC Information:
 - the name of the food, under which it is to be sold, which must reflect any treatments the food has undergone, if the absence of such information could mislead the consumer. E.g. defrosted, refrozen, smoked, irradiated. Meat products and preparations containing added proteins of a different animal origin must indicate this in the food's name ;
 - the net quantity (weight);
 - the date of minimum durability or the 'use by' date;
 - Country of origin or place of provenance must be given if its absence would mislead the consumer as to the true origin of the food,
 - if frozen, the date of freezing or the date of first freezing in cases where the product has been frozen more than once
 - any special storage conditions and/or conditions of use;
 - the name or business name and address of the food business operator

Labelling of Packaged Equine Offal

1. For sale to meat industry for further processing:

Packaged equine offal must comply with Regulation 853/2004, Regulation 178/2002 and Regulation 1169/2011. Therefore, labels must bear:

- Identification Mark:

The ID mark must be applied to a label fixed to the packaging, or printed on the packaging, in such a way that it is destroyed when the packaging is opened.

- Batch Number:

To ensure that the meat can be traced back to a batch of equine carcasses

- if frozen, the date of production, and the date of freezing if different from the date of production, must be made available to the food business operator to whom the food is supplied and, upon request, to the competent authority.

2. For Sale to Mass caterers or the ultimate consumer:

Packaged equine meat for sale to mass caterers or the ultimate consumer must comply with Regulation 853/2004, Regulation 178/2002 and Regulation 1169/2011. Therefore, labels must bear:

- Identification Mark:

The ID mark must be applied to a label fixed to the packaging, or printed on the packaging, in such a way that it is destroyed when the packaging is opened.

- Batch Number:

To ensure that the offal can be traced back to a batch of equine carcasses

- FIC Information:

- the name and species of the offal (e.g. equine hearts)
- the net quantity (weight);
- the date of minimum durability or the 'use by' date;
- if frozen, the date of freezing or the date of first freezing in cases where the product has been frozen more than once
- any special storage conditions and/or conditions of use;
- the name or business name and address of the food business operator