

ABATTOIRS

[CAP. 99.

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CHAPTER 99

ABATTOIRS

JR 18 of 1977
JR 31 of 1979
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To regulate the slaughter of animals for meat for sale in Luganville, Port Vila or overseas.

INTERPRETATION

1. In this Act the following expressions shall have the meanings respectively assigned to them-
 - "abattoir" means any place used for the slaughter of animals for human consumption;
 - "approved abattoir" means an abattoir in respect of which a certificate of approval has been issued by the Minister following an application made to him under section 5;
 - "meat" means the flesh of any animal of the bovine, ovine, equine, caprine or porcine species;
 - "meat inspector" means any person appointed to inspect meat or products of animal origin by the Minister under the provisions of section 2 of this Act;
 - "Minister" means the Minister responsible for agriculture and livestock;
 - "stock-breeder" means the owner of any animal who takes or causes it to be taken to an abattoir with the intention of having it slaughtered so that its flesh may be used for human consumption;
 - "veterinary officer" means a veterinarian employed in the service of the Government.

APPOINTMENT OF MEAT INSPECTORS

2. The Minister may on the recommendation of the director of the department of agriculture and livestock appoint any person to be a meat inspector.

ABATTOIRS TO BE APPROVED

3. Subject to the provisions of section 5(2), no person shall maintain or operate any abattoir from which meat is sold or processed for export or sold for consumption in the urban areas of Port Vila and Luganville unless a certificate of approval granted by the Minister is in force in respect of such abattoir.

EXEMPTIONS

4. (1) A veterinary officer, with the consent of the Minister, may grant a written exemption to either a person-
 - (a) (i) who is a small beef producer;
 - (ii) sells insufficient cattle to permit their economic transportation to approved abattoirs; and
 - (iii) does not have reasonable access to a stock yard having a ramp for loading live cattle onto a stock transporter; or,
 - (b) who in the opinion of a veterinary officer is killing wild and unmanageable cattle.
- (2) A person granted an exemption under subsection (1)-
 - (a) may sell carcass meat to a buyer granted a permit under subsection (3); and
 - (b) shall abide by any conditions relating to hygiene and other matters that the officer granting the exemption may include in the exemption.

No person may purchase carcass meat from a person granted an exemption under subsection (1) unless he has been granted a permit in writing by a veterinary officer permitting him to purchase carcass meat from that exempted person or generally from persons granted an exemption under subsection (1).

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- (4) A person granted a permit under subsection (3) shall not export from Vanuatu carcass meat purchased by authority of the permit.
- (5) Exemptions and permits granted in accordance with this section shall each be for a definite period of time.
- (6) A veterinary officer may at any time revoke an exemption or permit granted under this section.
- (7) A person who fails to comply with any of the provisions of this section or any condition in an exemption or permit granted in accordance with its provisions commits an offence and shall on conviction be liable to a fine of VT80,000 or imprisonment for 2 years or to both such fine and imprisonment.

APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

5. (1) An application for a certificate of approval shall be made in triplicate by the owner of the abattoir to the Minister in the form prescribed in the Schedule.
- (2) The application for a certificate of approval of an abattoir shall be endorsed by the principal veterinary officer, who shall forward 2 copies to the Minister.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL TO RELATE TO SINGLE ABATTOIR

6. (1) A certificate of approval shall relate only to the abattoir premises described in the application for such certificate submitted in accordance with section 5.
- (2) Any change in the ownership or management of an approved abattoir shall be notified within 14 days to the director of the department of agriculture and livestock.

REGISTRATION AND LICENSING OF MEAT EXPORT PROCESSING ESTABLISHMENTS

7. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Act, no person shall maintain or operate a meat export processing establishment unless it is registered and licensed in accordance with regulations made by Order of the Minister. For the purposes of this section, "processing establishment" means any establishment in which any part of the carcass of any animal is used for the preparation or manufacture for sale of products including canned meat, small goods, sausage skins, tallow, bones, bone meal, meat meal, blood meal, hides, animals glands or any other product principally derived from any animal.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANT OF CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

8. (1) No application for a certificate for an abattoir shall be approved by the Minister unless and until the Minister is satisfied that the said abattoir complies with the requirements of subsection (2) and of sections 9 to 19 inclusive.
- (2) In the case of every approved abattoir-
 - (a) the premises shall be enclosed on all sides with a wall of permanent materials, the interior of which shall be smooth, imperishable, waterproof, unbreakable and non-corrodible;
 - (b) all corners of the interior of the premises shall be so constructed as to be concave or convex to facilitate cleaning;
 - (c) the roof shall be of permanent material and there shall be no space between roof and walls;
 - (d) the floors shall be of permanent, waterproof, non-slip materials and drained by means of gutters covered by removable gratings and provided with an adequate slope;
 - (e) all drainage from the premises shall be led underground for a distance of at least 100 metres and then disposed of in such a manner as not to cause nuisance by reason of the breeding of flies or other insects and so as to prevent access by any person or animal;

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all doors shall be of the automatically closing type and separated from the outside by means of a space enclosed on the other side by a screen designed to prevent entry of flies:

Provided that, as an alternative, the doorways may be provided with an automatic draught to prevent the entry of dust or flies;

- (g) The premises shall be adequately lighted by windows or open spaces separated from the outside by fly-proof screens. If opening glass windows are provided, the space must be separated from the outside by fly-proof screens;
- (h) artificial lighting of such type and intensity as not to modify or distort colours shall be provided in any areas which are inaccessible to daylight and shall be adequate for all work to be performed therein;
- (i) adequate ventilation shall be provided and any spaces leading to the outside will be protected by fly-proof screens. If at ground level these spaces shall also be rat-proof; and
- (j) entry for animals shall be regulated in such a way that no animal can enter the dressing area until it has been killed, washed and bled.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

9. Every approved abattoir shall be supplied with electricity at a tension sufficient to provide adequate lighting, heating and cold storage to comply with the requirements of this Act.

WATER SUPPLY

10. (1) Every approved abattoir shall be supplied with water in sufficient quantity to comply with regulations made under this Act, and in any event shall be piped at a pressure of not less than 2 atmospheres.
- (2) All water supplied to the abattoir shall meet the standard of portability required for human consumption in the urban areas of Port Vila and Luganville.

WASHING ROOM

11. Every approved abattoir shall include a washing and dressing room with running water under pressure, with at least 1 sink, 1 shower and 1 tub for washing clothes; one of each of these facilities for every six men employed.

RAILS FOR TRANSPORTING ANIMALS

12. The layout of every approved abattoir shall be such that rail transport for carcasses in the suspended position is provided in such length and arrangement that the total number of animals to be slaughtered in 1 day can be dressed in 1 continuous operation without touching or contaminating each other.

EQUIPMENT

13. All equipment used in an approved abattoir shall be of non-degenerating metal or plastic and shall include-
 - (a) easily washable metal or plastic wheeled containers for the removal of stomachs and intestines of slaughtered animals;
 - (b) hooks, trays and tables to permit the inspection of offal and heads; and
 - (c) equipment for holding, cutting, scrapping, hoisting of carcasses or their parts.

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INTERNAL WATER SUPPLY

14. The dressing area and bleeding area of every approved abattoir shall be provided with a sink and soap or detergent for the washing of hands together with a hose connection for the supply of a high pressure water jet of at least 2 atmospheres for washing carcasses.

COLD STORAGE

15. Sufficient cold storage space shall be provided on the premises of each approved abattoir for the maximum number of animals which can be slaughtered in 1 day. The temperature of this space must be shown by a thermometer and regulated in such a way that it cannot exceed 4° C or fall below 0° C. Adequate hanging racks shall be provided for cold storage of offal so that pieces can be hung separately without touching each other.

STAND-BY FACILITIES

16. An approved abattoir shall be provided with such stand-by facilities as will ensure that in any emergency the cold storage chamber is maintained at its correct temperature.

STERILISER

17. An approved abattoir shall be provided with a steriliser in which water can be boiled at a temperature of 100° C and in which knives and other tools coming into contact with carcasses can be sterilised daily at the end of operations by placing them in the said steriliser for at least 10 minutes.

PROVISION OF ANIMAL ENCLOSURES

18. Any approved abattoir shall have an enclosure 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 and watering while awaiting slaughter. This enclosure shall be so subdivided into separate pens so that no pen holds more than 4 animals. The floors of such pens shall be of concrete.

PROVISION OF TRANSPORT

19. If an approved abattoir undertakes to provide or secure the provision of transport, such transport must enable the abattoir to transport carcasses of meat in accordance with the provisions of the Butcheries Act, Cap. 100.

PROVISION OF CLOTHING

20. Clean overalls and hats or other suitable head coverings shall be made available for all staff at the beginning of every working day.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

21. (1) Every person working in an abattoir shall wear clean clothes and wash his hands before and after handling any meat.
(2) No person shall smoke in an abattoir.

CATTLE TO BE RESTED BEFORE SLAUGHTER

22. Cattle must be detained in an animal enclosure provided in accordance with section 18 for a minimum period of 24 hours before slaughter. During such period they shall be provided with water only and no solid foodstuffs shall be given to them.

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PIGS AND CATTLE NOT TO BE SLAUGHTERED ON SAME DAY

23. Pigs and other animals may only be slaughtered on the same day if the pigs are slaughtered after the other animals, and on all occasions following the slaughter of pigs the whole dressing and bleeding, area shall be thoroughly washed down before any other species of animal is slaughtered.

NOTIFICATION OF SLAUGHTER

24. No owner of an approved abattoir may on any day when he intends to slaughter carry out such operations in the abattoir without having first notified, or caused to be notified, a veterinary officer of his intention to do so.

INSPECTION OF ANIMALS

25. (1) Every animal intended for slaughter shall be inspected before slaughter by a veterinary officer.
(2) Any animal found upon inspection to be unhealthy shall be separated from others awaiting slaughter.
Any animal suspected by a veterinary officer to be suffering from any contagious disease shall be removed from the premises of the abattoir and returned at the expense of the owner of the animal to its place of origin pending further examination by the veterinary officer. Slaughter and destruction of such an animal may take place at its place of origin depending upon the decision of the veterinary officer.
(4) The responsibility of removal of the animal from the abattoir shall rest with the owner of the animal who shall be allowed a period of up to 12 hours in which to effect such removal. In the event of failure to remove the animal within this period the veterinary officer may order the removal of the animal at the owner's expense for its immediate destruction.

METHOD OF SLAUGHTER

26. (1) Every animal shall be stunned before being bled and such bleeding shall take place immediately after stunning.
(2) The animal shall be slung up immediately after the major blood vessels in the neck have been severed.
(3) No person shall cause or permit any animal other than those to be slaughtered to enter an abattoir.
(4) All waste meats shall be placed in a receptacle especially provided for the purpose.
(5) No person shall inject any air under the hide of an animal to facilitate its removal.
(6) No person shall wipe any carcass with a cloth.
(7) No person shall empty the abdominal organs elsewhere than in the place especially provided for this purpose.
(8) No person shall bleed a carcass elsewhere than in the place especially provided for this purpose.

USE OF CONTAINER FOR VISCERA

27. An adequate number of wheeled containers shall be provided so that stomachs and intestines together with their contents can be lowered from the carcass into these; containers and moved to one side without contaminating the floor. These containers and their contents shall be indistinguishable with the carcasses.

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USE OF COLD STORE

28. (1) An abattoir cold store shall only contain carcasses, parts of carcasses or offal of animals slaughtered on the premises.
- (2) Carcasses shall be suspended in the cold store in such a way that they cannot touch either the floor or walls of the room or each other and so that adequate space is left for an inspecting officer to pass between the rows of carcasses.

MEAT INSPECTION

29. Meat shall be inspected by a meat inspector or veterinary officer at the abattoir at the time of slaughter for the purpose of ascertaining whether it is fit for human consumption. The whole carcass together with all the offal, head, feet and hide shall be presented for inspection and be identified with the animal previously notified as intended for slaughter in accordance with section 24. In the event of any abnormal cutting or removal of parts before inspection the whole carcass may be seized and destroyed by the meat inspector after written notice to the owner or his agent in charge of the abattoir of his intention to do so, stating his reasons.

GRADING OF MEAT

30. All carcasses declared fit for human consumption shall be graded and stamped by a meat inspector or veterinary officer, according to the standards prescribed by the principal veterinary officer.

DESTRUCTION OF UNFIT MEAT

31. A meat inspector may, after giving written notice of his reasons for so doing to the owner of an abattoir or his agent, declare meat to be unfit for human consumption. Such meat shall be destroyed by burning as soon as possible after the written notice has been received by the owner of the abattoir or his agent.

REGISTER OF ANIMALS SLAUGHTERED

32. The owner or his agent in charge of any approved abattoir shall keep on the premises a register of animals presented for slaughter showing-
- (a) origin of the animal;
 - (b) species of animal;
 - (c) date of arrival;
 - (d) date of slaughter;
 - (e) sex and age of the animal;
 - (f) weight of the carcass; and
 - (g) grade of the carcass.

INSPECTION OF ABATTOIRS

33. All abattoirs approved under this Act shall be liable to inspection at any time by a meat inspector or veterinary officer who may issue instructions to ensure that the provisions of this Act are carried out.

NOTICE TO REMEDY DEFAULTS

34. (1) If upon inspection of any approved abattoir a meat inspector or veterinary officer finds that either the premises, the equipment installed therein or the operations carried out thereat fail to comply with the provisions of this Act, he shall serve on the owner or his agent responsible for the operation of the approved abattoir a written notice specifying all alterations or improvements to the abattoir necessary

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to ensure that the premises, equipment and operations comply with the provisions of this Act.

- (2) Such notification shall specify the period of time which the owner shall be given for the purpose of effecting the said alterations or improvements, provided that such period shall not exceed 3 months from the date of the notification being received by the owner or his agent.

Should the specified period be exceeded, the principal veterinary officer may apply to the court for an order that the abattoir be closed until such time as the required alterations or improvements have been completed to the satisfaction of the principal veterinary officer:

Provided that such closure shall be without prejudice to the institution of proceedings against the owner of the abattoir under the provisions of section 35.

ANNULMENT OF CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

35. If either-

- (a) following the issue of an order under section 34(3) the owner of the abattoir has failed within 3 months to comply with the notice served under section 34(1); or
(b) at the time that proceedings are instituted under section 36(2) the principal veterinary officer so requests,

the court may order the annulment of the certificate of approval of the abattoir issued under section 3:

Provided always that it shall be open to the holder of the certificate to show cause why such order should not be made.

OFFENCES AND PENALTIES

36. (1) Any person who operates an abattoir in respect of which a certificate is required under the provisions of section 3, but in respect of which there is not in force: a valid certificate issued under the provisions of sections 3 and 5, shall be guilty of an offence and upon conviction shall be liable to a fine not exceeding VT100,000 or to imprisonment for a term of 6 months or to both such fine and imprisonment.
- (2) Any person who fails to comply with any of the provisions of this Act relating, to the construction, equipping or operation of an abattoir or the slaughter of animals or who obstructs a veterinary officer or meat inspector or any police officer in the exercise of his duties under this Act shall be guilty of an offence and upon conviction shall be liable to a fine not exceeding VT50,000 or to imprisonment for a term of 3 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 section 34(3) or 35 shall be guilty of an offence and upon conviction shall be liable to a fine not exceeding VT100,000 or to imprisonment for a term of 6 months or to both such fine and imprisonment.

ENFORCEMENT OF ACT

37. The principal veterinary officer is charged with the application of this Act.

REGULATIONS

38. The Minister may by Order make regulations for the better implementation of this Act, and may provide therein for penalties not exceeding VT50,000.

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SCHEDULE

(section 5(1))

Application for a certificate of approval of an abattoir

Name of applicant

Postal address

Full postal address of abattoir premises

Is building already completed?

Has it previously been in operation?

If not, submit plans

State- Area in m2 of: killing space

dressing space

cold storage

lairage

Number of pens in lairage

Total number of animals to be accommodated in lairage

Type of equipment to be used for slaughter, cutting, transport and disposal of carcasses: (list on separate sheet if necessary)

Sterilisation facilities

Washing facilities

Electricity: State voltage, phases, total available load KW

Water: Source of supply

Treatment

Storage capacity

Pressure available

Stand-by systems available for-

Give details

Cold Storage

Water

Electricity

.....

.....

Drainage: where and how disposed:

.....

Disposal of waste:

.....

Number of workers employed:

Date Signature

This application has been submitted to me, and is in order.

Principal Veterinary Officer

Date