

# Making biltong card

## Guidance for businesses

This quick-reference guide has been created for businesses who are using the **Making biltong** card in the Simply Safe and Suitable template food control plan (SSS) and My Food Plan (MFP).

Biltong is an uncooked, air-dried, ready-to-eat meat product.

Biltong is a high-risk food because:

- it is not cooked as part of the manufacturing process, and
- it can be processed at temperatures that allow harmful microbes to grow, and
- you must apply several food safety hurdles to provide the necessary microbiological controls to produce a safe product.

Hurdles are things that kill or weaken harmful microbes. Examples are making food acidic (lowering pH) and reducing water activity (drying, adding salt or sugar).

The **Making biltong** card was developed by NZFS and was published in August 2025.

The card sets out minimum criteria for biltong makers to meet. It still provides for the use of different recipes to allow different businesses to make their product unique.

The card covers the production of biltong. It does not cover other products such as droewors.

### The general process for making biltong is:

1. Meat is sliced and may be trimmed of fat.
2. The meat is marinated in vinegar, salt and optional spices such as pepper and coriander.
3. The meat is hung to dry over a period of days.



This quick-reference guide was produced in August 2025 for businesses making biltong using a template food control plan. It is intended to support, not replace, the information provided in the plan.

## The Making biltong card requires the following:

1	You must source meat from a primary processor operating a registered risk management programme (RMP) that is subject to microbiological monitoring for the National Microbiological Database (NMD). This cannot be a micro (mobile) abattoir. You can confirm the source with your supplier when you place an order.
2	You must only use beef, lamb or venison. You must use only fresh hindquarter meat or meat that was frozen shortly after slaughter when it was fresh.
3	The meat must be marinated at or below 5°C for at least 10 hours.
4	The marinade must contain minimum 30 grams vinegar and minimum 30 grams salt per kilogram of meat.
5	The finished biltong must have a water activity level below 0.85 a <sub>w</sub> .
6	You must check the water activity level of each batch of biltong, using one of these three methods:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Using a water activity meter</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Calculating percentage weight loss</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sending samples to a laboratory to test</li> </ul>
7	If you are using the percentage weight loss method to determine water activity, you must:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use the specific method provided in the Making biltong card</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Set up the procedure as described in the Making biltong card</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Revalidate annually or whenever your recipe changes</li> </ul>

## Note about additives:

Some things must not be added to food. Others are allowed, but in limited amounts. Permitted food additive levels are set by the Food Standards Code, not this card. Because the drying process significantly reduces the weight of the product, you must make sure food additive calculations use the final product weight, not the weight of the raw meat used.

The [Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code](#) Standard 1.3.1 and Schedule 15 provide information about permitted additives and amounts.

Scan the QR code to the right or visit the webpage here:  
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/food-standards-code/legislation>



## Note the card does not set requirements for:

- Thickness of meat slices
- Temperature, humidity or time spent drying