



MPI VERIFICATION SERVICES ON-FARM VERIFICATION PROGRAMME

Not just another audit!

It's about Growing and Protecting New Zealand. An audit to safeguard and enhance New Zealand's reputation as a supplier of safe, wholesome and ethically produced red meat.

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is increasing the scope and number of its on-farm verifications (OFV). This information sheet explains what we will be looking at and why.

MPI has provided a commitment to the European Union (EU) that veterinarians working at export meat slaughter premises will carry out on-farm verification, as a prerequisite for exports covered by the NZ/EU Sanitary Agreement. Government to government assurances are the gateway and passport for New Zealand meat to be exported to all our important trading partners. That is why this is not just another audit.

Starting in 2016 the programme has been expanded beyond sheep, beef cattle, deer and horse suppliers to include farms supplying bobby calves and cull dairy cattle to meat export premises and pet food operators. The total number of farms to be audited annually has also increased from a minimum of 900 to 1200. A specialised group of MPIVS veterinarians will be conducting the audits in these new sectors.

MPI acknowledges that time is precious for farmers, especially during lambing and calving times and we will endeavor to fit our audits into your busy daily schedule but to satisfy market access requirements MPI will be conducting audits during these times. MPI will be focusing on the content of the audit to ensure that the time spent is beneficial to all parties.

MPI has a regulatory role and a more targeted approach and, if appropriate, investigation and enforcement programme will be introduced for verification visits where significant non-compliances are identified. This may include restricting product from overseas markets or the raising of an animal welfare case. However, the programme will continue to have an educational component for farmers/suppliers and the overall goal of the programme is to demonstrate to our trading partners that New Zealand farming practices and New Zealand farmers, are amongst the best in the world.

The declarations made by the person in charge contained in the Animal Status Declaration and Bobby calf direct to slaughter seasonal declaration are the specific areas included in the programme for verification. These are:»

- » use and control of hormone growth promotants (HGP);
- use of veterinary medicines, pesticides and other farm chemicals – including withholding times and treatment; »
- use of ruminant protein (meat and bone meal etc) and the prohibition of feeding to ruminants;
- » imported animal control and identification;
- » Tb testing and movement control requirements for cattle and deer;
- » requirements relating to Johnes disease vaccination;
- » supplier knowledge and implementation of the relevant animal welfare codes.

New Zealand Government

ANIMAL STATUS DECLARATIONS (ASD)

The ASD form and bobby calf seasonal declaration is a vital component of the market eligibility system that supports the New Zealand government's ability to provide assurances to overseas countries by way of certification. The form provides information about the identified animals to the next person in charge and ultimately to the processor who on the basis of the information supplied either sends or restricts product from certain markets. This acts as the animal's "passport" and carries the "need to know" information along the food chain.

An ASD must accompany animals when moving off farm – to sale yards, new owners or meat processing plants. It is even required to pass on the ASD to new owners if a farm is sold as a going concern.

Bobby calves going direct to slaughter require a seasonal declaration.

ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION

The current system of animal identification is mandated for cattle and deer under National Animal Identification and Tracing Act 2012 and is administered by OSPRI New Zealand alongside TB Free New Zealand.

The programme will verify the implementation of NAIT in cattle and deer. For other species, identification of animals or groups of animals will be looked in the context of management of stock treated with substances with withholding periods for slaughter.

TB MOVEMENT CONTROL

One of the main drivers for animal ID is the control of Tb in New Zealand. ASD forms contain details of a farm's status and the status of the animals submitted for slaughter. Test records will be verified as part of the audit.

IMPORTED ANIMALS

Under the regulations, animals imported to New Zealand are specifically ear-tagged following their arrival into the country and are then tracked throughout their life.

If you have imported animals on your property you need to be aware of your obligations for their management and disposal.

AGRICULTURAL COMPOUNDS, VETERINARY MEDICINES AND AGRI-CHEMICALS

A key responsibility of farmers and suppliers of animals is to ensure animal products produced in, and exported from, New Zealand are free of potentially harmful substances, including pesticides and antibiotic residues. This responsibility includes maintaining auditable treatment records and adherence to withholding times. Linkage between ASD declarations and treatment records will be audited.

There have been examples of overseas authorities detecting residues in imported New Zealand animal products. Examples include pesticides in beef to Korea and antibiotics in lamb to France. These have caused issues with the credibility of our New Zealand system. International reputations are hard-earned and easy to lose.

The registration, control and use of the above compounds are administered by MPI under the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicine (ACVM) Act 1997.

HORMONAL GROWTH PROMOTANTS (HGP)

The use of HGP in cattle is strictly controlled and is legislated under the HGP Specifications Notice, available on the MPI website. The specification requires that HGP are implanted by a veterinarian or a trained technician under his/her direct control. All animals that have been treated need to be identified and registered by the veterinarian into the national database.

There are specific requirements for farmers or suppliers who use HGP in their animals and the OFV programme targets a selection of HGP suppliers for the farm visits.

RUMINANT PROTEINS

New Zealand is recognised as being free of a specific group of diseases called TSEs (Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies). TSEs are invariably fatal diseases characterised by lengthy incubation and neurological signs. The animal diseases in this group are scrapie in sheep, Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) or mad cow disease in cattle, and chronic wasting disease of deer (CWD).

New Zealand, while declared free of these diseases, has regulations in place to control the feeding of ruminant protein to other ruminants. This is covered by the Ruminant Protein Regulations 1999.

The audit will include questions and checks on the on-farm use and storage of feed or fertilizer which contain for example, meat and bone meal.

ANIMAL WELFARE

An animal welfare statement forms part of the animal status declaration signed by the person in charge.

New Zealand has established a reputation for good animal welfare practices with our overseas trading partners and the humane care and husbandry of animals providing foodstuffs is increasingly important for consumers.

An owner or person in charge of an animal has a duty of care to ensure that the needs of those animals are provided for. These needs are known as the Five Freedoms:

- » proper and sufficient food and water;
- » adequate shelter;
- » the opportunity to display normal patterns of behavior;
- » physical handling in a way which minimises the likelihood of unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress;
- » protection from, and rapid diagnosis of, any significant injury or disease.

One of the purposes of the OFV programme is to gauge farmer knowledge of animal welfare requirements and their implementation on the farm. This may include viewing animals and handling facilities.

Health and safety and biosecurity. MPI is concerned about the health and safety of its staff and your obligations under the Health and Safety in the Workplace Act 2015. When conducting OFV, MPI staff will ask for a health and safety briefing and if our staff may be exposed to any significant hazards we encourage you to identify these to our staff either prior to, or at the start of the audit. MPI are also conscious of biosecurity hazards and will manage these in the appropriate fashion.

If you have any questions or suggestions regarding this programme please contact: 0800 00 83 33

