



Food Unit Notice

Cadmium in Sheep and Cattle Kidneys

Notice number 19.02

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Distribution of Notice

Western Australian (WA) domestic and export registered, state regulated (Tier 1) registered abattoir food businesses covered by the Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption (AS 4696: 2007), the Department of Agriculture (DoA), relevant *Food Act 2008 (WA)* (Food Act) enforcement agencies, and Food Act Authorised Officers (Meat Inspectors).

Purpose

To reinforce and clarify the Department of Health's requirements for the management of cadmium in kidneys produced in domestic and Tier 1 abattoirs in WA. This notice supersedes all previous notices issued by the Department of Health.

Actions

The cadmium policy in WA is as follows:

1. Kidneys from sheep and cattle coming from the Kimberley and pastoral areas are exempt from restrictions and may be passed for human consumption.
2. For stock coming from the agricultural region of the south west of WA,
 - a. Kidneys from 'full mouthed' cattle are to be excluded from human consumption. (Cattle develop a 'full mouth' i.e. eight permanent incisors, at approximately 40 months of age.)
 - b. Kidneys from 'full mouthed' sheep are to be excluded from human consumption. (Sheep develop a 'full mouth' i.e. eight permanent incisors, at approximately 42 months of age.)

Controlling authority under AS 4696:2007

Ensure that all relevant stakeholders are notified of this Food Unit Notice.

Assess and/or audit domestic and Tier 1 abattoirs' cadmium procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance.

Relevant Food Act enforcement agencies

Relevant Food Act enforcement agencies that provide meat inspection services at abattoirs under the Food Act are to include all relevant cadmium information into the appropriate meat inspection procedures. Meat inspectors and other relevant staff are to be communicated with in regards to the cadmium information required to be implemented by the appropriate enforcement agency.

Assess and/or audit domestic and Tier 1 abattoirs' cadmium procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance.

Domestic and Tier 1 registered abattoirs covered by AS 4696:2007

Domestic and Tier 1 registered abattoirs covered by AS 4696:2007 are to document and implement the cadmium requirements into meat food business' approved arrangements. Meat inspectors and other relevant staff are to be trained in relation to the food business' cadmium procedures.

Tier 1 registered abattoirs covered by AS 4696:2007

Tier 1 registered abattoirs covered by AS 4696:2007 are to ensure that they follow this Food Unit Notice for sheep and cattle kidneys that are sold to the domestic market in Australia.

The DoA Meat Notice No. 2018/05 "Establishment sourcing of stock to comply with importing country requirements for cadmium levels in offals" is to be followed for all sheep and cattle livers and kidneys that are sold into the export market.

Meat inspectors and other relevant staff

Meat inspectors authorised under the Food Act and other relevant staff are to ensure that the food business' cadmium procedures are implemented.

Background

In the late 1980's it was found that kidneys from animals that had been grazing in agricultural areas of WA contained cadmium levels that exceeded the maximum residue limit permitted by food legislation at the time and the current Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code. Research found Superphosphate, that had been used for a long period of time in agricultural regions of WA and other areas of Australia, contained levels of cadmium that had subsequently contaminated the land on which it had been applied. As a result it was agreed nationally that kidneys from cattle and sheep that were full mouth and had been grazing on land contaminated with cadmium would be excluded from human consumption.

Useful Resources and websites

WA Department of Health

- *Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption AS 4696:2007 (AS 4696:2007)*

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Department of Agriculture

- [Meat Notice No. 2018/05, Establishment sourcing of stock to comply with importing country requirements for cadmium levels in offals](#)

More information

Contact your [local government](#) for further information

or

Contact the Environmental Health Directorate

Email: foodsafety@health.wa.gov.au

Phone: (08) 9222 2000

Website: <http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au>

Various parts of the information contained in this Fact Sheet were provided by MINTRAC.

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