

## **EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (RABBIT MEAT AND FARMED GAME MEAT) REGULATIONS 1995**

I, IVAN YATES, Minister for Agriculture, Food and Forestry, in exercise of the powers conferred on me by section 3 of the European Communities Act, 1972 (No. 27 of 1972) and for the purpose of giving effect to Council Directive No. 91/495/EEC(1) of 27 November 1990 as amended by Council Directive No. 92/65/EEC(2) of 13 July 1992 and Council Directive No. 92/116/EEC(3) of 17 December 1992, hereby make the following Regulations:

### **PART I PRELIMINARY**

#### **REG 1**

Title and Commencement.

1. (1) These Regulations may be cited as the European Communities (Rabbit Meat and Farmed Gamed Meat) Regulations, 1995.

(2) These Regulations shall come into operation on the first day of November, 1995.

#### **REG 2**

Interpretation.

2. (1) In these Regulations, except where the context otherwise requires—

"abattoir" means an abattoir as defined in the Abattoirs Act, 1988 (No. 8 of 1988);

"authorised officer" means a person authorised in writing by the Minister to exercise for the purposes of these Regulations and the Council Directive the powers conferred on an authorised officer by these Regulations;

"auxiliary" has the meaning assigned in Article 2.8 of Annex B to Council Directive No. 92/116/EEC;

"certificate" means a health certificate or any other document issued by an official veterinarian and has the meaning and form assigned to it in the Council Directive;

(1)O.J. No. L268 of 24.9.1991, P.41.

(2)O.J. No. L268 of 14.9.1992, P.54.

(3)O.J. No. L62 of 15.3.1993, P.1.

"the Council Directive" means Council Directive No. 91/495/EEC of 27 November 1990 as amended by Council Directive No. 92/65/EEC of 13 July 1992 and Council Directive No. 92/116/EEC of 17 December 1992;

"Member State" means a Member State of the European Communities;

"the Minister" means the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Forestry;

"official veterinarian" has the meaning assigned in Article 2.7 of Annex B to Directive No. 92/116/EEC;

"premises" includes any land and any buildings, structures or private dwellings;

"third country" means a country which is not a member of the European Communities.

(2) In these Regulations—

( a ) a reference to a Regulation is to a Regulation of these

Regulations, unless it is indicated that reference to some other provision is intended;

( b ) a reference to a Schedule is to a Schedule to these Regulations;

( c ) a reference to a paragraph or subparagraph is to the paragraph or subparagraph of the provision in which the reference occurs, unless it is indicated that reference to some other provision is intended.

(3) A word or expression that is used in these Regulations and is also used in the Council Directive has, unless the contrary intention appears, the same meaning in these Regulations as it has in the Council Directive.

### REG 3

General Conditions and Exemption.

3. (1) A person shall not produce or cause to be produced, obtain, cut, process, store or place on the market rabbit meat or farmed game meat other than in compliance with these Regulations.

(2) A person shall not use an establishment to produce, obtain, cut, process or store rabbit meat or farmed game meat unless that establishment has been approved by the Minister in accordance with these Regulations.

(3) The requirements of these Regulations and the Council Directive shall not apply to the cutting and storage of farmed game meat in retail shops or in premises adjacent to sales points, where the cutting and storage are performed solely for the purposes of supplying the consumer directly on the spot.

## **PART II**

### **APPROVAL OF RABBIT MEAT ESTABLISHMENTS**

#### REG 4

Conditions of Approval for Rabbit Meat Establishments.

4. (1) The Minister may, on application, approve an establishment to produce, obtain, process, cut or store rabbit meat provided he is satisfied that such establishment meets the general conditions laid down in Council Directive 71/118/EEC(4) (as amended).

(2) An approval granted under this Regulation shall relate to the owner of the establishment who originally applied for the approval. This approval shall cease in the event of the establishment being sold, ceasing trading or operation, or in the event of the death of the owner or the owner being adjudged bankrupt. Approval will also cease where an incorporated body is for any reason dissolved.

**PART III**  
**CONDITIONS FOR THE PLACING ON THE MARKET OF RABBIT MEAT**

REG 5

General Conditions.

5. (1) Subject to the provisions of Regulation 7, rabbit meat intended to be placed on the market shall:

- ( a ) be prepared in an establishment approved by the Minister in accordance with Regulation 4;
- ( b ) come from animals from farms or areas in which bans have not been imposed for veterinary inspection reasons, within the meaning of Article 3.1. (b) of the Council Directive;
- (4) As Amended by Council Directive No. 92/116/EEC — O.J. No. L62 of 15.3.1993, P.1.
- ( c ) come from animals which have undergone ante-mortem inspection by an official veterinarian or by an auxiliary, such inspection being in accordance with Chapter I of the Schedule and which have been deemed suitable for slaughter following such inspection;
- ( d ) have been treated under satisfactory hygiene conditions similar to those provided for in Chapter VII to Annex I to Directive 92/116/EEC, except for those in point 43;
- ( e ) have undergone, in accordance with Chapter II of the Schedule, post-mortem inspection by an official veterinarian or by an auxiliary, and have not shown any change except for traumatic lesions which would have occurred shortly before slaughter or localised malformations or changes provided it is established, to the satisfaction of an official veterinarian or auxiliary and if necessary by appropriate laboratory tests, that these do not render the carcase or offal unfit for human consumption or dangerous to human health;
- ( f ) bear a health mark in accordance with Chapter III of the Schedule;
- ( g ) be stored in accordance with Chapter IV of the Schedule after post-mortem inspection under satisfactory hygiene conditions in an establishment or in a store approved by the Minister in accordance with Regulation 4;
- ( h ) be transported under satisfactory hygiene conditions in accordance with Chapter V of the Schedule;
- ( i ) in the case of carcasses or boned meat, have also been obtained in conditions similar to those provided for in Article 3 of Annex B to Directive 92/116/EEC in establishments approved by the Minister under Regulation 4.

(2) Consignments of rabbit meat being sent to the territory of another Member State shall be accompanied during transportation by a health certificate. The original of the health certificate which shall accompany the fresh rabbit meat during its transport to the consignee. It shall be made available on request by an authorised officer.

(3) Any person who sends or receives a consignment of rabbit meat accompanied by a health certificate, shall retain a copy of that certificate and shall make it available for inspection when requested by an authorised officer, for a period of at least one year after receipt or sending.

(4) An application for a health certificate required for the purposes of compliance with these Regulations shall be made to an official veterinarian and shall be in such form and contain such particulars as the Minister may require and, unless the Minister otherwise agrees, such an application shall be received by the official veterinarian to whom it is made not later than the day, being a day which is not a Saturday, Sunday or a bank or public holiday, preceding the day on which the certificate is required by the applicant.

(5) A person shall not supply false or misleading particulars to an official veterinarian for the purpose of obtaining a health certificate.

## REG 6

### Health Marking Conditions.

6. (1) The owner or person in charge of an establishment approved by the Minister under Regulation 4 shall not place on the market rabbit meat unless it bears the public health mark. The health mark shall accord with the requirement of Chapter III of the Schedule.

(2) The procurement, printing or reprinting of labels, wrappers, stamps, seals or marks under this Regulation for use by an approved establishment shall be authorised by the official veterinarian.

## REG 7

### Derogations.

7. By way of derogation from Regulation 5, the Minister may authorise:

( a ) the direct supply of rabbit meat by a small producer to a private individual for his own consumption;

( b ) the supply of fresh rabbit meat in small quantities, by farmers who produce rabbits on a small scale:

(i) either directly to the final consumer at those local markets which are closest to their farms;

(ii) or to a retailer with a view to direct sale to the final consumer, provided that such retailer conducts his business in the same locality as that of the producer or in a neighbouring locality.

The said derogation shall not include itinerant sales, mail order sales and, as far as the retailer is concerned, sales on a market, within the meaning of Article 4.1 of the Council Directive.

**PART IV**  
**APPROVAL OF FARMED GAME MEAT ESTABLISHMENTS**

REG 8

Conditions of Approval for Farmed Game Meat Establishments.

8. (1) The Minister may, on application, approve an establishment to produce, obtain, cut, process or store farmed game meat provided he is satisfied that such establishment meets, as appropriate, the general conditions laid down in Council Directive 71/118/EEC (as amended) or Council Directive 64/433/EEC(5) (as amended).

(2) An approval granted under this Regulation shall relate to the owner of the establishment who originally applied for the approval. This approval shall cease in the event of the establishment being sold, ceasing trading or operation, or in the event of the death of the owner or the owner being adjudged bankrupt. Approval will also cease where an incorporated body is for any reason dissolved.

**PART V**  
**RULES FOR PRODUCTION AND PLACING ON THE MARKET OF FARMED GAME**

REG 9

Conditions for Farmed Game Meat from Wild Land Mammals.

9. (1) Farmed game may only be produced and placed on the market in accordance with this Part of the Regulations.

(2) Subject to the provisions of paragraphs (4) and (5), farmed game meat obtained from cloven-hoofed wild land mammals shall fulfil the relevant conditions referred to in Article 3 and Article 6.1

(c) of Directive 64/433/EEC (as amended) provided that the original herd is not the subject of any veterinary restrictions. The animals in question shall be treated at different times from bovine animals, swine, sheep and goats.

(5) As Amended by Council Directive No. 91/497/EEC of 29 July 1991 — O.J. No. L268 of 24.9.1991, P. 69.

(3) Meat from farmed wild pigs or other species sensitive to *Trichinae* infestation shall be subjected to examination by digestion upon importation from third countries in accordance with Council Directive 77/96/EEC(6) (as amended).

(4) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (2), the official veterinarian may, in order to avoid any risk for the handler or to protect the welfare of the animals, authorise the slaughter of farmed game in the place of origin, where it cannot be transported. This authorisation may be granted, on application, provided that the official veterinarian is satisfied that:

( a ) the herd has undergone veterinary inspection and is not the subject of any veterinary restrictions;

( b ) a request is submitted by the owner of the animals for slaughter at the place of origin;

( c ) the official veterinarian is informed in advance of the time and date of the slaughter of the animals and agrees to such time and date;

( d ) the holding has a centre for mustering wild animals where

an ante-mortem inspection of the group for slaughter can be carried out;

( e ) the holding has premises suitable for the slaughter, sticking and bleeding of animals;

( f ) slaughter by means of sticking and bleeding is preceded by stunning in accordance with the European Communities (Protection of Animals at Time of Slaughter) Regulations, 1995 (S.I. No. 114 of 1995);

( g ) the slaughtered and bled animals are hung as quickly as possible after slaughter and are transported under satisfactory hygienic conditions to a slaughterhouse approved by the Minister in accordance with Directive 64/433/EEC (as amended). Where game slaughtered at the place of rearing cannot be brought within the hour to a slaughterhouse approved by the Minister in accordance with Article 10 of Directive 64/433/EEC (as amended), it shall be transported in a container or means of transport in which the ambient temperature is maintained at between 0° and 4°C. Evisceration shall be carried out no later than three hours after stunning;

(6)As Last Updated by Council Directive 89/321/EEC — O.J. No. L133 of 17.5.1989, P. 33.

( h ) during transportation to the slaughterhouse the slaughtered animals are accompanied by a certificate issued by the official veterinarian attesting to the favourable outcome of the ante-mortem inspection, the correct conduct of the bleeding and the time of slaughter.

(5) By way of derogation from paragraphs (2) and (4), the Minister may, on application, permit the slaughter of farmed big game, within the meaning of Article 6.3 of the Council Directive, and the cutting and storage of the meat referred to in this Regulation to be performed in abattoirs or establishments already approved or licensed by the Minister to slaughter, cut or store for the domestic market, provided he is satisfied that such abattoir or establishment has the facilities to perform such tasks and that such meat does not enter intra-Community trade.

## REG 10

### 10 Conditions for Farmed Bird Meat.

10. (1) Meat of farmed game birds shall fulfil the conditions laid down in Article 3 of Annex B to Directive 92/116/EEC.

(2) Meat of farmed game birds intended for intra-Community trade shall be accompanied by the health certificate, provided for in Directive 92/116/EEC. However, notwithstanding point 36 of Chapter VII in Annex I to Directive 92/116/EEC, where in the case of quail and pigeon, the evisceration technique used does not permit complete inspection of the viscera of each bird, that inspection may be carried out on a sample of at least 5 per cent of each batch of 500 birds, and in corresponding proportion beyond 500 birds, provided that the batches are homogeneous in terms of their nature, weight and origin.

(3) Where the results are found not to be satisfactory, the opinion expressed on the basis of such sample inspection of the viscera as to whether the slaughtered birds are fit for consumption shall apply to the entire batch and the official veterinarian shall act accordingly.

**PART VI  
PROHIBITIONS AND IMPORTS**

REG 11

Prohibitions on Human Consumption.

11. Rabbit meat or meat of farmed game birds shall not be used for human consumption if, in the opinion of an official veterinarian, where, if necessary, confirmed by the appropriate laboratory tests:

- ( a ) it originates from animals to which substances likely to make the meat dangerous or harmful to human health has been administered;
- ( b ) the meat is treated with ionizing or ultraviolet radiation or treated with tenderizers or other substances which could affect the organoleptic properties of the meat or colorants other than those used for health marking.

REG 12

Imports.

12. No person shall import rabbit meat and farmed game meat from a third country unless:

- ( a ) that meat is in compliance with the rules laid down in the European Communities (Trade in Animals and Animal Products) Regulations, 1994 (S.I. No. 289 of 1994); and
- ( b ) meat from species susceptible to trichinosis have been subjected to examination by digestion in accordance with directive 77/96/EEC (as updated).

In addition fresh rabbit meat and fresh farmed game meat imported from third countries may not, under any circumstances, bear the public health mark referred to in Chapter XII of Annex I to Directive 92/116/EEC and, if cut and boned, shall have been treated in accordance with Article 3.1.B of Annex B to that Directive.

**PART VII**  
**MINISTERIAL APPROVAL, INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION**

REG 13

Granting of Ministerial Approval.

13. (1) The Minister in approving an establishment in accordance with Regulation 4 or 8, as the case may be, shall allocate an approval number to the establishment and shall notify the owner or person in charge of the establishment in writing of the approval and of the number.

(2) The Minister may allocate a single approval number where an establishment is located on the same site as an establishment already approved, by the Minister, in accordance with Directive 71/118/EEC (as amended) or Directive 64/433/EEC (as amended).

(3) The Minister may attach conditions, as he sees fit, to an approval granted under Regulation 4 or 8, as the case may be, or subsequently, and may amend or revoke a condition attached to the approval and shall notify the owner or person in charge of the establishment concerned in writing of the conditions, amendment or revocation concerned.

(4) The Minister may, if he is satisfied that the relevant provisions of these Regulations are not being complied with in relation to an establishment, refuse to approve the establishment and shall notify the owner or person in charge of the establishment in writing of the refusal and the reasons for such refusal.

(5) In the event of continued non compliance with these Regulations or failure by the owner or person in charge of an approved establishment to take the measures required under these Regulations the Minister may either temporarily suspend or revoke an approval.

(6) The Minister shall not—

( a ) revoke or suspend an approval given under Regulation 4 or 8, as the case may be, or

( b ) refuse to approve an establishment on foot of an application, without—

(i) notifying the holder of, or applicant for, the approval of his intention to revoke or suspend or refuse the approval, as the case may be; and

(ii) specifying his reason for the intended revocation or suspension or refusal, as the case may be; and

(iii) affording the holder of, or the applicant for, the approval an opportunity of making representations or having representations made on his behalf within 14 days, to the Minister in relation to the proposed revocation or suspension or refusal, as the case may be.

(7) Where an approval under Regulation 4 or 8, as the case may be, in respect of an establishment is suspended or revoked, the owner or person in charge of that establishment shall not produce, place on the market, supply, sell or use meat originating from that establishment subsequent to the date of revocation or suspension, as the case may be, except with the approval of the Minister.

(8) The Minister may restore approval, if approval has been

suspended in accordance with paragraph (5), in instances where—  
( a ) the owner or person in charge of the suspended establishment has rectified the shortcomings notified to him by the Minister, and  
( b ) the tests or checks carried out by an authorised officer confirm the safety of the meat emanating from the suspended establishment.

#### REG 14

Powers to protect Public and Animal Health.

14. (1) Where in relation to any rabbit meat or farmed game meat, an authorised officer forms an opinion that there is a risk to public or animal health—

( a ) he may seize such meat, or

( b ) he may serve or cause to be served on any person who is the owner of the rabbit meat or farmed game meat or an importer, or exporter of such meat or the person who appears to such officer to be in control for the time being of such meat a notice requiring either the owner, importer, exporter, or person in control for the time being of the rabbit meat or farmed game meat, that such meat—

(i) be destroyed in such manner and at such place as the authorised officer shall direct, or

(ii) be used or disposed of in such manner as the authorised officer shall direct, and

(iii) any costs pertaining to action required under subparagraphs (i) and (ii) will be borne by the person on whom the notice is served.

(2) A requirement contained in a notice may specify a time limit within which it is to be complied with.

(3) A requirement specified in a notice served under paragraph (1) (in this paragraph referred to as "the earlier notice") may be modified or withdrawn in a further such notice and in that event the earlier notice shall have effect subject to such modification or withdrawal.

(4) A notice may require the owner, importer, exporter, or person in control for the time being of the rabbit meat or farmed game meat as the case may be to choose between two or more of the requirements specified in the notice.

(5) A notice referred to in paragraph (1) may be served on the owner, importer, exporter, or person in control for the time being of the rabbit meat or farmed game meat as the case may be by delivery of it by hand, or by sending it by prepaid registered post to or by leaving it at his last known place of abode or business.

(6) ( a ) An owner, importer, exporter or person in control for the time being of rabbit meat or farmed game may appeal within 7 days of the seizure of the meat or service of the notice under paragraph (1) to the Judge of the District Court having jurisdiction in the District Court District where such meat is situated or to the Judge of the District Court having jurisdiction in the District Court District where the person bringing the appeal ordinarily resides or carries on business on the grounds that the seizure or the notice or any of the terms thereof are not justified having regard to the provisions of these Regulations.

( b ) An appeal made pursuant to subparagraph (a) may be heard at any sitting of the District Court within the appropriate District Court District.

( c ) (i) Notice of an appeal made pursuant to subparagraph (a) shall be served on the Minister and the said notice shall be served at least 48 hours prior to the hearing of the appeal by serving it on the Minister or by leaving it at the place and in the manner specified in the notice issued under this Regulation; (ii) the notice of appeal shall contain a statement on the grounds upon which it is alleged that the seizure or the notice or any of the terms thereof are not justified.

( d ) A copy of the notice of appeal shall be lodged with the District Court Clerk in the manner specified in the notice issued pursuant to paragraph (1), at least 48 hours prior to the hearing of the appeal.

( e ) The Minister shall, as well as the appellant, be entitled to be heard and to adduce evidence at the hearing of an appeal brought under paragraph (6) of this Regulation in opposition to an appeal made pursuant to this Regulation.

(7) On the hearing of an appeal under this Regulation a Judge of the District Court may, at his discretion, confirm, modify or annul the action taken under paragraph (1).

(8) ( a ) No person, including a person upon whom a notice has been served under paragraph (1), shall deal with the rabbit meat or farmed game meat concerned other than in accordance with the terms of the notice.

( b ) In the event of an appeal against the terms of a notice referred to in subparagraph (a), pursuant to paragraph (6), no person, including the person appealing, shall deal with the rabbit meat or farmed game meat concerned pending the determination of the appeal other than in accordance with such directions as shall be given in writing to the appellant by an authorised officer.

( c ) Where the terms of a notice referred to in subparagraph (a) are confirmed with or without modification by the Judge of the District Court hearing the appeal made under the said paragraph (6) no person, including the person who made the appeal, shall deal with the rabbit meat or farmed game meat concerned other than in accordance with such notice as confirmed.

(9) ( a ) where—

(i) an owner, importer, exporter or a person for the time being in control of the rabbit meat or farmed game meat fails to comply with the terms of a notice served upon him under paragraph (1) within the time specified therein, or

(ii) an authorised officer has reasonable grounds for believing that the terms of a notice served under paragraph (1) will not be complied with, or

(iii) a notice served under paragraph (1) has been confirmed with or without modification under paragraph (7) and the notice has not been complied with, or

(iv) an authorised officer has reasonable grounds for believing that the terms of a notice served under paragraph (1) which has been confirmed with or without modification under paragraph (7) will not be complied with, or

(v) pending the determination of an appeal made pursuant to subparagraph (a) of paragraph (6), an authorised officer has

reasonable grounds for believing that directions given pursuant to paragraph (8) have not been or shall not be complied with, an authorised officer may at any time seize the rabbit meat or farmed game meat at such premises or place as he thinks fit in the circumstances of the case.

( b ) In relation to any seized rabbit meat or farmed game meat, an authorised officer may destroy it, or cause it to be destroyed in such manner and at such place as the authorised officer shall direct, or such meat may be used or disposed of in such manner as the authorised officer shall direct.

( c ) Any profits arising out of the disposal of the meat referred to in subparagraph (b) shall be paid to the owner of such meat less any expenses incurred in connection with the said disposal.

(10) The costs of disposal or destruction of the rabbit meat or farmed game meat under this Regulation shall, subject to the provisions of subparagraph (9) (c), be recoverable by the Minister as a simple contract debt in any court of competent jurisdiction from the person who was the owner of such meat at the time the disposal or destruction was carried out.

(11) In this Regulation—

"importer" and "exporter" include any person who, whether as owner, consignor, consignee, agent or broker is in possession of or in any way entitled to the custody or control of the rabbit meat or farmed game meat which is being or has been imported into or exported from the State.

## REG 15

### Powers of Inspection.

15. (1) The Minister may appoint such and so many persons as he thinks fit to be authorised officers for the purposes of these Regulations.

(2) An authorised officer shall be furnished with a warrant of his appointment by the Minister as an authorised officer and when exercising any power conferred on him by these Regulations such officer shall, if requested by any person affected, produce the warrant to that person.

(3) An authorised officer or a veterinary expert from the Commission, within the meaning of Article 15 of the Council Directive, may at all reasonable times enter an establishment approved under these Regulations or for which an application for approval has been received for the purposes of carrying out inspections and supervision as required by these Regulations and the Council Directive.

(4) An authorised officer may at all reasonable times enter an approved establishment or any other premises or place in which he has reasonable grounds for believing that rabbit meat or farmed game meat is being produced for placement on the market in contravention of these Regulations and the Council Directive.

(5) An authorised officer shall have at all times free access to all parts of an establishment or premises and to accounting or other documents which enable the premises or holding of origin of the raw materials to be traced and for any other purpose of these Regulations.

(6) An authorised officer may:

( a ) make such examinations, tests and inspections at all stages of production and on any meat or products, and

( b ) inspect, take or take copies of or extracts from any books, documents, or other records as he finds in the course of his inspection, and

( c ) take such reasonable samples of any meat or product, which he finds in the course of his inspection, as he may consider appropriate for the purposes of these Regulations and the Council Directive.

## **PART VIII CERTIFICATION**

### **REG 16**

Improper use of Health Marks or Certificates.

16. (1) A person shall not print or cause to be printed, order, import, purchase, sell, offer or expose for sale a certificate or any document purporting to be or in any way resembling a certificate save with the consent in writing of the Minister.

(2) A person shall not have in his possession or under his control a certificate or any document purporting to be or in any way resembling a certificate unless he is—

(i) an official veterinarian, an authorised officer or an officer of the Minister, or

(ii) a person who is in possession or control of the certificate or document with the consent in writing of the Minister, or

(iii) a person who is in possession or control of the certificate or document, in accordance with the provisions of these Regulations.

(3) A person shall not make or cause to be made, order, import, purchase, sell, offer or expose for sale any instrument for affixing a health mark on rabbit meat or farmed game meat in accordance with Regulation 6, or any instrument for affixing a health mark in accordance with Regulation 6 on any certificate, document, wrapping, label, carton or other thing, save in accordance with these Regulations.

(4) A person shall not apply a health mark or anything purporting to be a health mark to a certificate except in accordance with these Regulations.

(5) A person shall not procure by fraud or by misrepresentation, forge, alter or tamper with, any document purporting to be a certificate or any other document purporting to be issued under these Regulations or for the purposes of the Council Directive nor utter any such certificate or document knowing it to be procured by fraud or by misrepresentation, forged, altered or tampered with.

(6) Nothing in paragraph (1) shall be construed as prohibiting the importation of a certificate where such importation is for the purpose only of complying with these Regulations.

**PART IX  
MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

REG 17

Offences.

17. (1) An offence under these Regulations may be prosecuted by the Minister.

(2) Any person who contravenes a provision of these Regulations shall be guilty of an offence.

(3) If any person fraudulently—

( a ) tampers or otherwise interferes with any rabbit meat or farmed game meat as to procure that any sample of it taken under these Regulations does not correctly represent the meat,

( b ) tampers or otherwise interferes with any sample taken under these Regulations,

that person shall be guilty of an offence.

(4) Any person who obstructs or otherwise interferes with an official veterinarian or an authorised officer in the exercise of a power conferred on him by these Regulations shall be guilty of an offence.

(5) Where an offence under these Regulations is committed by a body corporate or by a person acting on behalf of a body corporate and is proved to have been so committed with the consent, connivance or approval of, or to have been facilitated by any neglect on the part of, any director, manager, secretary or other official of such body, each such person shall also be guilty of an offence.

REG 18

Penalties.

18. A person guilty of an offence under these Regulations shall be liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding £1,500 or, at the discretion of the court, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve months or to both such fine and such imprisonment.

**SCHEDULE**

CHAPTER I

Ante-Mortem Health Inspection of Rabbits

1. Animals shall undergo ante-mortem inspection before they are slaughtered. As a general rule, such ante-mortem inspection shall be carried out at the holding before loading.

( a ) If the ante-mortem inspection has been carried out at the holding of origin, ante-mortem inspection at the slaughterhouse may

be restricted to detecting injuries received in transport if rabbits have been inspected at the holding of origin within the previous 24 hours and found to be healthy. In addition, the identity of the rabbits shall be proved to the official veterinarian by the owner or person in charge of such rabbits on arrival at the slaughterhouse.

If the ante-mortem inspection at the holding of origin and at the slaughterhouse is not carried out by the same veterinarian, a health certificate stating the particulars required under Annex III of the Council Directive shall accompany the animals.

( b ) If the ante-mortem inspection is not carried out at the holding of origin, rabbits for slaughter shall undergo ante-mortem inspection within 24 hours of arrival at the slaughterhouse. The inspection shall be repeated immediately before slaughter if more than 24 hours have elapsed since ante-mortem inspection. The owner or person in charge of the slaughterhouse shall facilitate operations for performing ante-mortem health inspections and in particular any handling which is considered necessary. Each animal or batch of animals sent for slaughter shall be identified in order to allow the official veterinarian to determine its origin.

2. The ante-mortem inspection shall be carried out by the official veterinarian in accordance with professional rules under suitable lighting.

3. The inspection shall determine:

( a ) whether the animals are suffering from a disease which can be transmitted to humans or animals, whether they show symptoms or whether their general conditions is such as to indicate that the disease may occur;

( b ) whether they show symptoms of a disease or of a disorder affecting their general condition which may make the meat unfit for human consumption.

4. Animals may not be slaughtered for human consumption where it is established that they suffer from the conditions referred to in paragraph 3.

5. The animals referred to in paragraph 4 shall be killed separately or after slaughter of all other rabbits and their meat hygienically disposed of to the satisfaction of the official veterinarian.

## CHAPTER II

### Post-Mortem Health Inspection of Rabbits

6. Slaughtered rabbits shall be inspected immediately after slaughter.

7. The post-mortem shall be carried out under suitable lighting.

8. The post-mortem inspection may include:

( a ) visual inspection of the slaughtered animal;

( b ) palpation and, where necessary, incision of the lungs, liver, spleen, kidneys and parts of the carcass which, in the opinion of the official veterinarian, have undergone any change;

( c ) investigations of anomalies of consistency, colour, smell and, where appropriate, taste;

( d ) where necessary, laboratory tests.

9. ( a ) Rabbits shall be declared totally unfit for human consumption where the post-mortem inspection reveals the following:

(i) diseases transmissible to man or animals;

(ii) malignant or multiple tumours; multiple abscesses;

- (iii) extensive parasitic infestation in the subcutaneous or muscle tissues;
- (iv) presence of residues of forbidden substances or residues in excess of permitted Community levels, including substances with a pharmacological effect;
- (v) poisoning;
- (vi) extensive injuries or extensive blood or serum imbibition;
- (vii) anomalies as regards colour, smell or taste;
- (viii) anomalies as regards consistency, particularly oedema or severe emaciation.

( b ) Parts of slaughtered animals which show localised lesions or contaminations not affecting the health of the rest of the meat shall be declared unfit for human consumption by the official veterinarian.

### CHAPTER III

#### Public Health Marking

10. The public health marking shall be made under the responsibility of the official veterinarian.

11. (1) The health mark shall give the following particulars:

( a ) it shall consist of an oval mark containing in legible form and in printed capital letters the following information — in the upper part, the letter "IRL", in the centre, the approval number of the slaughterhouse or, where appropriate the cutting premises, preceded by the letter "G" and in the lower part the letters "EEC";

( b ) the oval shall contain the information listed at (a); the letters shall be 0.8 cm high and the figures 1.1 cm high.

(2) The material used for marking shall meet all hygiene requirements and the information referred to in subparagraph (1) shall appear in perfectly legible form.

(3) ( a ) The public health marking referred to in subparagraph (1) shall be made:

(i) on unwrapped carcasses by means of a seal containing the information listed in subparagraph (1),

(ii) on or visibly beneath wrappers or other packaging of packed carcasses,

(iii) on or visibly beneath wrappers or other packaging of parts of carcasses or offal packed in small quantities.

( b ) The public health marking referred to in subparagraph (1) shall be made on large packaging.

(4) Where a public health marking appears on a wrapper or packaging in accordance with subparagraph (3):

( a ) it shall be applied in such a way that it is destroyed when the wrapper or packaging is opened, or

( b ) the wrapper or packaging shall be sealed in such a way that it cannot be re-used after opening.

### CHAPTER IV

#### Storage

12. After post-mortem inspection, rabbit meat shall be chilled or frozen and kept at a temperature which shall not at any time exceed +4°C if chilled or 12°C if frozen.

### CHAPTER V

#### Transport

13. The rabbit meat shall be dispatched in such a way that during transport it is protected from anything liable to contaminate it or

affect it unfavourably, having regard to the duration and conditions of transport and to the means of transport employed. In particular, vehicles used in this transport shall be equipped in such a way as to ensure that the temperatures laid down in paragraph 12 are not exceeded.

GIVEN under my Official Seal, this 26th day of October, 1995.  
IVAN YATES,  
Minister for Agriculture, Food and Forestry.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTE.

The purpose of these Regulations is to implement Council Directive No. 91/495/EEC on the production and marketing of rabbit meat and farmed game meat. The Regulations cover the standards to be met in the hygienic production and marketing of farmed game meat and rabbit meat so as to safeguard public and animal health.