

# NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE STATE MEAT AND POULTRY INSPECTION PROGRAM Guidelines for Mobile Slaughter and Field Slaughter Operations

## Purpose for Guidelines

The intent of these guidelines is to convey the regulatory requirements set by the North Dakota Meat and Poultry Inspection Program (NDMPIP) for mobile slaughter and field slaughter operations. Mobile or Field slaughter operators, if qualified, will operate under the title and restrictions of a “Grant of Exemption”, which allows for an individual to conduct custom processing activities, provided that, all regulatory requirements have initially been met and the operator continues to abide by all state rules and regulations pertaining to meat inspection.

## Definitions

“Field slaughterer” means a Custom processor who provides slaughtering service at the premises of the owners of the animals being slaughtered. The carcass will then be processed at a custom processors registered processing facility.

“Mobile slaughterer” means a person who provides a slaughtering service to the general public for compensation and conducts such slaughtering at the premises where the animals were raised. Mobile slaughter units are fully enclosed trailers, so the skinning and evisceration processes are completely protected from the environment.

"Custom processing" means slaughtering, eviscerating, dressing, or processing an animal or processing meat products for the owner of the animal or of the meat products, if all meat products derived from the custom operation are returned to the owner of the animal or of the meat products.

## Regulatory Requirements

The NDMPIP operates under the authority and regulatory requirements contained within North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) §4.1-31 and North Dakota Administrative Code (NDAC) §7-13. These regulations incorporate the adoption of the federal regulations pertaining to meat inspection; Title 9, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Parts 300 to end.

Under these regulations, and USDA’s *FSIS Guideline for Determining Whether a Livestock Slaughter or Processing Firm is Exempt from the Inspection Requirements of the Federal Meat Inspection Act* the following allowances and restrictions are in place:

### **Livestock slaughtered under personal exemption**

Full slaughtering services including harvesting (killing), bleeding, skinning and eviscerating may be provided for a producer on their premises for livestock raised and still owned **by them**.

### **Livestock custom slaughtered or prepared**

If another individual purchases livestock from a producer, or you purchase livestock acting as an agent for another individual, full slaughtering services may only be provided if you have a fully equipped mobile unit. If you are operating with minimal equipment for field slaughter, the only activities that may be performed on a producer’s premise is to kill and bleed. All other activities must occur at your approved and registered establishment.

Provisions allow a custom exempt operator (CEO) to act as an agent. As an agent, there are two primary ways that slaughter can take place:

1) A CEO can purchase an animal and then sell the animal to one person, or to a maximum of eight persons. Once sold to that person(s), she/he/they are the new owner and they can appoint the CEO as an agent to kill and bleed the animal on the producer's premise. Further processing of the animal (such as opening or evisceration) must be performed in a CEO mobile unit or at the CEO's establishment because the CEO must meet the requirements of 9 CFR 303.1 (a) (2) (i) for custom operations. CEO's are required to keep documentation of these sales transactions.

2) A person or group of persons can appoint a CEO to be an agent and authorize the CEO to purchase, slaughter, and then process an animal from a producer. That CEO/agent can then, on the person/principal's behalf, go to a farm/ranch, select an animal, pay the producer and buy the animal using the person/principal's funds. At this point the person(s) is/are the new owner(s) and the CEO, on behalf of the new owner(s), may slaughter and bleed the animal on the ranch premises. Further processing of the animal (such as opening or evisceration) must be performed in a CEO mobile unit or at the CEO's establishment as the CEO must meet the requirements of 9 CFR 303.1 (a) (2) (i) for custom operations. CEO's are required to keep documentation of these sales transactions.

With either of these scenarios a CEO may slaughter an unlimited number of animals on a producer's premises for one new owner or multiple new owners. A new owner may purchase either an entire animal or a share of an individual animal.

### **Annual Registration**

Any slaughtering establishment, meat processing establishment, or custom-exempt plant that is required to be inspected pursuant to North Dakota Century Code chapter 4.1-31 to operate under this chapter must register annually with the department of agriculture on forms approved by the commissioner. Registration is valid for one year. All registrations will expire annually on June thirtieth. Each registered establishment will be assigned a number that may not be transferred from one person or establishment to another.

### **Facilities and Sanitation**

- All mobile custom slaughter and processing operations must be conducted under clean and sanitary conditions.
- Vehicles and facilities must be designed and constructed so they can be kept clean and sanitary and are of large enough size to handle the preparation and storage of carcasses without danger of contamination. All mobile slaughter unit walls, ceilings and floors must be made of durable materials, impervious to moisture and have easy to clean surfaces.
- Facilities must be available, at every slaughter site to clean and sanitize equipment and utensils.

### **Equipment and Utensils**

- Equipment and utensils used in mobile custom slaughter operations must be of sanitary design and construction and must be kept clean and sanitary. Meat contact surfaces of equipment and

utensils must be cleaned and sanitized after each use, and more frequently as necessary, to keep them clean and sanitary.

### **Employee Hygiene**

- All persons working in contact with carcasses or product must adhere to hygienic practices while on duty to prevent adulteration of product and the creation of insanitary conditions.
- Aprons, frocks, and other outer clothing worn by persons who handle product must be of material that is disposable or readily cleaned. Clean garments must be worn at the start of each working day and garments must be changed during the day as often as necessary to prevent adulteration of product and the creation of insanitary conditions.

### **Water Supply**

- A supply of potable running water at a suitable temperature and pressure as needed must be available at every mobile custom slaughter site. Proof of potability of the water must be maintained at all times through either a water testing certificate or a letter documenting the potability of your water supply. If you use water from a municipal supply, obtain a letter from the city attesting to its potability. If you use water from a private well, you will need to test the water for potability at least every six months.
- There must be enough water for thorough cleaning of all equipment and utensils as needed to prevent contamination of the carcass. Water must be available during all slaughtering and cleanup operations.

### **Separation and Transportation**

- All viscera and other inedible created from slaughter must be kept separate from edible product. Inedible product must be handled according to ND Dept. of Health- Division of Environmental Quality regulations (NDAC §33.1-20).
- If inedible product is transported on the same vehicle as carcasses or other edible product, the inedible product must be transported in tightly covered waterproof containers or in separate waterproof compartments to prevent spillage of inedible products and contamination of meat.
- When loading, transporting and unloading carcasses from the field to an approved establishment, it must be done so in a manner that keeps the carcass and meat wholesome and unadulterated.

### **Recordkeeping and Labeling 9 CFR 303, 316.16**

- As a Custom Exempt operator you must keep the following records; the numbers and kinds of livestock slaughtered, the date the livestock is slaughtered, the names and addresses of the owners of the livestock and products and, if carcasses are delivered to an approved establishment for further processing, the name of the establishment and the date of delivery. If slaughtering cattle you must also keep the records listed under “Other Requirements”.

- All carcasses must be marked, immediately after slaughter, with the term “Not for Sale” in letters at least 3/8<sup>th</sup>s of an inch in height. All carcasses must be accompanied by the name and address of the owner.
- Ink used to mark carcasses must be approved for the purpose and marks must be legible.

### **Other Requirements**

Because of concerns for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), also known as Mad Cow Disease, USDA has additional regulations in place for cattle. If you slaughter any cattle, the following regulations must be followed:

- You cannot slaughter Non-ambulatory Disabled Cattle, which are defined as cattle "that cannot rise from a recumbent position or cannot walk, including, but not limited to, those with broken appendages, severed tendons or ligaments, nerve paralysis, fractured vertebral column or metabolic conditions."
- Certain cattle parts have been termed Specified Risk Materials (SRM) and must be treated as inedible product. SRMs include;
  - In all cattle the tonsils and distal ileum of the small intestine;
  - In cattle that are 30 months and older the brain, skull, eyes, trigeminal ganglia, spinal cord, dorsal root ganglia (DRG), and most parts of the vertebral column.

You are not required to remove the SRMs at the time of slaughter if the carcass will be delivered to an approved establishment for further processing. However, those parts listed above that have been removed must be treated as inedible. In addition, in order for the receiving establishment to comply with BSE regulations, you must provide them with proof of the accurate and verified age of the cattle. This means you must age all cattle slaughtered with one of the methods listed below, include the age within your slaughter logs, and provide proof of the age to the receiving establishment.

Age can be determined through (1) Documentation that identifies the age of the animal, such as a birth certificate, cattle passport, or some other form of identification, that is presented with the animal when it arrives for slaughter, or (2) examination of the dentition of the animal to determine whether at least one of the second set of permanent incisors has erupted (the permanent incisors of cattle erupt from 24 through 30 months of age).

### **Access by Inspectors**

As a Custom Exempt Plant that field slaughters or operates a mobile slaughter unit, you are required by North Dakota Century Code 4.1-31-03(1) (a) through (e) to provide access for inspection to all places, facilities, and equipment used in during your slaughter activities.

If you have any questions regarding these guidelines or on regulations pertaining to meat inspection, you may contact the North Dakota Department of Agriculture - Meat and Poultry Inspection Program at one of the following phone numbers: (701) 328-2299; (701) 328-4762; or (800) 242-7535.