

Separation Requirements for Ready to Eat and Raw Meat Products for Food Safety Programme Approval

24th October 2007

Food Act 1981

STATEMENT OF POLICY

This statement of policy is to clarify the requirement for separation for raw and ready to eat meat products under the Food Act 1981.

Signed at Wellington this 27th day of October 2007

(Signed)

Carol Barnao

Director (Standards)

New Zealand Food Safety Authority

Background:

1. Ready-to-eat means food that is ordinarily consumed in the same state as that in which it is sold.
2. An appropriate means of separation is necessary and should be required by all businesses with both raw and RTE meat products on the premises to prevent post-process contamination of RTE meat products with pathogens.
3. Although the same microbiological limits and general hygiene outcomes are expected to be achieved by all businesses producing RTE meat products regardless of size, many of the control measures for achieving these outcomes will differ for manufacturers and retail meat premises due to differences in the size and nature of their operations.
4. For many small processors and meat retail premises such as butcher shops, physical separation of raw and RTE areas is not a practical option. Instead appropriate separation could more easily be achieved by time or by distance when combined with other hygiene and operation controls.
5. The means of separation should be flexible and applied sensibly according to the size of the business and nature of the operation.

Policy:

1. Requirement that businesses must have separation, ideally by physical means, but other means may be acceptable if deemed appropriate by NZFSA.
2. If businesses can show that their separation methods by physical means or otherwise are appropriate and effective, then their Food Safety Programme's should be approved by NZFSA.
3. The following conditions should be met by businesses involved in the production of RTE meat products to ensure that post-process contamination of RTE meat products is minimised:
 1. Basic hygiene practices and procedures are effectively implemented
 2. Specific controls for preventing post-process contamination of RTE products, including appropriate separation of raw and RTE areas, are effectively implemented
 3. Effectiveness of the controls are validated (if necessary) and verified
 4. Training of staff to comply with established procedures