

MEAT SUPPLY

[CAP. 51.]

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CHAPTER 51

MEAT SUPPLY

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To control the supply and inspection of meat in Vanuatu.

INTERPRETATION

1. In this Act the following expressions shall have the meanings respectively assigned to them-

"butcher" means any person who cuts up and sells meat for human consumption;

"butchery" means any place where meat is prepared and exposed for sale;

"meat" means the flesh of any animal of the bovine, ovine, equine, caprine or porcine species;

"Minister" means the Minister responsible for livestock;

"stock-breeder" means the owner of any animal who takes or causes it to be taken to a slaughterhouse with the intention that its flesh shall be used for human consumption.

APPOINTMENT OF MEAT INSPECTOR

2. There shall be a meat inspector appointed for the purpose of this Act who shall be a public servant.

CONSTRUCTION OF SLAUGHTERHOUSES

3. No person shall operate a slaughterhouse unless it complies with the following conditions-
- (a) all floors are waterproof and designed so as to prevent slipping thereon and have such a slope and drainage channels as will permit liquid to flow away;
 - (b) all interior walls are coated with a substance that is unbreakable, waterproof, smooth and imperishable;
 - (c) there are sufficient taps supplying drinking water to permit the cleaning of the slaughterhouse;
 - (d) a wash basin or other facilities for hand washing by the slaughterhouse staff is provided;
 - (e) there is adequate lighting in all parts of the slaughterhouse.

DESIGN OF SLAUGHTERHOUSES

4. Every slaughterhouse shall be so designed that-
- (a) from the time when the living animal enters the premises until the time when the meat and offal are taken away, there may be such a continuous movement as will prevent any such meat or offal already prepared being contaminated by animals awaiting slaughter or by waste meat or animal by-products;
 - (b) every slaughterhouse where more than 1 animal is killed at a time shall have a separate room for the reception of meat awaiting despatch large enough to hold all the meat that can be produced in 1 day and fitted with insect-proof screens to protect such meat from contamination by flies and other insects;
 - (c) it shall have a cattle yard of sufficient size to accommodate the maximum number of animals that can be slaughtered in 1 day and to enable such animals to have proper rest while awaiting slaughter;

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- (d) that part of the premises to be used for slaughtering and bleeding shall be of sufficient size to provide for the maximum number of animals that can be slaughtered in 1 day;
- (e) where they exist that part of the premises where emptying and first washing of the abdominal organs (stomachs and intestines) take place and the tripery shall be separate from but close to the trimming room.

EQUIPMENT OF SLAUGHTERHOUSES

- 5. All equipment in a slaughterhouse shall be of non-degenerating metal or plastic and shall include-
 - (a) easily washable metal or plastic receptacles or wheelbarrows for the handling and transport of meat or waste meat;
 - (b) hooks, trays and tables to permit the inspection of offal and heads;
 - (c) equipment for the washing and cleaning of instruments and tools required for work and inspection.

CLEANLINESS OF SLAUGHTERHOUSES

- 6.
 - (1) Every person working in a slaughterhouse shall wear clean clothes and shall wash his hands before handling any meat.
 - (2) No person shall smoke in a slaughterhouse.
 - (3) No person shall cause or permit any animal other than those to be slaughtered to enter a slaughterhouse.

SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS

- 7.
 - (1) No animal shall be taken into any slaughterhouse until immediately before it is to be slaughtered.
 - (2) Every animal shall be stunned by a captive bolt pistol or by being shot in the head before its throat is cut.
 - (3) All meat and offal awaiting despatch shall be placed in the room specially provided for the purpose under the provisions of paragraph (b) of section 4.
 - (4) In the case of cattle the animal shall be slung up while the operations of bleeding and trimming are carried out.
 - (5) When the gastro-intestinal mass has been removed it shall be placed directly in a receptacle or wheelbarrow especially provided for the purpose under the provisions of paragraph (a) of section 5.
 - (6) All waste meat shall be placed in the receptacle especially provided for the purpose under the provisions of paragraph (a) of section 5.
- No person shall-
 - (a) for the purpose of facilitating the removal of the hide inflate any carcass, except the carcass of a calf;
 - (b) inflate the lungs of any carcass;
 - (c) wipe any carcass with a cloth;
 - (d) open and empty the abdominal organs (stomachs and intestines) elsewhere than in a place specially provided for this purpose.

NOTIFICATION OF OPERATION

- 8.
 - (1) Every person intending to slaughter any animal shall give to a meat inspector such notice of the time when the slaughterhouse is to be used as shall enable such animals to be inspected both before and after being slaughtered.

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- (2) If the meat inspector is unable to be present at the time in respect of which notice has been given under the provisions of subsection (1), the slaughterhouse shall not be used until such other time as the said meat inspector shall specify.

REGISTER OF SLAUGHTERING

9. (1) The owner of every slaughterhouse shall keep on the premises a register of slaughtering.
- (2) The following entries shall be made in the said register in respect of all meat intended for sale-
 - (a) the date of slaughter;
 - (b) the species, sex and age of the animal;
 - (c) the weight of each of the 4 quarters of the carcass.
- (3) The said register shall be initialled after each inspection by a meat inspector.

INSPECTION OF ANIMALS

10. (1) Every animal intended for slaughter may be inspected before slaughter at the discretion of a meat inspector.
- (2) Any such animal which is found upon inspection to be unhealthy shall be separated from those awaiting slaughter.

INSPECTION OF MEAT

11. (1) Fresh meat shall be inspected for the purpose of ascertaining whether it is fit for human consumption at the slaughterhouse or at a cold storage depot or at any butchery that is equipped with a cold storage chamber of sufficient capacity to contain all the carcasses presented for inspection and in which the temperature does not fall below 0° Centigrade or rise above +4° Centigrade.
- (2) Irrespective of the place where the inspection is carried out the whole carcass together with all the offal shall be presented to the meat inspector.
- (3) In the event of any abnormal cutting or removal of meat before inspection, the carcass shall be seized and destroyed in the presence of the stock-breeder or butcher concerned.

WEIGHING OF MEAT

12. (1) Notwithstanding the provision of section 9, meat intended for sale shall be weighed either at the cold storage depot or at the butchery, in the presence of a meat inspector.
- (2) After inspection the meat inspector shall enter in a register-
 - (a) the number of carcasses inspected;
 - (b) the species of each carcass;
 - (c) their respective weights;
 - (d) the name of the stock-breeder and butcher concerned.

GRADING OF MEAT

13. (1) All meat declared fit for human consumption shall be graded and stamped as follows-
 - (a) special or first grade-red;
 - (b) second grade-green;
 - (c) third grade-black.
- (2) No person shall export any meat that has been graded under the provisions of subsection (1) as second or third grade.

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- (3) No person shall sell any meat that has been graded as third grade except to a cannery for the purpose of its being prepared as a cooked meat product.
- (4) After it has been graded and stamped all meat declared fit for human consumption shall be stored for at least 24 hours at a temperature not to fall below +1° Centigrade or rise above +4° Centigrade in a cold storage chamber.

No person shall sell any meat that has not been stamped under the provisions of subsection (1). All game meat and the meat of wild cattle, pigs or goats shall automatically be placed in the third grade and used only for cooked meat products.

DESTRUCTION OF UNFIT MEAT

14. (1) All meat declared unfit for human consumption shall be destroyed in the presence of the stock-breeder or his representative or the butcher.
- (2) Official notice of the destruction of meat shall be given to the stock-breeder by a meat inspector.

TRADE OF BUTCHER

15. No person shall engage in the trade of butcher unless he complies with the following requirements-
 - (a) he shall hold a business licence to do so;
 - (b) he shall maintain his butchery in accordance with the provisions of section 16;
 - (c) he shall be medically examined at least every 6 months and shall obtain a medical certificate to the effect that he is not suffering from any contagious disease transmissible to his customers by reason of his trade;
 - (d) he shall ensure that any assistants that he may employ comply with the provisions of paragraph (c).

CONSTRUCTION OF BUTCHERIES

16. (1) Every butcher, cannery or any other premises where foodstuffs of animal origin destined for human consumption are prepared or placed on sale shall be subject to the provisions of any Act or regulation currently in force in Vanuatu governing the construction of buildings. Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing they shall comply with the following conditions-
 - (a) the main walls of such premises be constructed of cement, brick, stone or wood covered with a substance which shall be waterproof and washable;
 - (b) the floor shall be of cement and be sloped to allow water used for washing to flow to drains which shall be so constructed as to carry such water into a soakage pit outside the premises. Every such drain and soakage pit shall be closed to the open air;
 - (c) the premises shall be ventilated on at least 2 sides by windows large enough to permit a good draught;
 - (d) all meat exposed for sale shall be suspended inside butcheries on hooks made of non-degenerating and washable metal and shall be protected from flies;
 - (e) there shall be at least 1 tap with running water inside the premises.
- (2) All meat shall be stored for at least 24 hours before being sold in a cold storage chamber in which the temperature does not fall below 0° Centigrade or rise above +4° Centigrade and where the carcass shall be kept slung up with adequate circulation of air round each piece. In no case shall meat be frozen before being placed on sale. If any butchery has no cold storage chamber which complies with the requirements of this subsection all carcasses intended for sale therein shall be

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stored at a cold storage depot and every such butchery shall be equipped with efficient refrigeration apparatus where the pieces of meat which have been cut for sale shall be kept at a temperature not exceeding +60° Centigrade before being placed on sale.

- (3) All carcasses awaiting processing in a cannery shall be stored in cold storage chambers in which the temperature does not fall below 0° Centigrade or rise above +4° Centigrade.
- (4) All butcheries, canneries and premises where foodstuffs of animal origin are prepared or placed on sale shall always be kept clean and hygienic. They shall not be in direct contact with any refuse dump, lavatory, stable, poultry house or any other premises of nature likely to cause contamination of meat.
- (5) All waste matter shall be placed in a container provided with a lid and every such container shall be emptied and washed daily.

MEAT NOT INSPECTED

17. (1) No person shall sell or knowingly purchase any meat which has not been inspected by a meat inspector and passed as fit for human consumption.
- (2) No person shall cause or permit any meat to be transported from any plantation to any place other than a cold storage depot, a butchery or cannery if the said meat is intended for sale.

TRANSPORT OF MEAT

18. (1) No person shall transport meat from a slaughterhouse to a cold storage depot, butchery or cannery otherwise than in a clean vehicle.
- (2) During transit all meat shall be protected from flies, dust, rain or other external contact.
- (3) All vehicles used for the transport of meat shall be presented for inspection at the request of any meat inspector who if he is not satisfied with the condition thereof may order any such vehicle to be repaired or cleaned before it may lawfully be used again for the carriage of meat.

INSPECTION OF PREMISES

19. All premises governed by this Act and all operations connected with the preparation of fresh or canned meat or any other product of animal origin intended for human consumption shall be liable to inspection by any meat inspector who may issue instruction to ensure that the provisions of this Act and the ordinary requirements of hygiene are complied with by the owners or occupiers of such premises and persons in charge of such operations.

ACCESS TO PREMISES

20. For the purpose of carrying out their duties under this Act, all meat inspectors shall have access at any reasonable time to any private slaughterhouse, cold storage depot, butchery, cannery or any place where meat or any other foodstuffs of animal origin is stored, processed or exposed for sale.

PREMISES SUBSTANDARD

21. (1) If upon inspection of any premises governed by this Act any meat inspector finds that the said premises, the equipment installed, or the operation carried out thereon fails to comply with the provisions of this Act he shall notify the owner or occupier of the said premises in writing of the alterations or improvements to the said premises or operations that are required to make them comply with the said provisions.

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- (2) Such notification shall specify the period of time which the proprietor shall be granted for the purpose of carrying out the said alterations or improvements:

Provided that such period shall not exceed 3 months from the date of the notification being received by the person to whom it is addressed.

Should such period be exceeded the veterinary officer may order the said establishment to be closed provisionally, without prejudice to any prosecution to which the offender is liable by virtue of the provisions of section 22(1), until such time as the required alterations or improvements have been completed to the satisfaction of the veterinary officer.

- (4) The Minister may upon the recommendation of the veterinary officer order final closure of any premises in respect of which a provisional closure order has been issued under the provisions of subsection (3).

PENALTIES

22. (1) Any person who contravenes any of the provisions of this Act or who obstructs the veterinary officer, any meat inspector or any police officer in or upon the occasion of the exercise of his duties under this Act shall be guilty of an offence and upon conviction thereof shall be liable to a fine not exceeding VT75,000 or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 6 months or to both such fine and imprisonment.

- (2) Any person who fails to comply with any instructions issued under the provisions of section 19 shall be guilty of an offence and upon conviction thereof shall be liable to a fine not exceeding VT75,000 or to a period of imprisonment not exceeding 6 months or to both such fine and imprisonment.

Any person who fails to comply with a provisional or a final closure order issued under the provisions of subsection (3) or (4) of section 21 shall be guilty of an offence and upon conviction thereof shall be liable to a fine not exceeding VT200,000 or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 1 year or to both such fine and imprisonment.

REGULATIONS

23. The Minister by Order may make regulations for the better carrying out of this Act.

APPLICATION

24. (1) The provisions of sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 18 shall only apply to slaughterhouses and meat dispatched therefrom to any cold storage depot, butchery or cannery within the town limits of Port Vila and Luganville.

- (2) The Minister may by Order further extend the application of the said sections.
- (3) This Act shall not apply to meat which is sold or processed for export or which is sold for consumption in any part of Vanuatu in respect of which the Abattoirs Act, Cap. 99, applies.