

New Zealand Food Safety

Haumaru Kai Aotearoa

This Animal Product Notice has been revoked. For more information on these changes:

[Changes to animal products regulations and notices](#)

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Specifications for the Ante-mortem and Post-mortem Examination of Poultry Intended for Human or Animal Consumption

2 March 2021

TITLE

Animal Products Notice: Specifications for the Ante-mortem and Post-mortem Examination of Poultry Intended for Human or Animal Consumption

COMMENCEMENT

This consolidated Animal Products Notice comes into force on 2 March 2021

AMENDMENT AND CONSOLIDATION

This Animal Products Notice amends and consolidates all amendments to the Animal Products (Specifications for the Ante-mortem And Post-mortem Examination of Poultry Intended for Human or Animal Consumption) Notice 2005 made up to the commencement of this notice.

ISSUING AUTHORITY

In accordance with clause 4 of Schedule 1 of the Animal Products Act 1999, this Animal Products Notice is amended under section 167(1)(h) of the Animal Products Act 1999 as in force immediately before commencement of the Food Safety Law Reform Act 2018.

Dated at Wellington, 2 March 2021

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Ministry for Primary Industries
(acting under delegated authority of the Director-General)

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Introduction

This introduction is not part of the Animal Products Notice, but is intended to indicate its general effect.

Purpose

The purpose of this Notice is to amend and consolidate new requirements applicable to ante-mortem (AM) and post-mortem (PM) examination of poultry and poultry material for human or animal consumption. Requirements have been set to ensure that poultry processors have robust processes in place for the examination of poultry and poultry material, in order to produce poultry material and product that is fit-for-purpose.

Background

- (1) AM and PM examination of poultry and poultry material is critical to ensure that it is fit for human and animal consumption. A robust system for ensuring all poultry and poultry material has passed the appropriate examinations, is needed, to safeguard public health.
- (2) This review makes the following changes:
 - a) Issuing a new notice in the form of an amendment to the current Animal Products (Specifications for the Ante-mortem and Post-mortem Examination of Poultry Intended for Human or Animal Consumption) Notice 2005 and consolidating all amendments up to 2 March 2021; and
 - b) Deleting Schedule 2 of the current notice 'Acceptable Level of Abnormalities (ALA)'; and
 - c) Adding a section on 'Process Control' that will be detailed in the Poultry Processing Code of Practice and will include 'abnormalities' from Schedule 2 of the present Notice; and
 - d) Updating competencies and NZQA unit standards; and
 - e) Deleting the reference to 'contamination of natural resources' from the definition of 'disposed-of safely'.
 - f) Updating Schedule 1 so that it covers food safety-related disease and defects (not quality-related defects); and
 - g) Aligning this Notice with other Animal Products Act 1999 legal instruments e.g. Animal Products: Specifications for Products Intended for Human Consumption, Animal Products: Specifications for Products Intended for Animal Consumption, etc.

Who should read this Animal Products Notice?

- (1) This Notice should be read by:
 - a) All primary producers (including farmers) and processors of poultry and poultry material, where the resulting product is intended for human or animal consumption; and
 - b) Risk management programme operators; and
 - c) Ante-mortem and post-mortem examiners, direct supervisors and nominated persons at poultry premises; and
 - d) Suppliers of poultry material for further processing.

Why is this important?

- (1) Those persons to whom this Notice applies are responsible for ensuring that they meet their obligations under this Notice, in order to ensure that poultry and poultry material for human or animal consumption is fit-for-purpose.
- (2) Operating other than in accordance with this Notice is an offence under Part 10 of the Animal Products Act 1999.

Other information

- (1) Poultry and poultry material for human and animal consumption is also subject to other requirements, including the relevant requirements in the following legislation:
- a) Animal Products Act 1999
 - b) Animal Products Regulations 2000
 - c) Animal Products (Exemptions and Inclusions) Order 2000
 - d) Animal Product (Fees, Charges and Levies) Regulations 2007
 - e) Animal Products Notice: Specifications for Products Intended for Human Consumption 2020
 - f) Animal Products Notice: Specifications for Products Intended for Animal Consumption 2020
 - g) Food Act 2014.

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Amendment Commentary

Amend clauses 1.1 to 6.3, and Schedule 1 and 2 of the Animal Products (Specifications for the Ante-mortem And Post-mortem Examination of Poultry Intended for Human or Animal Consumption) Notice 2005 so they read as follows:

Part 1: Preliminary Provisions

1.1 Application

- (1) This Notice contains specifications that apply to:
- a) operators who carry out primary processing of farmed, wild, or game estate poultry and poultry material intended for human or animal consumption; and
 - b) primary producers and suppliers of farmed, wild, or game estate poultry and poultry material that is intended for processing into products for human or animal consumption; and
 - c) persons nominated by the RMP operator to ensure that the poultry ante-mortem (AM) and post-mortem (PM) examination requirements are met, and to ensure that appropriate corrective action is taken when deficiencies are identified; and
 - d) persons appointed by the RMP operator as direct supervisors, to ensure that the poultry AM and PM examination requirements are met; and
 - e) persons carrying out AM or PM examination of poultry or poultry material intended for human or animal consumption; and
 - f) veterinarians, and other persons involved in the management of poultry health and supply, to poultry primary processors.
- (2) This Notice contains specifications that are additional to, but must be read in conjunction with the Animal Products Notice: Specifications for Products Intended for Human Consumption 2020, and the Animal Products Notice: Specifications for Products Intended for Animal Consumption 2020 and any Notices that replace these Notices, or amendments made to these Notices.

1.2 Definitions

- (1) In this Notice, unless the context requires otherwise:

Act means the Animal Products Act 1999

AM means ante-mortem and refers to live poultry prior to slaughter

ante-mortem examiner means a person responsible for carrying out the ante-mortem examination of poultry under a risk management programme, in accordance with this Notice

disease or defect means any behaviour, symptom, disease, or condition that is not expected to occur in a healthy, normal bird and impacts or is likely to impact food safety and/or fitness for intended purpose

direct supervisor means a person responsible under clauses 2.1 (3) and 2.3 for the direct supervision of the ante-mortem and post-mortem examination systems at the poultry primary processing premises

disposed-of safely means disposed in a manner that prevents:

- a) use for human or animal consumption; or
- b) spread of disease to humans and animals.

nominated person means a named person who is nominated as per clauses 2.1 (6) and 2.4 to ensure on behalf of the operator, that the poultry AM and PM examination requirements have been met, and that appropriate corrective actions are taken when required

MPI means the Ministry for Primary Industries

NZQA means the New Zealand Qualifications Authority

operator or **RMP operator** means a person who operates an animal product business that is subject to a risk management programme

operator verification means the use of documented methods, procedures, tests, and other checks by the operator, to determine ongoing compliance and validity of the AM and PM examination procedures

PM means post-mortem, and refers to poultry or poultry material after slaughter

post-mortem examiner means a person responsible for carrying out the post-mortem examination of poultry under a risk management programme, in accordance with this Notice

poultry includes chickens, turkeys, ducks, pheasants, quail, guinea fowl, geese, partridges, pigeons and other game birds, but excludes ratites, such as emus and ostriches

poultry AM and PM examination requirements means the requirements of this Notice and the relevant clauses from these Notices:

- c) the Animal Products Notice: Specifications for Products Intended for Human Consumption 2020; and
- a) the Animal Products Notice: Specifications for Products Intended for Animal Consumption 2020

process control means a system of controls applied during a production process that ensures that animal product is safe, suitable for its intended use, and is compliant with regulatory requirements

RMP means a risk management programme

supplier statement means a statement in the form and manner approved by the Director-General which is signed by a supplier to confirm that certain requirements of those specifications have been met, and includes electronic supplier statements for farmed animals

whole flock health scheme in relation to a flock of farmed poultry, means a set of documented procedures followed by the operator that is designed to ensure that any hazards associated with the birds or the eggs (as appropriate) that are likely to affect human health are identified and managed in an appropriate manner and must include:

- a) measures for disease control or eradication; and
- b) activities to ensure that agricultural compounds and veterinary medicines are used according to any general or specific conditions of use; and
- c) measures for feed management; and
- d) environmental contaminant controls

- (2) Unless the context requires otherwise, terms used in this Notice that are defined in the Act or Animal Products Regulations 2000 have the same meaning as those definitions.

Part 2: Responsibilities

2.1 Operator's Responsibility

- (1) The operator must ensure that their poultry AM and PM examination requirements are met, including requirements relating to their AM and PM examiners', nominated persons' and direct supervisors' documented roles and responsibilities set out in this Notice.
- (2) The operator must ensure that there are sufficient persons on site with competencies required by [Subpart 3.1 Competency](#), to carry out AM and PM examination of poultry during processing.
- (3) Unless prior written approval has been obtained from the Director-General, the operator must ensure that there is at least one direct supervisor, in sufficiently close physical proximity to the AM and PM examination points at the processing plant, to ensure that:
 - a) poultry AM and PM examination requirements are met at the processing premises; and
 - b) appropriate corrective action is taken as required.
- (4) The Director-General may grant an approval if reasonably satisfied that the operator is unable to comply with clause 2.1(3) due to circumstances beyond their control and the risk to animal and human health and market access is negligible.
- (5) The approval may be subject to such conditions that the Director-General considers necessary.
- (6) The operator must nominate a person or persons to ensure on the operator's behalf that:
 - a) poultry AM and PM examination requirements have been met at the processing premises; and
 - b) appropriate corrective action is taken as required.
- (7) The operator must ensure that the person or persons required in clauses 2.1(3) and 2.1(6) have the competencies specified in [Subpart 3.1 Competency](#).
- (8) The operator must document the name and contact details of each direct supervisor and nominated person, and where more than one person shares a role, clarify each person's area of responsibility.
- (9) The operator must give all persons with responsibilities for meeting poultry AM and PM examination requirements, the freedom, access and authority to suitably carry out those responsibilities.
- (10) Upon receipt of live poultry at the processing premises, if the supplier statement for the flock, or communication through a supplier guarantee programme, or other means, or if ante-mortem examination identifies a flock that is of greater risk of disease or defects, the operator must ensure that carcasses are subject to a detailed post-mortem examination. This should include allowing sufficient time to view the viscera as well as the outer and inner surfaces of each carcass.

2.2 Ante-Mortem and Post-Mortem Examiner's Responsibility

- (1) The AM and PM examiner must carry out the AM and PM examination of poultry in accordance with the procedures documented by the operator in their Risk Management Programme.
- (2) The PM examiner must determine and carry out the disposition of poultry material or poultry product in accordance with [Schedule 1 – Disposition of Poultry Carcasses and Material](#), or if deemed necessary must bring diseases or defects to the attention of the direct supervisor who must then determine the correct disposition of the poultry material or poultry product.

2.3 Direct Supervisor's Responsibility

- (1) The direct supervisor must:
- a) ensure that the AM and PM examination of poultry is performed at the processing premises; and
 - b) ensure that appropriate corrective action is taken when required. These corrective actions include:
 - i) restoration of control; and
 - ii) disposition of poultry and poultry material in accordance with [Schedule 1 – Disposition of Poultry Carcasses and Material](#); and
 - iii) prevention of recurrence of the problem; and
 - c) ensure that records and reports relevant to the AM and PM examination of poultry are completed and kept, in accordance with poultry AM and PM examination requirements; and
 - d) be located at sufficiently close physical proximity to the AM and PM examination points at the processing premises. This is to ensure that the responsibilities detailed in clauses 2.3(1)(a), (b) and (c) are met. This may include:
 - i) being present in the AM or PM processing room when examination is being conducted; or
 - ii) being located on the premises and available for supervision, including checks on the process and corrective actions, as required by this Notice.

2.4 Nominated Person's Responsibility

- (1) The nominated person must:
- a) ensure that the documented AM and PM examination procedures meet the requirements of this Notice; and
 - b) carry out operator verification activities, systems audits, and review records, to ensure that the AM and PM examination procedures are effectively implemented in accordance with poultry AM and PM requirements; and
 - c) review the appropriateness of any corrective actions taken when deficiencies are identified, including:
 - i) restoration of control; and
 - ii) checking that the disposition of poultry material or poultry product is carried out in accordance with this Notice; and
 - iii) prevention of recurrence of the problem; and
 - d) be available or contactable when necessary, to give advice to the operator or direct supervisor on any matter relevant to poultry AM and PM examination requirements; and
 - e) ensure that records and reports relevant to the AM and PM examination of poultry are completed and kept, in accordance with poultry AM and PM examination requirements.

Part 3: Competencies

3.1 Competency

- (1) The operator must ensure that each of the following persons are assessed as competent and qualified prior to their undertaking AM or PM examination activities:
 - a) AM or PM examiners at the poultry processing premises; and
 - b) direct supervisors at the poultry processing premises; and
 - c) nominated persons.
- (2) Each AM or PM examiner must have received sufficient training to carry out their tasks effectively.
- (3) Each direct supervisor must either:
 - a) be a registered veterinarian under the Veterinarians Act 2005; or
 - b) hold an alternative qualification acceptable to the Director-General; or
 - c) hold the New Zealand Certificate in Meat Processing: Animal Product Examination (Level 3, poultry strands); or
 - d) have evidence of competency to the following NZQA unit standards:
 - i) For direct supervisors with ante-mortem responsibilities:
 - 1) 28171 – Demonstrate understanding of ante-mortem examination of poultry used for human consumption; and
 - 2) 30290 – Complete ante-mortem examination of poultry used for human consumption; and
 - 3) 20644 - Demonstrate knowledge of the animal welfare act in a primary industry operation.
 - ii) For direct supervisors with post-mortem responsibilities:
 - 1) 28170 – Demonstrate understanding of post-mortem examination of poultry products used for human consumption; and
 - 2) 28173 – Complete post-mortem examination of poultry products used for human consumption.
 - iii) For direct supervisors with both ante-mortem and post-mortem responsibilities:
 - 1) 28171 – Demonstrate understanding of ante-mortem examination of poultry used for human consumption; and
 - 2) 30290 – Complete ante-mortem examination of poultry used for human consumption; and
 - 3) 20644 - Demonstrate knowledge of the animal welfare act in a primary industry operation; and
 - 4) 28170 – Demonstrate understanding of post-mortem examination of poultry products used for human consumption; and
 - 5) 28173 – Complete post-mortem examination of poultry products used for human consumption.
- (4) Each nominated person must:
 - a) have evidence of competency to the NZQA unit standards in clause 3.1(3)(c) or clause 3.1(3)(d)(iii) and evidence of competency to the following NZQA unit standards:
 - i) 22050 – Demonstrate knowledge of, and apply monitoring, corrective action and verification of poultry meat examination; and
 - ii) 22047 - Demonstrate knowledge of the poultry industry as it applies to poultry meat examination; or

- b) be a registered veterinarian under the Veterinarians Act 2005; or
- c) hold an alternative qualification acceptable to the Director-General; and
- d) demonstrate understanding of their role as a nominated person within the relevant regulatory requirements under the Animal Products Act 1999.

Competencies acquired under the earlier Animal Products Notice: Specifications for the Ante-Mortem and Post-Mortem Examination of Products Intended for Human or Animal Consumption 2005:

Competencies acquired under clause 9(3) and 9(4) of the 2005 Notice will continue to be valid, and equivalent to the corresponding clauses, 3.1(3) and 3.1(4) in the current Notice.

3.2 Maintenance of Competency

- (1) The operator must ensure that competencies required in [Subpart 3.1 Competency](#) are maintained, and that each person receives refresher training at intervals appropriate to their responsibility level, and/or whenever a new species of poultry or a major change to the process that has an impact on ante-mortem and/or post-mortem inspection, occurs.

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Part 4: Ante-Mortem Examination Requirements

4.1 Establishment and Documentation of Ante-Mortem Examination Procedures

- (1) The operator must establish and maintain documented AM examination procedures for detecting and managing defects and/or disease in poultry at the processing premises prior to primary processing.
 - a) AM examination process documentation must include procedures (including operator-defined limits) for recording numbers of poultry, that are:
 - i) dead on arrival, or dead before the commencement of processing; and
 - ii) moribund, unhealthy or not suitable for processing for other reasons.
 - b) AM examiners at the processing premises must:
 - i) report to the direct supervisor when either of these conditions in clause 4.1(1)(a) exceed operator-defined limits.
 - ii) confirm and carry out the required disposition of poultry specified in clause 4.1(1)(a), prior to processing so that:
 - 1) poultry that are already dead are not processed, and are either rendered or disposed-of safely; and
 - 2) moribund, unhealthy or unsuitable poultry are not processed, are humanely killed as soon as possible, and either rendered or disposed-of safely.

4.2 Implementation of Ante-Mortem Examination Procedures

- (2) The operator must ensure that the documented AM examination procedures are implemented. This may include requiring the nominated person to take certain steps.
- (1) The direct supervisor of the ante-mortem examiners must ensure that records are completed for the AM examination of poultry to show:
 - a) the numbers of poultry that were:
 - i) dead on arrival or dead before the commencement of processing; and
 - ii) moribund, unhealthy or unsuitable for processing for other reasons.
 - b) the method of disposition applied to poultry as a result of clause 4.2(2)(a); and
 - c) any other corrective action taken.

Part 5: Post-Mortem Examination Requirements

5.1 Establishment and Documentation of Post-Mortem Examination Procedures

- (1) The operator must establish and maintain suitable documented PM examination procedures for the identification and management of defects or diseases in poultry including:
 - a) where relevant, the assessment of any killed wild or game estate poultry prior to primary processing, to ensure that the poultry material is suitable for processing; and
 - b) the PM examination of poultry material at relevant points during primary processing; and
 - c) the PM examination of poultry product; and
 - d) the sampling of poultry carcasses or parts after final PM examination to verify that PM examination requirements have been met; and
 - e) if the flock has been identified as having a high risk of disease or defects, based on the supplier statement, or communication through a supplier guarantee programme, or other means, or ante-mortem examination, the operator must ensure that these carcasses are subjected to a detailed post-mortem examination, in accordance with clause 2.1(10).
- (2) The documented procedures described in clause 5.1(1) must specify:
 - a) that diseased or contaminated carcasses and their parts are handled in a manner which ensures that the contamination of other animal material or product is minimised; and
 - b) the appropriate handling and disposition procedures of affected carcasses or parts; and
 - c) that carcasses or parts that are not fit for human consumption, but are fit for animal consumption, are clearly identified and separated from product that has been deemed as fit for human consumption; and
 - d) that carcasses or parts that are not fit for human or animal consumption are clearly identified and are sent for rendering or disposed-of safely; and
 - e) where necessary, a process for retention of carcasses and their parts pending results of testing or other examination before disposition; and
 - f) the circumstances under which the persons carrying out PM examination must report to the direct supervisor, including:
 - i) where relevant, when the assessment of any killed wild or game estate poultry prior to primary processing determines that the animal material is not suitable for processing; and
 - ii) the causes that warrant corrective action to be taken with the supplier and that these procedures are carried out and completed.

5.2 Implementation of Post-Mortem Examination Procedures

- (1) The operator must ensure that the documented PM examination procedures are followed. This may include requiring the nominated person to take certain steps.
- (2) The direct supervisor must ensure that records are completed for the PM examination of poultry to show:
 - a) an approximate number of diseases or defects detected during processing; and
 - b) the number and type of diseases or defects detected in samples of poultry carcasses or parts taken after final PM examination has been completed; and
 - c) the method of disposition applied to poultry as a result of clause 5.2 (2)(a) or (b); and
 - d) any other corrective action taken.

Part 6: Miscellaneous Requirements

6.1 External Verification

- (1) The operator must ensure that the freedom and access provided to the RMP verifier is extended to apply to the AM examination activities carried out under the whole flock health schemes of poultry suppliers.

6.2 Supply of Information

- (1) Poultry primary producers, suppliers of poultry, operators, and nominated persons must provide information relevant to poultry health or AM or PM examination, to the Director-General upon request.

6.3 Process Control

- (1) The operator must ensure that an effective system is in place to have control of all process steps and to produce a safe and suitable product that also complies with regulatory requirements.
- (2) The operator must ensure the process control system aligns with any relevant market access requirements, where applicable, and any other requirements.
- (3) The operator must ensure the process control system covers all aspects of product processing, including but not restricted to, food safety, fitness for purpose, process inputs, processing conditions, and final products.

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Schedule 1 – Disposition of Poultry Carcasses and Material

Handling and disposition of poultry carcasses and material following post-mortem examination, must ensure that the product is fit for intended purpose. This disposition table specifies the dispositions that must be applied. In formulating the dispositions, MPI has considered that risks to public health (food safety) and animal health must be minimised. Wholesomeness was also a consideration.

The extent to which the disposition applies to the poultry product must be clear to the examiner. Multiple dispositions may apply to different parts of a carcass. Where only parts of a carcass are affected by a disease or defect, due consideration must be given to the possibility of the tissue being an indicator of disease in other parts of the carcass. If these parts have been mixed with parts from other carcasses, it may be necessary to apply the disposition to all associated carcasses. The dispositions in this table have been assembled based on observations of meat chickens, but may apply to other types of poultry too.

Disposition Table

Disease/Defect	Details	Action required	Dispositions required		
			Human consumption	Animal consumption	Render or safe disposal
Abnormal carcass colouring – Bluish reddish-brown (localised)	Haemorrhages Bruising	Trim affected area	Unaffected part	Affected part	Affected part
Abnormal carcass colouring – Bluish reddish-brown (extensive)	Haemorrhages Bruising		No	Yes	Yes
Abnormal carcass colouring – Greenish-yellow (localised)	Faecal and/or bile staining	Trim affected area	Unaffected part	Unaffected part	Affected part
Abnormal carcass colouring – Greenish-yellow (extensive)	Faecal and/or bile staining		No	Yes	Yes
Abnormal carcass colouring – Yellow-orange (extensive)	Liver condition		No	Yes	Yes
Abnormal carcass colouring – Red birds	Improper bleeding		No	Yes	Yes
Abnormal carcass colouring – Red birds	Toxaemia Septicaemia		No	Yes - only if subject to appropriate thermal processing	Yes
Abscess – Localised	No systemic involvement	Trim affected area	Unaffected part	Unaffected part	Affected part

Disease/Defect	Details	Action required	Dispositions required		
			Human consumption	Animal consumption	Render or safe disposal
Abscess – Extensive	Systemic involvement/ Multiple		No	No	Yes
Arthritis	Pus in joint		Unaffected part	Infected limb – only if subject to appropriate thermal processing	Infected limb
Ascites	Fluid in abdominal cavity		No	Yes	Yes
Breast blisters	Watery fluid filled/Fibrotic	Trim affected area	Unaffected part	Unaffected part	Affected part
Discoloured liver/Abnormal liver only	Cirrhosis of liver (carcass colour normal)		Unaffected part	Unaffected part	Organs
Emaciation	Wasted thigh and breast meat		No	Yes	Yes
Fibrinous deposits	Jelly-like film on heart and/or liver		Unaffected part	Unaffected part	Organs
Lesions – Extensive	Septicaemia		No	No	Yes
Parasites	Roundworms in gastrointestinal tract		Yes (unaffected part)	Yes (unaffected part)	Yes
Peritonitis	Pus in abdominal cavity		No	Only if subject to appropriate thermal processing	Yes
Tumours/nodules – Localised		Trim affected part	Unaffected part	Unaffected part	Affected part
Tumours/nodules – Multiple			No	No	Yes
Wounds – Localised injury		Trim affected part	Unaffected part	Unaffected part	Affected part
Wounds – Systemic involvement			No	Only if subject to appropriate thermal processing	Yes