



# DEPARTMENTAL POLICY

## Export Meat Establishments with Limited Market Access

### Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to describe the department’s policy for export meat establishments conducting the slaughter and dressing of animals in accordance with market access requirements for countries other than United States of America (USA), Member States of the European Union (EU), Canada, and countries or territories requiring compliance with the USA or EU requirements.

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## Definitions

The following table defines terms used in this document.

Term	Definition
Australian Export Meat Inspection System (AEMIS)	The Australian Export Meat Inspection System (AEMIS) is an integrated set of controls specified and verified by Government that ensure the safety, suitability and integrity of Australian meat and meat products. Underpinning AEMIS are objective hygiene and performance standards which are continually monitored.
Area Technical Manager (ATM)	Departmental officers with veterinary and audit qualifications who conduct Export Meat System Audits at registered export meat establishments.
Ante-mortem Inspection	The On-plant Veterinarian carries out ante-mortem inspection of animals, prior to slaughter, to ensure they are healthy and suitable for slaughter and for human consumption.
Approved Arrangement (AA)	An arrangement approved under export legislation required by all registered export meat establishments.
Australian Government Authorised Officer (AAO)	A qualified meat inspector who is authorised, through a deed of obligation under export legislation to undertake post-mortem inspection under the supervision of the On-plant Veterinarian.
Food Safety Meat Assessor (FSMA)	A departmental authorised officer who has meat inspection qualifications and conducts inspection and/or assessment and/or verification activities on export registered meat establishments. The tasks undertaken are dependent upon the particular AEMIS model operating on that establishment.
Limited Market Access (LMA)	An AEMIS model for export meat establishment registration that allows for limited market access and is has Australian government oversight.
On-Plant Veterinarian (OPV)	A veterinarian employed by the Australian government to provide daily supervision of ante- and post-mortem inspection and verification of the establishment's compliance with its approved arrangement.
Meat Establishment Verification System (MEVS)	The department's on-plant verification system which underpins the department's health certification system and supports the AEMIS.
Porcine Ante-Mortem Inspectors (PAMI)	Authorised officers trained in conducting ante-mortem inspection of pigs. Must have attained specified units of competency as part of completing the Certificate III in Meat Processing (General/Livestock handling/Meat Safety) qualification.
Post-mortem Inspection	Post mortem inspection is performed to remove any potential source of contamination to human food, those carcasses or carcase parts that are dangerous, unwholesome or aesthetically unacceptable to the consumer. It is the second stage after ante mortem inspection to reduce the risk of meat not being suitable for human consumption.

Term	Definition
Product Hygiene Indicators (PHI)	The PHI program identifies a number of key performance indicators, which when combined produce an index, which is a measure of hygienic meat production at individual export meat establishments.

## Policy statement

This policy applies to export meat establishments, conducting the slaughtering and dressing of animals utilising an inspection model that is acceptable to a limited number of countries. It does not meet the requirements of the United States of America (USA), Member States of the European Union (EU), Canada, and countries or territories requiring compliance with the USA or EU requirements.

## Objective of this policy

To describe the minimum requirements for export meat establishments to prove compliance with the model.

## Legislative framework

The Export Control Act and sub ordinate legislation including any relevant importing country requirements.

## Roles and responsibilities

The following table outlines the roles and responsibilities undertaken in this departmental policy.

Role	Responsibility
Export Meat Establishment	Apply to the department for consideration of registration for export under the LMA model.
ATM	Approve the AA of the export Meat Establishment verifying that they meet the requirements of the LMA model.

## The department's commitment

The department has designed this regulatory model to comply with all legislative and relevant importing country requirements. It is committed to implementing this policy and ensuring flexibility to the export meat industry in the structure of the Australian Export Meat Inspection System (AEMIS) and the requirements for registration of export meat establishments.

Some markets (such as the USA, EU and Canada) have specific importing country requirements. Not all exporters of meat products wish to export to these markets, but may still want to be registered for export with direct oversight of the department.

Under the AEMIS there are two types of export registrations available for export meat establishments. These are commonly known as Tier 1 and Tier 2. Tier 1 registration does not allow for market access to the USA, EU or Canada. Some markets accept product prepared in accordance with the relevant Australian Standards and oversight by a State or Territory Regulatory Authority (SRA). Tier 1 registration allows for this level of oversight. Details of Tier 1 registration can be found at <http://agriculture.gov.au/export/controlled-goods/meat/elmer-3/meat-establishment-tier1>

Tier 2 registration allows for export to markets that require oversight of export meat establishments by the Australian government. This oversight consists of the permanent presence of a department On-Plant Veterinarian (OPV) conducting ante-mortem inspection, supervising post-mortem

inspection and conducting verification of the establishment's compliance with export requirements. Post-mortem inspection is conducted by either department Food Safety Meat Assessors (FSMA) or by Australian Government Authorised Officers (AAO). Where an establishment utilises AAOs, a FSMA will be stationed at either the end of the slaughter line conducting carcass-by-carcass assessment or at the primary carcass post-mortem position. Audits of the establishment approved arrangement are conducted by department Area Technical Managers (ATM).

This policy outlines an alternative type or model of registration under the AEMIS that provides direct department oversight and is less intensive than that required to access the USA, EU and Canada markets. This model is referred to as limited market access (LMA).

## **Limited market access model minimum requirements**

Export meat establishments conducting slaughtering and dressing that are interested in adopting the LMA registration model should review the following information and then contact the department to commence the registration process.

Tier 2 registered establishments that are considering changing to the LMA model should note that existing export listings for the USA, EU and Canada (and other countries requiring compliance with USA or EU requirements) will be removed from the establishment's registration when they commence operating under the LMA model. If the establishment wishes to regain access to those countries, the establishment will need to re-apply for listing.

Tier 1 registered establishments that are considering changing to the LMA model need to demonstrate compliance to any specific importing country requirements to gain additional market access. Please note that many importing countries require an on-site audit conducted by the importing country officials before access can be given.

## **Regulatory oversight of the establishment**

All establishments operating under the LMA model will operate under the direct regulatory supervision of the department. Establishments will comply with the requirements of the current export legislation.

A permanent department employed OPV will be stationed at the establishment. If the establishment operates multiple production shifts for slaughtering, an OPV will be present for each shift.

The OPV will conduct ante-mortem inspection, supervise post-mortem inspection and conduct verification of the establishment's compliance with export requirements as per the Meat Establishment Verification System (MEVS) - Abattoir policy.

<http://agriculture.gov.au/export/controlled-goods/meat/elmer-3/mevs-abattoir>

At establishments conducting the slaughter and dressing of pigs, the establishment may use either AAOs or Porcine Ante-Mortem Inspectors (PAMI) to conduct ante-mortem inspection under the supervision of the OPV.

Post-mortem inspection of carcasses and carcass parts must be performed by either FSMAs in all inspection positions, or AAO in all inspection positions, or FSMA in the carcass inspection position and AAO inspecting viscera and heads (if they are required to be inspected). There is no requirement for a FSMA to be positioned at the end of the slaughter line conducting carcass-by-carcass assessment.

Establishments operating under the LMA model must provide sufficient amenities for department staff in accordance with export legislation.

Audits of the establishment will be conducted by department ATMs. Audits will be systems audits in accordance with the Export Meat System Audit Program policy.

<http://agriculture.gov.au/export/controlled-goods/meat/elmer-3/guideline-auditing-processing-establishments>.

## AAO and PAMI requirements

Establishments operating under the LMA model can use AAOs to conduct post-mortem inspection.

AAOs can be employed directly by the establishment or can be employed and provided to the establishment by a third party employer. Under the LMA model there is no requirement for the third party employer to be accredited by the department.

Details of the policy regarding the appointment and use of AAOs can be found at <http://agriculture.gov.au/export/controlled-goods/meat/elmer-3/appoint-non-departmental-ao#5-overview-of-the-process>

The minimum qualifications required to be held by an AAO at establishments operating under the LMA model is the Certificate III in Meat Processing (Meat Safety). There is no requirement for the AAOs to have a Certificate IV in Meat Processing (Meat Safety).

The qualification requirements for PAMIs remain the same as those required for the Tier 2 registered establishments.

AAOs and PAMIs are not required to wear a prescribed uniform when performing the official inspection tasks. AAOs and PAMIs must be uniquely identified when performing official inspection duties. The method of identification must be documented in the establishments approved arrangement.

## Approved arrangement requirements

Establishments operating under the LMA model are required to have an approved arrangement (AA) that complies with the Approved Arrangement- Meat guidelines with the exceptions detailed in this policy. <http://agriculture.gov.au/export/controlled-goods/meat/elmer-3/aa-guidelines-meat>

## Product hygiene indicators program

Establishments operating under the LMA model are required to participate in the Product Hygiene Indicators (PHI) Program. <http://agriculture.gov.au/export/controlled-goods/meat/elmer-3/product-hygiene-index>

This includes the conduct of microbiological testing of carcasses, carcass parts and carton meat in accordance with the Microbiological Manual for Sampling and Testing of Export Meat and Meat Products. <http://agriculture.gov.au/export/controlled-goods/meat/elmer-3/microbiological-manual>

Establishments operating under the LMA model are not required to sample and test carcasses for the presence of *Salmonella spp.* at the frequency required by the microbiological manual.

Establishments are required to conduct sampling and testing of carcasses for the presence of *Salmonella spp.* as a HACCP verification activity where the HACCP plan has identified *Salmonella spp.* as a hazard reasonably likely to occur. The frequency of this verification testing is determined by the establishment. Validation information relating to the frequency chosen must be available.

The testing of microbiological samples is to be performed by laboratories as detailed in the microbiological manual.

## Importing country access

Establishments operating under the LMA model will not be able to obtain listing for export to the USA, EU or Canada or any other country or territory that requires compliance with USA and/or EU requirements.

Establishment will need to develop procedures detailing the system of controls used to ensure compliance with importing country requirements. Any specific requirements including microbiological testing must be addressed and verified. This information should be included in the AA. These procedures are to be submitted to the department ATM for approval.

To be listed by an importing country, establishments will follow the listing process detailed in the Manual for Importing Country Requirements. <http://agriculture.gov.au/export/micor>

## Verification of water potability

Establishments operating under the LMA model must verify the potability of the water supply to the establishment, as required by the Approved Arrangement- Meat Guidelines. If the establishment sources its water from a local water authority then the frequency of sampling and testing of the water for *E.coli* and coliforms can be reduced to quarterly.

## Short staffing procedures

Establishments operating under the LMA model will have a short staffing procedure. The procedure will detail the processes that need to be put in place if, due to unforeseen circumstances, there is no department officer (OPV) present on site.

Where the only department officer stationed at the establishment is an OPV, and the OPV is unable to attend the establishment prior to operations commencing, slaughter and dressing is allowed to commence and continue for a period not exceeding two hours, provided the animals have been subject to ante-mortem conducted by an OPV within 24 hours of slaughter.

Carcases produced during this time are not to have the Australia Inspected mark applied and are to be retained in the carcass chillers for inspection by a department officer when they arrive. Any carcass and carcass parts requiring final disposition by an OPV must be retained until the OPV arrives and can provide the disposition.

## Version history

The following table details the published date and amendment details for this document.

Version	Date	Amendment details
1.0	27/06/2019	First publication of this departmental policy.