

AS 4696:2023



Hygienic production and transportation of meat and meat products for human consumption



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The following are represented on Committee FT-021:

AUS-MEAT
Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Australian Meat Industry Council
Australian Meat Processor Corporation
Australian Pork Limited
Australian Renderers Association
Biosecurity South Australia
Department of Health (WA)
Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade (NT)
Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania
Department of Primary Industries (NSW)
Joint Accreditation System of Australia & New Zealand
PrimeSafe Victoria
Safe Food Production Queensland
Stock Feed Manufacturers' Council of Australia

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Preface

The Standard

This Standard has been approved by the Australia and New Zealand Food Ministers Meeting (FMM).

This Standard applies to the production and transportation within Australia of meat and meat products regardless of whether the meat or meat products are for domestic use or for export. The Standard incorporates risk based amendments to post mortem inspection procedures and disposition judgements endorsed by the Australia and New Zealand Food Regulation Standing Committee (FRSC).

The focus of this Standard is on essential health and hygiene issues and provides for standards that are consistent with the principles and objectives of the Codex Alimentarius Code of Hygienic Practice for Meat (CAC/RCP 58-2005).

Importing requirements set by overseas governments for access to their individual markets are not dealt with in this Standard but are dealt with under Commonwealth legislation dealing with export certification. Similarly, special requirements set by government or industry for all exporters of a particular product to a particular market are beyond the scope of, and in addition to, the requirements specified in this Standard.

Objectives

The prime objective of this Standard is to ensure meat and meat products for human consumption comply with food safety requirements and are wholesome. The food safety outcomes for each stage of production are specified in this Standard together with requirements to ensure meat and meat products are wholesome or else are removed from the food chain and dealt with separately. The Standard reflects the fact that food safety risks extend through the food preparation chain and are not confined to the preparation, handling and storage of end products.

This Standard incorporates other objectives so that wholesomeness can be ensured. These objectives include the need for systems to be in place for the accurate identification, traceability, effective recall and integrity of meat and meat products. They also include animal welfare objectives as they impact on food safety and on public expectations as to wholesomeness.

The Standard reflects the shared responsibility between industry and governments for food safety. Management and production practices underpin the Standard as do process controls based on the hazard analysis critical control point (HACCP) approach with its emphasis on risk assessment and risk management.

Scope

This Standard sets out the outcomes required for the receipt and slaughter of animals, the dressing of carcasses, and the processing (including further processing), packaging, handling and storage of meat or meat products. It also sets out the rules for the construction of premises and transportation of meat and meat products.

This Standard potentially applies to meat and meat products derived from any animal belonging to a species set out in Clause 2.1. Commonwealth, state and territory laws enable permission to be given for the production of meat derived only from certain specified animals within these species. In this manner it is the Commonwealth, state and territory laws that limit in a practical way the animals to which this Standard applies.

Similarly, this Standard is broad enough in scope to apply to retailers who store or prepare meat and meat products and to the transportation of meat and meat products from the retailer to the consumer. However, the question of when meat and meat products cease to fall within this Standard and are to be covered under food laws applying to retailers is left to be dealt with under Commonwealth, state and territory laws governing the adoption of this Standard.

This Standard is in addition to other requirements under Commonwealth, state and territory legislation and the standards and codes that also apply to the production of meat and meat products. These include animal health and welfare requirements and construction requirements. They also include requirements in the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code* such as those relating to additives, contaminants, labelling and fermentation.

Guidelines

This Standard should be read in conjunction with guidelines as periodically developed by the Australian Meat Regulators Group (AMRG).

Equivalence

Where a meat business proposes a technique different from one detailed in this Australian Standard the assessment of equivalence is to be determined by the relevant controlling authority. AMRG will establish methodology for determining the equivalence of benchmarks or standards. The proposer of the alternative technique is to supply sufficient supporting information to validate the procedure to the relevant controlling authority who will advise AMRG. The submission must include a HACCP plan that ensures equivalence is maintained. Where the AMRG cannot reach agreement on the approval of an alternative technique the final decision shall be made by the relevant Meeting of Food Ministers.

Standards replaced

This Standard replaces each edition of the following Australian Standards:

- AS 4460:1997, *Australian Standard for the Construction of Premises for Processing Meat for Human Consumption (SCARM Report No. 53)*
- AS 4461:1997, *Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production of Meat for Human Consumption (SCARM Report No. 54)*
- AS 4462:1997, *Australian Standard for the Construction of Premises for Processing Animals for Human Consumption (SCARM Report No. 55)*
- AS 4463:1997, *Australian Standard for the Transportation of Meat for Human Consumption (SCARM Report No. 56)*
- AS 4696:2002, *Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption (PISC Report No. 80)*
- AS 4696:2007, *Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption (FRSC Technical Report No. 3)*

Australia and New Zealand Food Ministers Meeting

The Australia and New Zealand Food Ministers Meeting (FMM) comprises Australian Commonwealth, state and territory health and agriculture ministers responsible for food safety and food standards, and their New Zealand counterparts. The objective of the FMM is to develop food safety and food standard management policies, strategies and practices for the benefit of the community.

FMM is supported by a permanent Food Regulation Standing Committee (FRSC) and Food Regulation Secretariat within the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care. Membership of FRSC comprises relevant departmental heads and chief executive officers of Australian Commonwealth, state, territory and New Zealand food safety regulatory agencies.

FMM was created on 3 November 2000 following endorsement by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) of the Senior Officials Working Group's response to the Blair Review including the drafting of a Food Regulation Inter-Government Agreement. Prior to 2011, the FMM was known as the Australia and New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council (or Ministerial Council).

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