

MEAT PRODUCTION MODERNIZATION: NEXT STEPS

On September 14, 2020, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Ministry) released a Rural Slaughter Modernization Intentions Paper (Paper) for public comment. The consultation period closed on November 16, 2020. 88 submissions were received.

The Paper feedback supports modernization of meat production and highlights potential for further improvement to meat inspection and overall administration. Support for modernization and increasing access to local meat was high. The feedback is consistent with what was heard during previous consultations. Responses highlight that B.C.'s meat industry is facing capacity issues such as challenges accessing slaughter services, and a shortage of cut-and-wrap businesses to process meat. Facility operators are facing a lack of skilled labour for their businesses.

British Columbians want:

- » a credible regulatory system that effectively ensures food safety and animal welfare;
- » flexibility to enable a competitive meat industry; and
- » capacity for livestock producers and processors of all sizes across BC.

Actions completed to date:

- » Oversight of Class D and E licences was transferred to the Ministry from health authorities;
- » The Ministry designated three new Class D areas (Alberni-Clayoquot RD, Electoral Area D of RD Central Kootenay, and Electoral Area H of RD Fraser-Fort George);
- » The Ministry reduced travel restriction for Class E from two hours to one-hour from Class A or B;
- » Updated training - new SlaughterRight program released;

- » Increased oversight of plans, records and site inspection protocols for Class D/E applications;
- » Increased frequency of inspection of Class D/E sites - all to be inspected by end of 2021; and
- » Graduated enforcement approach in effect.

Opportunities to modernize B.C.'s approach to meat inspection include: increasing production limits, expanding where meat products can be sold, and increasing areas where rural licences are available. Opportunities for all licence holders include exploring alternative approaches to traditional inspection and redefining the licensing framework. Proposed changes respond to consultation by alleviating capacity issues, providing more opportunities for B.C.'s small-scale meat producers, and supporting ongoing work to action recommendations from the 2018 Select Standing Committee report.

To achieve the needs of British Columbians, the ministry expects, in the coming months, to complete work on the following changes:

» New Simplified and Graduated Meat Licence Categories

- To support entry level and developing business opportunities for meat production facilities handling up to 5,000lbs, 25,000lbs, and unlimited slaughter.
- Increased provincial market access, including farmers markets and restaurants, corresponding to the graduated licence category.
- Risk-based inspection approach.
- Introduction of licence term and fee.

» Modernized Inspection Approach

- A risk-based inspection framework that correlates to licence category, past compliance rating and volume of production.



Ministry of
Agriculture, Food
and Fisheries