

Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland Approval Information Pack

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Link to Meat Industry Guide: Food Hygiene and Other Regulations for the UK Meat Industry http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/meat/guidehygienemeat Link to Department of Agriculture and Rural Development- Veterinary Service, Veterinary Public Health Programme (DARD-VS VPHP) Manual of Official Controls: https://www.dardni.gov.uk/publications/manual-official-controls-vphp• Link to A Guide for Food Business Operators to FSA Charges for Official Controls (The Charges Guide): http://www.food.gov.uk/northern-ireland/niregulation/niguideguidancenotes/fbomhocni	

1. Approval of establishments

Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 requires that food business establishments handling food of animal origin, with some limited exceptions be approved by a competent authority. In these cases compliance with the relevant requirements of Regulation 853/2004 is required in addition to compliance with Regulation (EC) 852/2004.

Depending on the nature or type of food produced, and unless they meet the exemption criteria detailed in Section 2, businesses will be subject to approval by either (or both):

- The Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland (FSA NI) (establishments are then subject to official controls enforced and executed by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)), or
- District Councils

The categories of establishments below must be approved under Regulation (EC) 853/2004 unless specifically exempted from the regulations.

Meat establishments

1. Meat establishments listed below are subject to approval by the FSA NI, in order to operate:

- a) **Slaughterhouses**
- b) **Game handling establishments**
- c) **Cutting plants**
- d) **Meat wholesale markets**

These establishments are subject to official controls enforced and executed by the DARD – Veterinary Service, Veterinary Public Health Programme (VPH) on behalf of the FSA NI.

2. Responsibility for official controls in the following establishments will depend on whether they are operating in a stand-alone capacity, or co-located with an approved slaughterhouse, cutting plant or game handling establishment:

- a) **Minced meat establishments**
- b) **Meat preparations establishments**
- c) **Mechanically separated meat (MSM) establishments**
- d) **Processing Plants (Meat products; Rendered animal fats & greaves; Treated stomach, bladders & intestines; Gelatine and Collagen)**
- e) **Cold stores**
- f) **Re-wrapping establishments**

Where they are Standalone (i.e. not co-located with an approved slaughterhouse, cutting plant or game handling establishment) they will be approved and enforced by the District Council (DC), however - where the above establishments are co-located, responsibility for approval rests with FSA NI and the enforcement with VPHP on behalf of the FSA NI).

3. District Councils are responsible for official controls and the approval of:

- a) **Meat product; and**
- b) **Edible co-product activities**

Where these activities are carried out in premises also subject to approval by the FSA NI as described above, the establishment will be an 'Integrated' establishment, in that it will be subject to enforcement by **both** VPHP and the District Council.

VPHP will, on behalf of the FSA NI, execute and enforce the relevant provisions of the Hygiene Regulations in respect of:

- a) **Collection centres; and**
- b) **Tanneries supplying raw material for the production of gelatine and collagen intended for human consumption.**

Raw milk & dairy establishments

1. FSA NI is responsible for the approval of:

- a) **Standalone liquid milk establishments**
- b) **Liquid milk processing in**

Official controls in these premises are enforced and executed by DARD, Agri-food Inspection Branch (AfIB), on behalf of FSA NI.

2. District Councils are responsible for the approval of:

- a) **Stand alone dairy product establishments**
- b) **On farm dairy product establishments**

3. Establishments that are both a liquid milk establishment, and also for the production of milk products will be subject to integrated enforcement by DARD (AFIB), on behalf of FSA NI, and District Councils.

Whilst not subject to approval, DARD AfIB are responsible for the official controls of:

- Collection centres for raw milk; and
- sales of raw drinking milk intended for direct human consumption

Egg establishments

1. FSA NI is responsible for the approval of:

a) Egg packing centres

Official controls in these premises are enforced and executed by DARD, Agri-food Inspection Branch (AfIB), on behalf of FSA NI.

2. District Councils are responsible for the approval of:

- a) Egg product establishments i.e. where processing takes place; and**
- b) Liquid egg establishments ie is produced for later processing by an approved egg product manufacturer,**

Fishery establishments

District councils are responsible for official controls and the recommendation of approval for fishery (including live bivalve mollusc) premises. For further information on approval contact your local district council who will be able to provide further advice.

2. Exemption criteria

Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004 provides certain exemptions from approval. In terms of establishments for which the FSA may need to consider for approval the exemptions fall into the following basic categories:

- a) **Retail establishments** - The exemption for retail establishments that supply food of animal origin to the final consumer. They will also be exempt if they supply other retail establishments (including caterers) on a marginal, localised and restricted basis.
- b) **Poultry slaughter and cutting on farm** - There is an exemption for producers supplying small quantities of meat from poultry and lagomorphs reared and slaughtered on their own farm directly to the final consumer and to local retail establishments directly supplying the final consumer.
- c) **Slaughter for private domestic consumption** - Where slaughter is carried out for private domestic consumption and the meat is not placed on the market this activity is exempt subject to compliance with Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies and EU and National Animal By-Products Regulations.
- d) **Wild game** – There is an exemption for primary producers (individual hunters or shooting estates) supplying small quantities of wild game carcasses in fur/feather directly to the final consumer and to local retail establishments directly supplying the final consumers. There is also an exemption for hunters and active members of a hunting party supplying small quantities of wild game meat.

A more in depth explanation of the exemption thresholds and criteria is contained in The Meat Industry Guide (MIG)

http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Chapter1-Introduction_1.pdf

The MIG can be downloaded from the FSA website at

<http://www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/meat/guidehygienemeat>

3. Guidance notes for the completion of the application form

This section provides advice on how to complete the application form for approval that is included separately with this information pack. Be sure to read this document carefully before filling out the application form.

PART 1 – Establishment for which approval is sought

- a) Approval name – this is the name of the sole trader, partner/s or legal entity of the business.
- b) Trading name is the name that the owner wishes to be known to trade under. This cannot be a different incorporated company.
- c) Address: Complete address including postcode. Make sure the full telephone number and if appropriate, fax number, including area code are included. Please also provide a full email address.

There are also options in this section to let us know if there are any changes to the business ownership, or if you are seeking FSA approval but are currently approved by the district council (i.e. you are undertaking a new process that may change who is responsible for enforcement at your premises).

PART 2 – Food Business Operator (FBO) details and business structure

- a) The Food Business Operator (FBO) is the legal entity of the company and can be an incorporated company that is registered with Companies House or the name of the owner(s) if a partnership or sole trader.
- b) It is vital that the details in this section are correct. If you have any doubt as to the structure of your business seek legal advice or contact Companies House.
- c) Only complete section 2a if you have been given Incorporated/ Limited Company status. Make sure the company registration number is completed in full.
- d) Details for the Company Directors should be listed in full. This does not include senior management. If necessary please continue on a separate sheet and attach.
- e) Only complete section 2b if you are trading as a Partnership or Sole Trader. You should list the details accurately including telephone numbers, fax number, home address and email. If necessary please continue on a separate sheet and attach.

PART 3 – Establishment managers and contacts

List all the relevant managers and staff who will hold a position of responsibility:

- a) For a Limited company, a Duly Authorised representative of the FBO must be entered. For Partnerships/Sole Traders a Duly Authorised representative of the FBO only needs entering if different to the individuals listed in Part 3b.
 - b) Finance and invoicing contact - It is important that finance and invoicing details are entered. Charges will apply to approved establishments that are subject to veterinary supervision by VPHP on behalf of the FSA NI. Please give details of the contact person, address and email which the FSA will use for sending financial information including invoices and statements.
 - c) The throughput queries contact is required if different from finance/invoice contact. This enables the company to be contacted regarding any discrepancy in the numbers of animals slaughtered.
 - e) The FBO may be required to be contacted should there be an emergency and for contingency planning purposes. This information is voluntary and is not specifically collected as part of legislation. The FBO, at any time can request the FSA remove these details or request any data to be amended to reflect changes in their contact details. The information will be treated as confidential and only limited members of the organisation will have access.
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PART 4 – Seasonal pattern

- a) If you are intending to operate a seasonal pattern or process seasonal species i.e. a wild game handling establishment. If you tick YES in this section you will need to state which months you anticipate to be processing.
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PART 5 – Type of establishment(s) and activities for which approval is sought

- a) The establishment will need to specify the type of operations the establishment is requiring approval for. This includes the specific species to be slaughtered, or in the case of other operations, the nature of those operations (e.g. cutting, minced meat, meat preparations).
- b) Clearly mark a cross in the box for any of the species that you are applying for approval to slaughter.
- c) When applying for integrated activities please refer to definitions of these activities on the following page.
- d) For slaughterhouse throughput enter the average number of animals/ birds that you anticipate slaughtering per week in the estimated average weekly throughput column.

- e) Throughput in cutting plants is defined as “the number of tonnes of meat brought into the plant or establishment concerned during that period to be cut up or boned there.” This should include the weight of the bone prior to any cutting or boning taking place.
- f) Applications for approval as a wild game handling establishment should include the estimated average weekly number of large and small wild game animals and birds that you expect to be brought into the establishment.

Definitions of co-located activities

Activity for which approval is sought	Definition
Minced meat	Boned meat that has been minced into fragments and contains less than 1% salt
Meat preparations	Fresh meat, including meat that has been reduced to fragments, which has had foodstuffs, seasoning or additives added to it or which has undergone processes insufficient to modify the internal muscle fibre structure of the meat and thus eliminate the characteristics of fresh meat.
Mechanically separated meat (MSM)	The product obtained by removing meat from flesh bearing bones after boning or from poultry carcasses, using mechanical means resulting in the loss or modification of the muscle fibre structure.
Processing plant	An establishment where POAO are either treated, processed (heating, smoking, curing etc) and wrapped or undergoes one or more of those handling activities
Meat products	Processed products resulting from the processing of meat or from the further processing of such processed products, so that the cut surface shows that the product no longer has the characteristics of fresh meat.
Ready to eat food	Food intended by the producer or the manufacturer for direct human consumption without the need for cooking or other processing
Rendered animal fats and greaves	Fat derived from rendering meat, including bones and intended for human consumption (e.g. lard). Greaves is the protein containing the residue of rendering after partial separation of fat and water (e.g. pork crackling)
Treated stomach, bladders and intestines	Treated stomach, bladders and intestines that have been submitted to treatment such as salting, heating or drying after they have been obtained and after cleaning
Gelatine	Natural, soluble protein obtained by the partial hydrolysis of collagen produced from bones, hides, skins, tendons and sinews of animals (e.g. used in production of jelly)
Collagen	Protein based product derived from animal bones, hides, skins and tendons (e.g. used in food additives).
Re-wrapping	Wrapping means the placing of a foodstuff in a wrapper or container in direct contact with the foodstuff concerned, and the wrapper or container itself. Therefore re-wrapping means the replacement of initial wrapping or initial container, which is in direct contact with the product.

PART 6 – Information and documentation

- a) These additional documents will be essential for the approval of the premises. Use this checklist to make sure that all documents are available at an approval visit. Failure to produce this additional information may result in a delay in the approval process.
 - b) The site and building plan must be submitted along with the application form to the FSA.
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PART 7 – Application

N.B. Failure to complete all relevant parts of this form may result in a delay in the approval process.

- a) Make sure the name is completed in BLOCK LETTERS, dated, and a signature supplied.
- b) If completed on screen, please print off a copy, sign and date and either post or submit scanned copy by email to the address mentioned on page 1 of the application form.

Approval process explained

(subject to variation dependent on the complexities of an individual case)

1. Once an application that is subject wholly or partly to FSA approval, and site plans have been received by the FSA NI they will be forwarded to DARD (and in the case of integrated premises the relevant DC) who will contact you to discuss your approval requirements. You may wish to involve a professional consultant at this stage.
2. DARD, and / or the DC may arrange one on-site advisory visit to assist you in identifying any problems in the areas of structure, maintenance and food safety management. This is in order to avoid any potential difficulties when the establishment is assessed for approval.
3. When you consider the establishment to meet all the requirements for approval, an approval visit will be arranged with an FSA Official and DARD (and in the case of integrated premises, the DC) to assess the establishment.
4. Conditional approval may be granted during the first approval visit if the establishment meets all the infrastructure, and equipment requirements. The establishment may not be able to demonstrate the documented HACCP based procedures but the planned method of operation must not constitute a risk to public health and there must be adequate provision to control any hazards that have been identified.

There is no obligation for a CA to grant an approval, conditional approval will be refused if there are structural or equipment deficiencies at the initial approval visit. It is not possible to grant full approval on a first visit as operations must be observed and the HACCP must be validated and verified.

5. A further visit will take place by an FSA Official within 3 months of a conditional approval being granted. This visit is to observe activities in operation and to assess whether deficiencies identified at conditional approval have been rectified (e.g. amendment required to the HACCP based procedures).
6.
 - a) If you have made clear progress but the establishment still does not meet all of the relevant requirements (e.g. required paperwork not fully completed, activities have not all been seen in operation), conditional approval may be extended. This extension will not exceed 3 months. The total period of conditional approval cannot exceed six months.
 - b) If there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that necessary work will be completed at the end of the three month period of extended conditional approval, approval will be refused.

- c) Full approval will be granted if, following conditional approval, you comply with all the relevant requirements of food law (infrastructure, equipment & operational requirements) and operations have been observed and found to be compliant.
 - d) Conditional approval will expire if either the establishment ceases operations or a visit could not be undertaken.
7. If extension of conditional approval is granted, a final approval visit by an FSA official and DARD will take place within 6 months from the original date conditional approval was granted.

During this visit, full approval will be granted if you comply with all the relevant requirements of food law (infrastructure, equipment & operational requirements) and operations have been observed and found to be compliant.

Full approval will be refused, if at the end of 6 months there is *insufficient compliance* with structural, equipment or operational requirements and other relevant requirements of food law, including the implementation of an effective food safety management system based on HACCP principles.

When refused, approvable activities must not be undertaken.

8. Approval will be **discontinued** if, within 6 months of an application being received no information is provided or action taken by the FBO in order to proceed with the application.

In accordance with the Official Feed and Food Controls Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009, any person who is aggrieved by a decision taken by the FSA in respect of an establishment subject to approval may appeal to a court of summary jurisdiction if such an appeal is lodged within one month of the decision being notified.

5. Background to food law

European Union (EU) food hygiene legislation forms the basis for UK food law and includes the following:

- **Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002 General Food Law**

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02002R0178-20140630&qid=1439306545435&from=EN>

- **Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004 General Rules for Official Controls**

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02004R0882-20140630&qid=1439306648181&from=EN>

- **Regulation (EC) No. 854/2004 Specific Rules for Official Controls on Products of Animal Origin** – Organisation of official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption. Also includes the specific requirements for inspection and auditing duties of official veterinarians (OVs) and official auxiliaries (meat inspectors in UK).

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02004R0854-20150101&qid=1439306716589&from=EN>

- **Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004 Specific Hygiene Rules for Products of Animal Origin** - includes additional structural and operational requirements for meat production.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02004R0853-20141117&qid=1439306866086&from=EN>

Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004 General Rules on Hygiene - sets out the general hygiene rules in the form of objectives for 'good hygiene practices' to be applied by all food businesses to protect customers.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:2004R0852:20090420:EN:PDF>

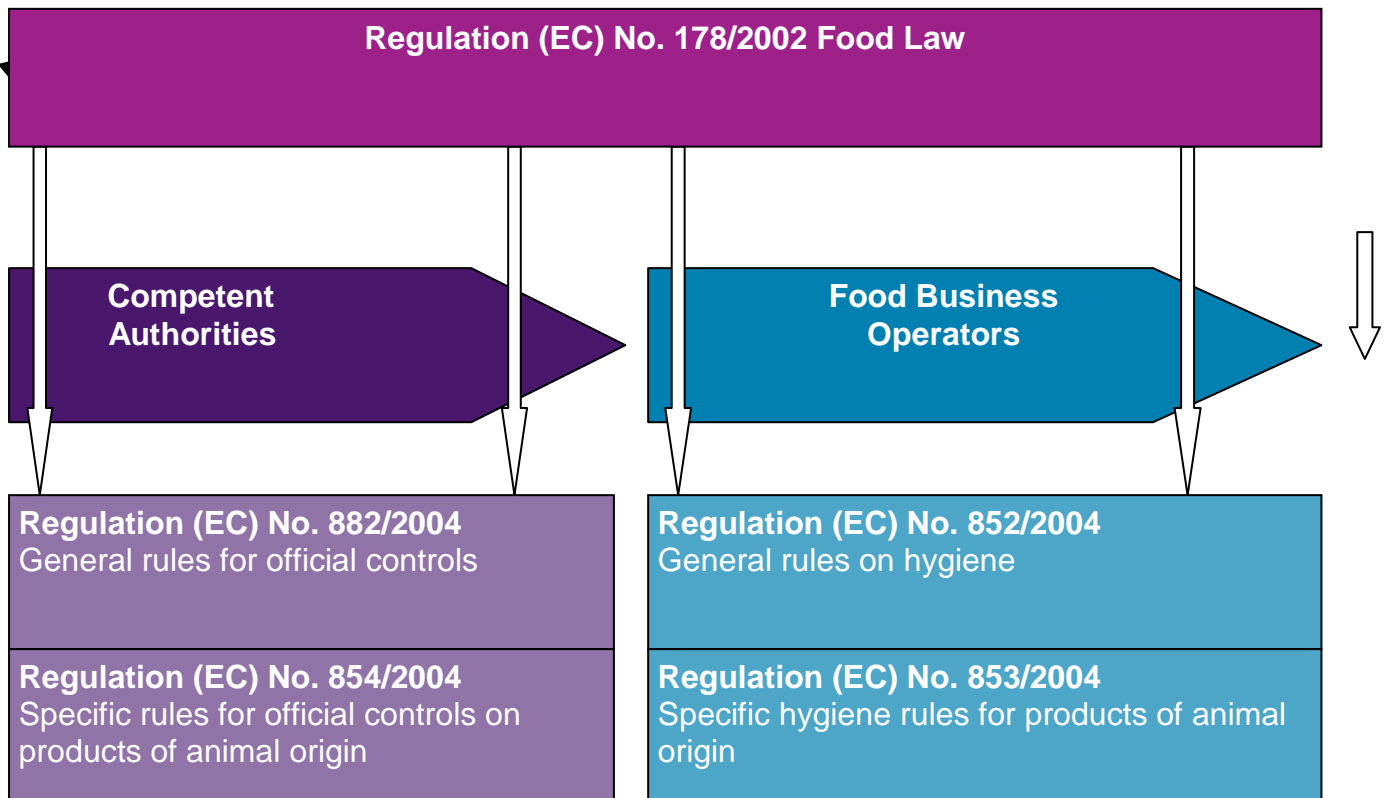
- **Regulation (EC) No. 2073/2005 Microbiological Criteria of Foodstuffs**

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02005R2073-20140601&qid=1439307127534&from=EN>

The Regulations contain general and specific rules on the hygiene of food for competent authorities and food business operators (FBOs) under the umbrella of the General Food Law Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002.

The Regulations lay down rules on the hygiene of foodstuffs taking into account a number of principles such as the primary responsibility for food safety resting with the FBO, the need to ensure food safety throughout the food chain starting from primary production ('farm to fork') and the implementation of procedures based on the hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) principles together with the application of good hygiene practices.

The Regulations also provide the legal context for FBOs to produce, transport, store, process and place on the market food for human consumption and will be used by the competent authority to verify compliance of a food business.



Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004 ensures the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules and includes the procedures to be followed concerning the approval of establishments.

6. A simplified guide to the structural and equipment requirements of the Food Hygiene Regulations

Basic requirements under the Food Hygiene Regulations 852/2004

All premises

1. Clean premises in good repair.
2. Size, layout, design, construction & siting must:
 - (a) Allow maintenance, cleaning, and/or disinfection.
Avoid or minimise air borne contamination.
Provide adequate working space.
 - (b) Protect against accumulation of dirt, shedding of particles into food and formation of condensation or “undesirable” mould.
 - (c) Permit good hygiene practices – particular reference to pest control.
 - (d) Where necessary, provide suitable temp. Controlled handling conditions of sufficient capacity designed to allow temps to be monitored and, where necessary, recorded.
3. Adequate number of flush lavatories connected to effective drainage system. Lavatories must not open directly into food rooms.
4. Adequate number of wash hand basins suitably located. Hot & cold running water, cleaning materials and material for hygienic drying of hands.
5. Sufficient and suitable means of natural or mechanical ventilation. Mechanical systems must be readily accessible. Airflow from a contaminated area to a clean area to be avoided.
6. Sanitary conveniences to be ventilated (natural or mechanical).
7. Adequate natural and/or artificial lighting.
8. Drainage facilities to be adequate for purpose, designed and constructed to avoid risk of contamination. Drainage must ensure that waste does not flow from a contaminated to a clean area.
9. Where necessary – adequate changing facilities.
10. Separate storage for cleaning agents/disinfectants from food handling areas.

Specific requirements in food preparation areas

1. Design and layout must permit good hygiene practices and protection against contamination. In particular:
 - (a) Floor surfaces must be sound and easy to clean. Must use impervious, non-absorbent, washable, non-toxic materials. Where appropriate, adequate surface drainage necessary.
 - (b) Sound walls, easy to clean and disinfect. Smooth surface to appropriate height using impervious, non-absorbent, washable and non-toxic materials.

- (c) Ceilings and overhead fixtures or interior of roof to be constructed and finished to prevent accumulation of dirt, reduce condensation and growth of undesirable mould and particle shedding.
 - (d) Windows and other openings to be constructed to prevent accumulation of dirt.
Windows opening to exterior fitted with screens which can be removed for cleaning.
 - (e) Easily cleaned doors – smooth, non-absorbent surfaces.
 - (f) Surfaces and equipment in contact with food to be maintained in sound condition and be easy to clean.
2. Adequate facilities for cleaning, disinfecting and storage of tools and equipment. Facilities to be constructed of corrosion-resistant materials, be easy to clean, and have adequate hot and cold water supply.

Equipment requirements

1. All articles, fittings and equipment contacting food must:
- (a) Be effectively cleaned and, where necessary, disinfected. Such cleansing & disinfection to take place at a frequency sufficient to avoid risk of contamination.
 - (b) Be so constructed of such materials and be kept in such good order, repair and condition as to minimise any risk of contamination.
 - (c) With the exception of non-returnable containers and packaging – be so constructed, be of such materials and be kept in such good order etc. – as to enable them to be kept clean and, where necessary, disinfected.

Be installed in such a manner as to allow adequate cleaning of the equipment and the surrounding area.

7. Specific requirements for meat establishments

Requirements under the Food Hygiene Regulations 853/2004

Slaughterhouses – Meat from domestic ungulates (Red meat) and meat of farmed game

1. Food business operators must ensure that the construction, layout and equipment of slaughterhouses in which domestic ungulates are slaughtered meet the following requirements:
 - (a) Slaughterhouses must have adequate and hygienic lairage facilities or, climate permitting, waiting pens that are easy to clean and disinfect. Equipment must include watering and, if necessary, feeding facilities. Drainage of waste water must not compromise food safety.
 - (b) They must have separate lockable facilities or, climate permitting, pens for sick or suspect animals with separate drainage, and sited to avoid contamination of other animals – unless the competent authority considers such facilities unnecessary.
 - (c) Size of lairage must ensure welfare is respected. Layout must facilitate ante-mortem inspections, including identification of animals or groups of animals.
2. To avoid contaminating meat, slaughterhouses must:
 - (a) Have a sufficient number of rooms appropriate to operations being carried out.
 - (b) Have a separate room for emptying and cleaning stomachs and intestines unless the Competent Authority authorises time separation of these operations in a specific slaughterhouse on a case-by-case basis.
 - (c) Ensure separation in space or time of:
 - (i) Stunning and bleeding
 - (ii) In the case of pigs – scalding, depilation, scraping and singeing;
 - (iii) Evisceration and further dressing
 - (iv) Handling clean guts and tripe
 - (v) Preparation and cleaning of other offal, particularly the handling of skinned heads if it does not take place at the slaughter line
 - (vi) Offal packing
 - (vii) Dispatching meat
 - (d) Have installations that prevent contact between the meat and the floors, walls and fixtures.
 - (e) Have lines (where operated) that are designed to allow constant progress of the process and to avoid cross-contamination between different parts of the line.

Where more than one line is operated in the same premises, there must be adequate separation of the lines to prevent cross-contamination.

3. They must have facilities for disinfecting tools with hot water at not less than 82°C OR an alternative system having equivalent effect.
4. Equipment for hand washing by staff handling exposed meat must have taps designed to prevent the spread of contamination.
5. There must be lockable facilities for the refrigerated storage of detained meat and separate closable, lockable and cleanable facilities for storage of unfit meat.
6. There must be a separate place with appropriate facilities for cleaning, washing and disinfection of livestock vehicles. However, slaughterhouses need not have these places and facilities if the Competent Authority so permits, and official authorised places and facilities exist nearby.
7. They must have lockable casualty slaughter facilities – unless this slaughter takes place elsewhere in other establishments authorised by the Competent Authority, OR at the end of the normal slaughter period.
8. If manure or digestive tract contents are stored, there must be a special place or area for that.
9. They must have an adequately equipped lockable facility OR, where needed, a room for the exclusive use of the veterinary service.

Slaughterhouses – Meat from poultry & lagomorphs (White meat) and meat of farmed game (birds)

1. Slaughterhouses must have a room or covered space to the reception of the animals and for their inspection before slaughter.
2. To avoid contaminating meat, they must:
 - (a) Have a sufficient number of rooms, appropriate to the operations being carried out.
 - (b) Have a separate room for evisceration and further dressing, including the addition of seasonings to whole poultry carcasses – unless the Competent Authority authorises separation in time of these operations within a specific slaughterhouse on a case-by-case basis.
 - (c) Ensure separation in space or time of the following operations:
 - (i) Stunning and bleeding
 - (ii) Plucking or skinning, and any scalding
 - (iii) Dispatching meat
 - (d) Have installations that prevent contact between the meat and the floors, walls and fixtures.
 - (e) Have slaughter lines (where operated) that are designed to allow a constant progress of the process and to avoid cross contamination between the different parts of the line. Where more than one line is operated in the premises, there must be adequate separation of the lines to avoid cross contamination.
3. They must have facilities for disinfecting tools with hot water at not less than 82°C or an alternative system having equivalent effect.
4. Equipment for hand washing by staff handling exposed meat must have taps designed to prevent the spread of contamination.
5. There must be lockable facilities for the refrigerated storage of detained meat and separate closable, lockable and cleanable facilities for the storage of unfit meat.

6. There must be a separate place with appropriate facilities for the cleaning, washing and disinfection of:
 - (a) Transport equipment such as crates
 - (b) Livestock vehicles

These places and facilities are not compulsory for (b) if officially authorised places and facilities exist nearby.
7. They must have an adequately equipped lockable facility or, where needed, room for the exclusive use of the veterinary service.

Requirements under the Food Hygiene Regulations (additional to Regulations 852/2004)

Cutting Premises – Meat from domestic ungulates (red meat), meat of farmed game and wild game meat

1. Plants are constructed so as to avoid contamination of meat – in particular by:
 - (a) Allowing constant progress of operations
 - OR
 - (b) Ensuring separation between the different production batches.
2. Have separate rooms for storage of packaged and exposed meat – unless stored at different times or in such a way that the packaging material and the manner of storage cannot be a source of contamination.
3. Have cutting rooms equipped to ensure compliance with Annex III, Section I, Chapter V, e.g.

Work on meat must be organised to prevent or minimise contamination. In particular, operators must ensure that:

- (a) Meat intended for cutting is brought into workrooms progressively as needed.
 - (b) During cutting, boning, trimming, slicing, dicing, wrapping and packaging, the meat is maintained at not more than 3°C for offal and 7°C for other meat by means of an ambient temp. of not more than 12°C OR an alternative system having an equivalent effect.
 - (c) Where premises are approved for cutting meat of different species, precautions are taken to avoid cross contamination, where necessary by separation of the operations on the different species in either space or time.
4. Have wash hand basins with taps designed to prevent spread of contamination for staff handling exposed meat.
 5. Have hot water sterilisers operating at not less than 82°C OR an alternative system having an equivalent effect.

Cutting Premises – Meat from poultry & lagomorphs (white meat), meat of farmed game and wild game meat

1. Plants are constructed so as to avoid contamination of meat – in particular by:-
 - (a) Allowing constant progress of operators, OR
 - (b) Ensuring separation between the different production batches.

2. Have separate rooms for storage of packaged and exposed meat – unless stored at different times or in such a way that the packaging material and the manner of storage cannot be a source of contamination.
3. Have cutting rooms equipped to ensure compliance with the requirements laid down in Annex III, Section II, Chapter V of 853, e.g.

Work on meat must be organised to prevent or minimise contamination. In particular, operators must ensure that:

- (a) Meat intended for cutting is brought into the workrooms progressively as needed.
 - (b) During cutting, boning, trimming, slicing, dicing, wrapping and packaging, the meat is maintained at not more than 4°C by means of an ambient temp of not more than 12°C OR an alternative system having an equivalent effect.
 - (c) Where premises are approved for the cutting of different animal species, precautions are taken to avoid cross-contamination, where necessary by separation of the operations on the different species in either space or time.
4. Meat may be boned and cut prior to reaching 4°C when slaughterhouse and cutting premises are on the same site providing it is transferred to the cutting room either:
 - (a) Directly from the slaughter premises, OR
 - (b) After a period in a chiller.
5. In such cases meat must be chilled to 4°C as soon as it is cut and where appropriate packaged.
6. Exposed meat must be stored and transported separately from packaged meat – unless stored or transported at different times or in such a way that the packaging material and the manner of storage or transport cannot be a source of contamination.
7. Have wash hand basins used by staff handling exposed meat with taps designed to prevent spread of contamination.
8. Have hot water sterilisers operating at not less than 82°C OR an equivalent system having an equivalent effect.
9. If delayed evisceration or evisceration of “foie gras” geese or ducks stunned, bled and plucked on farm takes place – the cutting premises must have separate rooms which are available for that purpose.

8. Specific requirements for dairy establishments

Requirements under Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 concerning dairy products

Raw milk and colostrum

1. A representative number of samples of raw milk and colostrum collected from milk production holdings taken by random sampling must be checked for compliance with points 2 and 3 below in case of raw milk and with the existing national criteria in case of colostrum. The checks may be carried out by, or on behalf of:
 - (a) the food business operator producing the milk
 - (b) the food business operator collecting or processing the milk
 - (c) a group of food business operators; or (d) in the context of a national or regional control scheme
2. Food business operators must initiate procedures to ensure that raw milk meets the following criteria:
 - (i) for raw cows' milk: Plate count at 30 °C (per ml) $\leq 100\,000^3$
Somatic cell count (per ml) $\leq 400\,000^4$
 - (ii) for raw milk from other species: Plate count at 30°C (per ml) $\leq 1\,500\,000^3$

However, if raw milk from species other than cows is intended for the manufacture of products made with raw milk by a process that does not involve any heat treatment, food business operators must take steps to ensure that the raw milk used meets the following criterion: Plate count at 30 °C (per ml) $\leq 500\,000^3$

3. Food business operators must initiate procedures to ensure that raw milk is not placed on the market if either:
 - (a) it contains antibiotic residues in a quantity that, in respect of any one of the substances referred to in Annexes I and III to Regulation (EEC) No 2377/905, exceeds the levels authorised under that Regulation;
 - (b) the combined total of residues of antibiotic substances exceeds any maximum permitted value.

When raw milk fails to comply with points 1 - 3 above, the food business operator must inform the competent authority and take measures to correct the situation.

Premises and Equipment

1. During transport the cold chain must be maintained and, on arrival at the establishment of destination, the temperature of the milk must not be more than 10°C.
2. Food business operators must ensure that, upon acceptance at a processing establishment milk is quickly cooled to not more than 6 °C and kept at that temperature until processed.
3. However, food business operators may keep milk at a higher temperature if:
 - a. Processing begins immediately after milking or within 4 hours of acceptance at the processing establishment;
 - b. The competent authority authorises a higher temperature for technological reasons concerning the manufacture of certain dairy products.

Requirements for Heat Treatment

1. When raw milk, colostrum, dairy or colostrum-based products undergo heat treatment, food business operators must ensure that this satisfies the requirement of laid down in Chapter XI of Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 852/2004. In particular, they shall ensure, when using the following processes, that they comply with the specifications mentioned:

Pasteurisation achieved by a treatment involving:

- (i) a high temperature for a short time (at least 72°C for 15 seconds)
- (ii) a low temperature for a long time (at least 63°C for 30 minutes); or
- (iii) any other combination of time-temperature conditions to obtain an equivalent effect, such that the products show, where applicable, a negative reaction to an alkaline phosphatase test immediately after such treatment.

Although 72°C for 15 seconds or equivalent is the legal minimum for pasteurisation for drinking milk, it is recommended that at least 72°C for 25 seconds is used as a precaution against *Mycobacterium paratuberculosis* (MAP).

Ultra High Temperature (UHT) treatment is achieved by a treatment:

- (i) involving a continuous flow of heat at a high temperature for a short time (not less than 135°C in combination with a suitable holding time) such that there are no viable microorganisms or spores capable of growing in the treated product when kept in an aseptic closed container at ambient temperature, and
- (ii) sufficient to ensure that the products remain microbiologically stable after incubating for 15 days at 30°C in closed containers or for 7 days at 55°C in closed containers or after any other method demonstrating that the appropriate heat treatment has been applied.

When considering whether to subject raw milk and colostrum to heat treatment, food business operators must have regard to the procedures developed in accordance with the HACCP principles pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 854/2004; and comply with any requirements that the competent authority may impose in this regard when approving establishments or carrying out checks in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 854/2004.

Criteria for Raw Cows' Milk being used to prepare dairy products

Food business operators manufacturing dairy products must initiate procedures to ensure that, immediately before processing:

- (a) raw cows' milk used to prepare dairy products has a plate count at 30°C of less than 300,000 per ml; and
- b) heat treated cows' milk used to prepare dairy products has a plate count at 30°C of less than 100,000 per ml

When milk fails to meet the criteria laid above, the food business operator must inform the competent authority and take measures to correct the situation.

Packaging

Sealing of consumer packages must be carried out immediately after filling in the establishment where the last heat treatment of liquid dairy products takes place, by means of sealing devices that prevent contamination. The sealing system must be designed in such a way that, after opening, the evidence of its opening remains clear and easy to check.

9. Further information

Official controls

The safe production of food is a fundamental legal obligation of the food business operator and the FSA as competent authority has a duty to undertake official controls and enforce the Regulations.

Operators are expected to apply good hygiene practices and food safety management procedures to control food safety hazards. These procedures should cover:

- Adequate training and instruction of staff
- Working instructions for staff, including what to do in the case of foreseeable disruptions to normal working, such as breakdowns or contamination incidents
- Periodic verification checks to see if working instructions are being followed continuously and properly
- Corrective actions to restore control if food safety management procedures fail; including dealing with any contaminated product; establishing the underlying cause of a failure; preventing similar incidents in the future
- Confirming (verifying) that company procedures meet legal requirements

Slaughterhouses and Game Handling Establishments will require DARD VPHP staff attendance from the onset of conditional approval being given. The level of service required will depend on the type of establishment and size.

Slaughterhouses, Cutting Plants and Game Handling Establishments require OV (and in some cases OA) attendance to carry out meat hygiene official controls. Time spent carrying out meat hygiene official controls is chargeable. A guide to these charges can be found at the link below.

<http://www.food.gov.uk/northern-ireland/niregulation/niguidancenotes/fbomhocni>

Please be aware that your establishment may be subject to visits and inspections by other authorities e.g. District Councils.

Statement of Resources (slaughterhouses and game handling establishments)

As the FBO you will be required to complete a statement of resources once you become approved. This will be discussed between you and DARD VPHP who work on our behalf. You will be required to provide details of working hours and working practices so that agreement can be reached on the level of service required to carry out official controls in your establishment. This includes the number of inspectors and also the number of hours they will be required to work.

This information will provide the basis for calculating your charges for official controls. Other information required includes operational start and finish times, the number of animals expected to be processed and any relevant information such as seasonal variations. The statement of resources should be reviewed on a monthly basis to help DARD VPHP to ensure that the service is delivered in the appropriate and most efficient way under the legislative requirements.

Provision of throughput figures

As an FBO of an approved establishment it will be your responsibility to submit throughput data to DARD Business Management Unit on a weekly basis from the date your Conditional Approval is granted.

This means

- For a slaughterhouse – weekly slaughter figures for each species
- For a cutting plant – the total weekly weight in tonnes, of meat which has been cut up or boned
- For a game handling establishment – the weekly number of large and small wild game animals and birds, by species, brought into your establishment

Throughput data is used to calculate the minimum charge required by EU law. The data will also be used to calculate applicable charging discount rates for activities at your establishment.

Please refer to '*A Guide for Food Business Operators to FSA Charges for Official Controls*', (The Charges Guide) for further information, see the following link:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/northern-ireland/niregulation/niguideguidancenotes/fbomhocni>