

Slaughter of animals sold for human consumption

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Biosecurity & Food Safety, Compliance & Integrity Systems

This Primefact will provide you with information relating to the slaughter of animals where the meat is sold for human consumption in NSW and other related biosecurity issues.

The term '**Animals**' refers to any of the following:

- Bovine (cattle, oxen, buffalo)
- Bubaline (antelope)
- Camel
- Caprine (goat)
- Cervidae (deer)
- Ovine (sheep)
- Porcine (pig)
- Soliped (horse) species
- Leporidae (rabbit)
- Crocodile, and
- any bird.

NB: it does not include game meat animals.

The '**legal slaughter**' of animals, and the sale of their meat for human consumption in NSW is strictly controlled and legislated by law for food safety, biosecurity and animal welfare. Laws exist to safeguard public health, provide for food safety, and prevent animal cruelty.

The '**illegal slaughter**' of animals in an unlicensed abattoir, and the sale or intended sale of the meat as food for human consumption **is a criminal offence** and carries significant penalties.

Food Safety

Slaughtered animals sold as food for human consumption

In NSW, the *Food Act 2003*, the Food Regulation 2015, and the applicable Australian Standards (AS:4696) are required to be met for food intended to be used for human consumption.

Every animal slaughtered at a licensed abattoir is subject to inspection by a certified meat inspector and stamped as being fit for human consumption. These inspections are conducted to make sure the animals are free from diseases, parasites, chemical residues, and contamination, to ensure the meat and any meat products are wholesome and safe to consume.

Relevant legislation:

- [Food Act 2003 \(NSW\)](#)
- [Food Regulation 2015](#)
- [Australian Standard AS 4696:2007](#)

Biosecurity

Biosecurity legislation

In NSW, the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, and Biosecurity (National Livestock Identification System) Regulation 2017 are required to be met to prevent, eliminate or minimise biosecurity impacts and biosecurity risk with impacts having an adverse effect on the economy, environment, or community. The Biosecurity (National Livestock Identification System) Regulation 2017 controls the movement of some animals on the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) database.

These requirements are **mandatory measures**.

Animal Traceability

National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) is Australia's system for the identification and traceability of cattle, sheep and goats, while PigPass is a national tracking system which provides real-time information on the movements of farmed pigs in Australia.

For additional NLIS information, please visit www.nlis.com.au.

In NSW, you must have a Property Identification Code (PIC) if you own or keep cattle, sheep, goats*, pigs, deer, bison, buffalo, alpacas, llama, horses, 100 or more poultry, 10 or more emus, and/or ostriches. For additional PIC information, please contact your Local Land Services office (www.lls.nsw.gov.au).

Under Biosecurity legislation, **'identifiable stock'** means cattle, pigs, goats* and sheep, and includes a carcass of any such animal. Records under the NLIS must be generated and kept when trading or moving identifiable stock.

All livestock movements from one property to another must be accompanied by the appropriate movement documentation and meet the necessary NLIS requirements for monitoring and traceability.

To correctly move livestock on or off a property, you must:

- Have a PIC
- Have an electronic National Vendor Declaration (eNVD) and/or Transported Stock Statement (TSS) form
- Ensure all livestock have appropriate and functional NLIS devices/tags in place
- Ensure the NLIS register is updated when you purchase livestock, and
- Keep all records for the movement of livestock for 7 years, or 3 years in the case of pigs.

**A goat depot that aggregates goats before the sale or slaughter of those goats, must open and use a goat depot NLIS database account to record goat movements to and from the depot.*

Restricted Animal Material (RAM)

When feeding animals, or allowing them access to food (feed, fodder, pellets, scraps, hay etc.), it is important to know what is, and isn't allowed to be consumed by that animal.

Not all animals can consume the same materials and the feeding of particular products to one animal may also be restricted in another.

Restricted animal material (RAM) is any part of a vertebrate, or anything produced by a vertebrate.

Ruminant animal means an animal that has a rumen including, but not limited to, alpacas, camels, cattle, deer, goats and sheep.

Ruminants are not to consume or have access to RAM or areas RAM has been in contact with. Consumption of this material by ruminants has potential to cause introduction and spread of diseases such as Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs), Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle and scrapie in sheep or goats throughout NSW, which is a biosecurity risk.

Feeding RAM is illegal in all states and territories of Australia and a breach of a **mandatory measure** under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*

Relevant legislation:

- [Biosecurity Act 2015](#)
- [Biosecurity Regulation 2017](#)
- [Biosecurity \(National Livestock Identification System\) Regulation 2017](#)

Animal Welfare

There is an obligation on every individual to take all necessary steps to ensure the welfare of an animal in their possession, or under their care.

Slaughter of animals sold for human consumption

When animals are intended to be slaughtered, the individuals must ensure that the animal is not caused unnecessary pain, suffering or injury through use of properly approved stunning and slaughtering methods.

The person slaughtering the animal must have 'the appropriate level of competence to do so without causing any avoidable pain, distress or suffering'.

If an animal is not humanely slaughtered, you may also be prosecuted under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* (POCTA).

Relevant legislation:

[Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979](#)

Zoning & Waste Disposal

During a slaughter and the subsequent dressing process conducted at a farm, there are also Local Control Authority (local council) requirements related to zoning of land and waste disposal.

The disposal of waste and its contamination of the environment are regulated under the various local government and state environmental planning and assessment legislation.

For additional zoning and waste disposal information, please contact your local council to assist you to determine those requirements. For example, the zoning of your area may carry certain restrictions, including the way offal, blood, skins, and waste are to be disposed of.

Multiple agencies are responsible for enforcing legislation related to animal slaughter

**NSW Department of
Primary Industries**

NSW Food Authority

RSPCA

Local Land Services

NSW Police

Animal Welfare League NSW

Terminology

Abattoir means premises used for or in connection with the slaughtering of abattoir animals for human consumption, and includes:

- (a) buildings used in connection with the slaughtering, handling, drafting or keeping of abattoir animals for human consumption at any premises so used, and
- (b) holding yards and the like.

Contaminated meat means the presence of objectionable matter (including, dust, dirt, residues, flies and other insects, microorganisms (including faecal matter), that may compromise food safety or wholesomeness, transmitted directly or indirectly onto the meat and includes to transmit that objectionable matter to any animal from which the meat is derived or to any surface that may directly or indirectly come into contact with the meat.

Food

(1) As defined under the [Food Act 2003 \(NSW\)](#) includes:

- (a) any substance or thing of a kind used, or represented as being for use, for human consumption (whether it is live, raw, prepared or partly prepared), or
- (b) any substance or thing of a kind used, or represented as being for use, as an ingredient or additive in a substance or thing referred to in paragraph (a), or
- (c) any substance used in preparing a substance or thing referred to in paragraph (a) (other than a substance used in preparing a living thing) if it comes into direct contact with the substance or thing referred to in that paragraph, such as a processing aid, or
- (d) chewing gum or an ingredient or additive in chewing gum, or any substance used in preparing chewing gum, or
- (e) any substance or thing declared to be a food under a declaration in force under section 6 of the [Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991](#) of the Commonwealth, whether or not the substance, thing or chewing gum is in a condition fit for human consumption.

(2) However, **food** does not include a therapeutic good within the meaning of the [Therapeutic Goods Act 1989](#) of the Commonwealth.

(3) To avoid doubt, **food** may include live animals and plants.

Game animal means any vertebrate animal, including a mammal, bird or reptile (but not including a fish) that:

- (a) is not husbanded in the manner of a farmed animal, and
- (b) is of a species that may be legally harvested, and
- (c) is slaughtered in a wild state.

(See also similar meaning used for Wild Game Meat in the [Australian Standard or the Hygienic Production of Wild Game Meat for Human Consumption](#) - AS 4464: 2007).

Illegal slaughter is the slaughter of animals outside the strict NSW legislated controls, in an unlicensed abattoir or premises and the sale or intended sale of the meat, as food

for human consumption. This activity is deemed a **criminal offence** and carries **significant penalties**.

Legal slaughter is the slaughter of animals in a licensed abattoir or premises and the sale or intended sale of the meat, as food for human consumption.

Meat business means a business involving the operation of any of the following activities which may also require a licence:

- (a) an abattoir
- (b) a meat processing plant
- (c) a game meat field depot
- (d) a game meat primary processing plant
- (e) a meat van
- (f) a game meat field harvesting van
- (g) a knackery
- (h) a rendering plant
- (i) an animal food processing plant
- (j) an animal food field depot
- (k) an animal food van
- (l) an animal food field harvesting van
- (m) meat retail premises
- (n) a poultry farm

Property Identification Code (PIC) - anyone who keeps livestock in NSW is required to obtain a PIC for the land on which the livestock are kept. Even if you keep livestock as pets, you must have a PIC. PICs are assigned to individual properties and allocated by [Local Land Services](#) (LLS).

Retail sale - is the sale of meat directly from the farm of legally slaughtered abattoir meat, to the person who will consume it. This may not require a licence depending on how the meat is sold and what further processing is conducted on the carcase of meat, prior to sale.

Sale (as defined under the [Food Act 2003 \(NSW\)](#)) includes:

- (a) barter, offer or attempt to sell, or
- (b) receive for sale, or
- (c) have in possession for sale, or
- (d) display for sale, or
- (e) cause or permit to be sold or offered for sale, or
- (f) send, forward or deliver for sale, or
- (g) dispose of by any method for valuable consideration, or
- (h) dispose of to an agent for sale on consignment, or
- (i) provide under a contract of service, or
- (j) supply food as a meal or part of a meal to an employee, in accordance with a term of an award governing the employment of the employee or a term of the employee's contract of service, for consumption by the employee at the employee's place of work, or
- (k) dispose of by way of raffle, lottery or other game of chance, or

- (l) offer as a prize or reward, or
- (m) give away for the purpose of advertisement or in furtherance of trade or business, or
- (n) supply food under a contract (whether or not the contract is made with the consumer of the food), together with accommodation, service or entertainment, in consideration of an inclusive charge for the food supplied and the accommodation, service or entertainment, or
- (o) supply food (whether or not for consideration) in the course of providing services to patients in public hospitals (within the meaning of the *Health Services Act 1997*) or inmates in correctional centres (within the meaning of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999*), or
- (p) sell for the purpose of resale.

Vertebrates are animals that have a backbone inside their body. The major groups include fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.

Contacts

NSW DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety (NSW Food Authority)

Ph: 1300 552 406

Email: food.contact@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/

RSPCA

Ph: 02 6282 8300

Email: rspca@rspca.org.au

Website: www.rspca.org.au

Local Land Services

Ph: 1300 795 299

Website: www.lls.nsw.gov.au/livestock

National Livestock Identification System

Helpdesk: 1800 654 743

Email: nlis.support@mra.com.au

Website: www.nlis.com.au

Integrity Systems

ISC Helpdesk: 1800 683 111

Email: info@integritysystems.com.au

Website: www.integritysystems.com.au

Animal Welfare League NSW

General Enquiries: 02 8899 3333

Email: helpingpets@awlsw.com.au

Website: www.awlsw.com.au/

Appendix 1: FAQ

FAQs

Am I allowed to slaughter animals for my own consumption?

Yes. Normally slaughter for 'Personal' consumption occurs on farms or larger rural allotments and is not captured under NSW Food Legislation, however when this does occur, there are parameters around how this can occur.

For example:

- 1) The slaughter of an animal is undertaken by its owner, AND
- 2) This occurs at the owner's residence (farm/rural allotment), AND
- 3) The meat is for the personal consumption, AND
- 4) There is **no sale or intended sale** of the meat.

While this activity does not require a licence, you do need to ensure that you comply with biosecurity laws. The [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979](#) (POCTA) also applies and you should only slaughter animals if you have the necessary skills and training to ensure that you slaughter the animal(s) humanely.

What do you mean when you say 'Sale'?

The [Food Act 2003 \(NSW\)](#) defines sale, and this definition is listed in Terminology on page 6 of this Primefact

Am I allowed to slaughter animals on my property and then sell or give away the meat?

No. The slaughter of animals outside the strict NSW legislated controls and/or in an unlicensed abattoir, with the sale or intended sale of the meat as food for human consumption is illegal and is a **criminal offence** carrying significant penalties.

What about businesses that provide home slaughter and butchering services?

There are a number of businesses offering a mobile service to attend your property to slaughter your livestock and cut and package the meat for your personal consumption.

This activity is not licensed by the Food Authority, so any meat you receive from these businesses has not been subject to inspection by a certified meat inspector or stamped as being fit for human consumption.

If you engage in the services of a home slaughter and butcher service at your property, you have a duty to prevent, eliminate or minimise the biosecurity risks posed by the activities conducted on your land. This includes but is not limited to:

- Notifying the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) administrator of the movement of identifiable stock (cattle, pigs, goats and sheep and includes the carcase of any such animal) onto the farm property.

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- Prohibiting ruminant access to restricted animal material (any material that consists of, or contains, matter from an animal, including fish and birds).
- Effectively managing waste material by containing it within the property boundaries away from water courses and disposing of it in an approved manner. Advice should be sought from local Council, the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) or Local Land Services if on or off farm disposal is being considered.

Any meat products produced as a result of a home slaughter and butcher service cannot be sold or supplied for human or animal consumption.

What about meat for ethnic and religious groups, festivals, or events?

Only meat that is from licensed meat businesses (e.g. from an abattoir or butcher's shop that is the subject of inspection and licensing) can be sold in NSW. No place, including those used for worship (e.g. churches, mosques, synagogues) and other meeting points, gathering, event, or festival can be used as a sale/distribution point for meat that has come from an 'illegal' slaughter.












Can you sell an animal on the understanding that the purchaser will slaughter it on your premises and take the carcass away for meat?

No; the slaughtering of the animal and taking the carcass away is an offence as the meat has come from an 'illegal' slaughter. The **intention** was always to sell the animal so it could be slaughtered as **food for human consumption** and not as a live animal.

To avoid any doubt, the [Food Act 2003 \(NSW\)](#) also defines what food means, and this definition is listed in Terminology on page 5 of this Primefact.

Appendix 2: Scenarios

Animal lives on a Private Property or Farm

SCENARIO	ACTION		INTENTION	RESULT
1 →	An animal is slaughtered at a licensed abattoir 		Meat is sold from the abattoir directly or as arranged by owner of the animal 	Meat can be sold and consumed as food for human consumption 
2 →	An animal is slaughtered and/or processed on the private property or farm 	Owner further processes the carcase/meat 	Consumption of meat (food) by owner at the property or farm 	Meat cannot be sold as food for human consumption 
3 →	The live animal is sold to a new owner and the animal is slaughtered on the private property or farm by the property owner, or new owner of the animal 	The new owner further processes the carcase/meat 	Consumption of meat (food) by new owner 	Meat cannot be sold as food for human consumption 

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