

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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**Report Name:** South Africa Updates Guidelines for the Sampling Handling and Transportation of Meat

**Country:** South Africa - Republic of

**Post:** Pretoria

**Report Category:** Livestock and Products, Poultry and Products

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**Report Highlights:**

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) has published guidelines regarding procedures for sampling, transportation and handling of meat samples that are meant for microbiological monitoring. The standard procedures apply to abattoirs, importers, and export cold stores, cutting, deboning, and processing plants linked to an export abattoir, and food safety laboratories. Post reviewed the Guidelines for Microbiological Monitoring of Imported Meat SOP that was signed in 2011 and the recent guidelines published on September 29, 2021, and found no indications of substantial changes to existing processes. Post consulted with DALRRD and received confirmation that the new Guidelines will not supersede the 2016 bilateral agreement on sampling and testing, as outlined in “Agreement on Poultry Importation from the USA to South Africa.”

## Background

On September 29, 2021, DALRRD published a document titled “Guidelines for the Sampling, Transportation, and Handling of Samples for the Microbiological Monitoring of Meat.” These guidelines fall under the legislative mandate of the Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act No 40 of 2000), which provides the measures to promote meat safety and safety of animal products. Under the Act, the National Executive Officer designated under the Meat Safety Act of 2000 may examine, sample, and test any meat or animal product.

The purpose of the guidelines is to provide guidance on good practices on sample collection, transportation, and handling at the cold stores and upon arrival at laboratories. Establishments must have procedures and sampling plans that define sampling plans. The standard procedures apply to abattoirs, importers, and export cold stores, cutting, deboning and processing plants linked to an export abattoir. They also apply to food safety laboratories including government, on-plant and independent laboratories.

The new guidelines are an extension of the Standards Operation Procedure for Microbiological Monitoring of imported meat that was published on November 25, 2011. While the 2011 Guidelines applied only to imported meats, the newly published guidelines attempt to standardize sampling practices across all meat and poultry in South Africa.

Post reviewed the two sets of guidelines and found differences in the locations on the product from which samples should be taken and a relaxing of the temperature requirements. A summary of changes can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1: Summary of Difference between 2011 and 2021 Guidelines**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>GUIDELINES FOR THE SAMPLING, TRANSPORTATION AND HANDLING OF SAMPLES FOR MICROBIOLOGICAL MONITORING OF MEAT-2021-09-29</b>	<b>GUIDELINES FOR MICROBIOLOGICAL MONITORING OF IMPORTED MEAT-2011-10-25</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	The purpose is to provide guidance on good practices on sample collection, transportation, and handling at the cold store and upon arrival at laboratories. Establishments must have procedures and sampling plans that define sampling sites	To lay down the necessary actions to be taken by officials during sampling and microbiological testing of imported unprocessed/raw meat* to ensure compliance with import requirements as stipulated in the relevant import permits and in legislation (*As defined in the Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act No. 40 of 2000)
<b>Scope</b>	These guidelines apply to abattoirs, import and export cold stores, cutting, deboning, and processing plants linked to an export abattoir and food safety laboratories	This procedural manual must be implemented at all inspection sites, i.e. City Deep, OR Tambo International Airport, Durban, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and at any other

	(government, on-plant and independent laboratories).	site approved by the Director Veterinary Public Health
<b>Sampling of frozen poultry carcasses</b>	At the laboratory, sample preparation of poultry carcasses must ensure that the neck skin, wings, back, thighs, drumstick and breast are included in the sample to be tested.	Sampling of poultry carcasses-the laboratory will sample the neck skin.
<b>Temperature</b>	Where samples arrive at the laboratory at a temperature $>7^{\circ}\text{C}$ but $<10^{\circ}\text{C}$ in the case of red meat and $>4^{\circ}\text{C}$ but $<8^{\circ}\text{C}$ in the case of poultry and offal, analysis can proceed if the requested test is for detection and or serotyping of the organism(s).	Samples must reach the laboratory before the temperature rises above 4 Degrees Celsius. For chilled products, temperature must not rise above 7 Degrees Celsius.

### **Impact of New Guidelines**

Post received confirmation from DALRRD that the new guidelines would not supersede the 2016 bilateral agreement on sampling and testing, “Agreement on Poultry Importation from the USA to South Africa.” Specific guidelines in this agreement include that samples for U.S. poultry shipments will include muscle cuts (not just skin), and that samples taken from U.S. poultry shipments will be taken at 0 degrees Celsius or lower and maintained at 4 degrees Celsius or lower until the sample is analyzed.

### **Attachments:**

[SOP for microbiological testing of imported meat.pdf](#)

[Guidelines for sampling, handling and transportation of samples for microbiological monitoring of meat - 30 September 2021.pdf](#)