

Meat Messenger

North Dakota State Meat Inspection Program

North Dakota Department of Agriculture

July 2008

Program Participants in the Spotlight

By Shaun Quissell

Reister Meats and Catering



Reister Meats and Catering of Streeter, ND, received a grant of inspection in May 2006 from the North Dakota Meat and Poultry Inspection Program (NDMPIP). What began as an idea to help their son, Lance, transfer back the family farm, Clyde and Penny Reister's business is booming.

Their plant, formerly the farm's milk parlor, has been transformed into a state inspected processing and custom slaughter facility. "The design was critical to avoid cross-contamination; we have to have two production lines so our custom processing business is kept completely separate from our inspected processing," says Clyde. The Reisters not only process under state inspection but they also run a very busy catering business for a variety of functions from town celebrations, to weddings, to smaller events.

The Reisters offer over 70 different products including beef sticks, kippered beef, German Brand Cold Smoked Sausage, and various other products. They employ 5 full time and one part time employee and wholesale products to 6 different locations in their area. When asked what he likes about inspection, Clyde answered, "It keeps us on our toes and makes sure all our equipment is up to snuff. Our customers really seem to appreciate it, too; they have a lot of confidence in our products."

In the future, the Reisters plan to add a kitchen, a larger retail area, and expanded cooling capacity to their plant.

Next Door Pizza

Next Door Pizza of Scranton, joined the Meat and Poultry Inspection program in May 2007.

Owned by Sheila Ness and her husband Danny, Next Door Pizza employs three part time employees to help with the restaurant portion of the business. Ness began at the restaurant while it was under prior ownership in 1988; two years later the owners offered her the opportunity to purchase the business. They said I had a week to decide if I wanted to buy it, so I just bought it." says Sheila.

When asked why she joined the NDSMIP, Sheila answered, "I joined because a number of area business had been asking me about my take and bake pizzas." An interesting twist to the story is that Sheila has a gluten intolerance; gluten is a protein in wheat, barley, or rye that can cause an allergic reaction. Owning a pizza restaurant may have been difficult since gluten is a key ingredient in a variety of pizzas; however, Sheila was able to formulate a gluten free pizza recipe.

The gluten free pizza is offered in the restaurant as well as one wholesale location. The original take and bake pizza is for sale with 11 different toppings at six area locations. In the future, Sheila plans to revamp her gluten free line to include a dairy free, egg free and tree nut free pizza. Additionally, she hopes to incorporate a number of gluten free bakery items into the business.



Meat Messenger

is published by the
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Department of Agriculture**

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New Faces in Meat Inspection

Holly Dalen is the new inspector for the southwest region of the state. She is originally from Zap, ND, and a graduate of Concordia College, Moorhead, MN. Prior to joining NDMPIP Holly was employed by Dakota Gasification in Beulah as a laboratory technician. Holly and her husband, Jason, reside in Dickinson with their daughter, Carissa, 6. Two of Holly's hobbies are reading and gardening.



Jacee Lund is the Assistant/Relief Inspector for the NDMPIP. Jacee assists Dr. Andrea Grondahl, the program director, and the senior inspectors. She also stands-in for the inspectors in charge during their absence. Jacee is originally from Carrington, ND; she is a graduate of North Dakota State University with a degree in Animal and Range Science. Before moving to Bismarck, she was employed with the Eddy/Foster County Farm Service Agency as a program technician.



Shaun Quissell covers inspections for the south central region of the state. Shaun is formally from Sherman, SD, and is a graduate of South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD. Shaun's prior employment included an internship at Dakota Provisions, Huron, SD, where he worked in the food safety and quality assurance divisions. Shaun and his fiancée, Elizabeth Caron, reside in Bismarck with their daughter Cheyanne, 9 months.



The new inspector for the south central region of the state is Dustin Person. Dustin is a native of Litchville, ND, and a graduate of North Dakota State University. Dustin has a bachelors degree in microbiology and a minor in food safety. Previously, Dustin worked for Sugar Creek Packing Co., Pittsburg-Frontenac, KS, as the quality control supervisor. Dustin currently lives in Jamestown where he enjoys reading, playing pool, darts and helping his dad farm.



Interstate Meat Sales and Country of Origin Labeling Included in New Farm Bill

Submitted By Dr. Andrea Grondahl

Interstate Meat Sales

The final 2007/08 Farm Bill includes provisions for a new program to allow interstate sales of meat and poultry from certain state plants. The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) and a coalition of agricultural organizations have long fought for legislation to allow interstate meat sales. USDA must now issue rules to implement the program, and NASDA is urging the department to do so as quickly as possible.

The legislation creates a new, optional program to allow state-inspected plants that have 25 employees or fewer to sell their products across state borders. This new program, dubbed “Title V” because of the addition of a fifth title to the Federal Meat Inspection Act, is an optional tool for states and will not replace existing state inspection programs. States will continue to maintain the current Title III cooperative agreements with USDA which require state inspection programs to continue to be “at least equal to” federal requirements. Plants that are currently federally inspected are not allowed to participate in the program.

USDA will designate a State Coordinator, who will be a federal employee, for each state inspection program. The state coordinator will visit selected establishments to ensure that they follow all federal meat and poultry inspection laws and food safety requirements. USDA will reimburse states for not less than 60 percent of the costs of operating the new program. Companies in the program will use a federal mark of inspection.

USDA will also establish an inspection training division to coordinate outreach, education, training and technical assistance for certain small and very small plants. USDA is authorized to provide grants to state agencies to help establishments transition from the existing intrastate inspection program to the new Title V program.

Country of Origin Labeling (COOL)

Also included in the final 2007/08 Farm Bill is a provision to require country of origin labeling (COOL) for meat, fish, fruits, vegetables, and other products. Imported agricultural products processed in the U.S. receive an inspection label from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), but they are not necessarily labeled to indicate their country of origin.

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act, also known as the 2002 Farm Bill, was signed into law on May 13, 2002, and required country of origin labeling. Mandatory labeling was set to be implemented by September 30, 2004, but in January of that year President Bush signed a law that delayed the implementation of mandatory labeling for all commodities except fish and shellfish until 2006. In November 2005, the president signed another extension that put off mandatory labeling until September 30, 2008.

With passage of the farm bill, USDA intends to publish rules further defining the requirements of COOL. These rules will reflect the changes in the farm bill that are highlighted below but the rules will also reflect other changes to USDA’s initial proposed rule. Of interest to the livestock and meat processing industry, the farm bill does the following:

- ***New Commodities Covered:*** Chicken and goat meat are added to beef, lamb and pork as commodities that must have COOL information.
- ***Labeling:*** The 2002 Farm Bill provided that a commodity can receive the label “Product of the U.S.” only if it is derived “exclusively from an animal that is exclusively born, raised and slaughtered in the United States.” The 2007 Farm Bill creates three other labeling categories: Animals that are born and/or raised in a

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different country then harvested in the U.S. will be labeled as a multiple-origin product and will identify all relevant countries. Meat products imported from another country would be labeled as a product of that country. The third category covers animals raised in another country and imported to the United States for immediate harvest.

- **Records:** Any person who supplies a covered commodity to a retailer must maintain records to identify the immediate previous source and immediate subsequent recipient of the product. Documents that can be used to verify origin include normal business records, animal health papers, import or customs documents, or producer affidavits. USDA may not require such a person to keep records other than those maintained in the normal course of business.
- **Fines Clarified:** The farm bill clarifies that a retailer or supplier notified of a violation has 30 days to come into compliance. Fines are issued only if, after the 30-day period, the person fails to act in good faith to comply and continues to willfully violate the law. Fines were reduced from the \$10,000 for each violation to \$1,000 for each violation.
- **Applicability:** Animals already in the U.S. on July 15, 2008, shall be exempt from the law.



Metzger, Certified Beef Grader

By Jacee Lund



Cami Metzger, the north east regional inspector for NDMPIP, recently attended eight weeks of AMS training in Omaha, NE. Upon completion of the course Cami is now a Certified Beef Quality and Yield Grader, who may grade beef carcasses at any federally or state inspected slaughter establishments in the United States.

Carcass grading is based upon the degree of marbling found in the ribeye muscle between the 12th and 13th rib as well as the skeletal and lean maturity. The yield of the carcass is based upon the fat thickness present at the exterior edge of the ribeye, ribeye area, carcass hanging weight, and percent of kidney, pelvic, and heart fat.

A native of Langdon, Cami has traveled to New Rockford to grade beef carcasses for ND Natural Beef and to Branded Beef and Pack in Harvey. The Beef Center of Excellence in Fargo has also expressed interest in having Cami grade for them in the future.

There is a fee for facilities that wish to have their beef carcasses graded. The establishment is responsible for providing the federal government with payment in order to cover the grader's travel and lodging expenses and the cost of the grading service. However, this is considerably less expensive now than previously when a federal grading specialist had to be brought in from out of state.

Cami said grading beef carcasses allows both the establishment and the cattle producer to see how the cattle are performing. Also, producers may use the grading information to their advantage, either to maintain their herd status or to make improvements as necessary. As a final point, grading presents official establishments with the availability to access larger markets and increases the value of the producer's beef animal.

If you are interested in the grading service, please contact either: Dr Andrea Grondahl, NDMPIP Director, 701-328-4762 or Cami Metzger, NDMPIP Inspector/Certified Beef Grader, 701-400-4852.

Food For Thought

Flies: COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE

By Shaun Quissell and Jacee Lund



Flies consume garbage, manure and more. In fact, flies regurgitate and excrete these former meals anytime they come to rest. An average housefly will hatch and reach maturity in as little as eight days; and a single fly can lay up to 900 eggs at one time. Flies also have the potential to spread food borne illnesses such as *Salmonella*, *E. coli* 0157:H7, and *Campylobacter*.

The overall control of pests, such as flies, is extremely important in the meat and poultry industry. 9 CFR 355.16 states, “Flies, rats, mice, and other vermin shall be excluded from inspected plants and premises.” Furthermore, 9 CFR 416.2 (b)(3) reads, “Walls, floors, ceiling, doors, windows, and other outside openings must be constructed and maintained to prevent the entrance of vermin, such as flies, rats, and mice.”

Prevention:

1. Sanitation, Sanitation, Sanitation

To begin with, eliminate fly breeding sites such as the matter flies are attracted to and on which they lay eggs. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: standing water, manure, garbage, and decaying plant and animal material. Moreover, inedible barrels and dumpsters should be kept as clean as possible, tightly sealed, emptied regularly, and kept as far away from the buildings, especially high traffic entrances, as possible. Animal holding facilities whether indoor or outdoor also should be clean and free of manure.

Control/Management:

The control of flies and other vermin begins outside the establishment and works its way indoors. Another key step in fly management is eliminating them from the premises. Some examples include:

- Maintain screens on all openings, such as windows, vents, and doorways.
- Caulk any possible points of entry, such as floor junctures, windows, and doorways.
- Install self-closing doors or air curtains that blow air away from doorways.
- Place outdoor lighting away from main entrances.
- Keep work areas inside the plant clean; try a “clean as you go” approach.
- Eliminate breeding sites around windows, vents, or doorways.
- Remove all excess moisture from under wheels, on tables or equipment, and floors.

Other Controls Methods:

Try “baiting” flies by strategically placing commercial fly traps around the outside premise of the establishment according to product instructions. Also, place UV light traps with glue boards near an entrance to contain the flies that do get into plant. Individuals may also try hanging sticky paper fly traps in acceptable areas in enclosed/indoor **holding pens or barn**; however, the sticky paper must be securely hung as to never come in contact with the animal. Remember that if and when the sticky paper does fall, it must land in an area where an animal may not come in contact with it, such as outside the circumference of the holding pen. As a final resort, consider spraying the premise of their holding pens with an **approved pesticide** at a set frequency and potency according to the product label. Please remember to always follow the product label and have documentation on file for safe use anytime pesticides must be used. The use of pesticides is generally not the best means of managing a fly predicament and should be used only as a last alternative in food service operations.

#1 Control: Sanitation, Sanitation, Sanitation

Bovine Tuberculosis

Submitted by Dr. Susan Keller, North Dakota State Veterinarian

Although the United States was nearly at the point of eradicating bovine tuberculosis, some cases of TB still linger in the US livestock industry, in wildlife or have made it into our national herd from sources outside of the US. This situation now threatens to prevent eradication of the disease.

Consequently, we need to avoid complacency in surveillance and reporting of suspect tuberculosis cases. Accredited veterinarians have been notified that the caudal fold test should produce about at least a 1% response rate in order to have a probability of 95% that at least one responder should be detected among each set of 300 tests. The ND veterinarians' response rate averaged about 2.8% for cattle and bison and 2.6% for deer and elk. Of course, some veterinarians who have a very high reporting rate could mask for those who report a less than expected number of responders.

Historically, the role of meat inspectors in identifying suspect TB lesions in carcasses has been central to the goal of, hopefully, eradicating tuberculosis. Likewise plant inspectors who historically have under reported granulomas, may have missed opportunities to help identify new and residual sources of TB that threaten the livestock industry. Although we realize that identifying a case of TB means a producer(s) could be negatively impacted by that finding; it is **imperative** that all meat inspectors fully appreciate the critical role and responsibility they have in assisting with eradication of TB throughout the industry as a whole. Federal plants are now required under a memorandum of understanding between FSIS and APHIS to submit granulomas at the minimal rate of at least 1 per every 1000 animals slaughtered. I would encourage state plants to meet or exceed that submission rate. New DNA capabilities, coupled with epidemiologic investigations and identification collected from animals at slaughter, help make it possible to determine possible sources of the disease.

The most important thing to remember is that not all TB granulomas 'look' like what may have been considered typical looking TB lesions in the past. There may be lesions that just don't fit the stereotypes, even to a well trained eye. **If you have any doubt, I encourage you to submit any abnormal looking lymph nodes to a lab for diagnosis.**

North Dakota Meat Classifieds

Plants For Sale:

FOR SALE—The Bowdon Locker Plant & Grocery a well established meat processing plant in Bowdon, North Dakota, is for sale and waiting for a new owner. All the equipment and inventory is being left for the new operator; everything is in good operating condition. The Bowdon Development Organization would be willing to assist a new owner in starting his/her new venture. The price is right and the business is thriving! Contact Vorland Land Company, New Rockford, ND 701-947-5626 www.vorlandlandcompany.com.

Equipment For Sale:

FOR SALE—(2) Jim Vaughn Meat Saws; (2) Hobart Meat Grinders, 3 phase; Steak Maker Model 200 Tenderizer; Toledo Counter top scale; (75) Trolleys; Contact Larson's Processing and Locker Wyndmere, ND, (shop) 701-439-2924, (home) 701-439-2982.

FOR SALE— Wonder Roast –BBQ Chicken Cooker with warmer, 4-Rotissires.
Call Meats by John and Wayne, Fargo, ND, (office) 701-281-2300.

FOR SALE—1983 Ford 1 ton pick-up with 14 ft by 2in boom, with enclosed trailer for doing custom mobile slaughter. Includes all hooks, cradle, and many extras; asking \$5000. Call Bob Bergeron at 701-572-1863. The truck is located in Williston, ND.

Dangers of Lead in Venison

Lead fragments in venison stir health concerns in Midwest

ESPNOuddoors.com

The following are excerpted from the official summary of a seven-state conference on the potential dangers of lead in venison. While no link has been made between deer killed with lead and any human illness, state health, game and agriculture departments are studying the issue. In the meantime, these are the reminders they're issuing for hunters, people who consume venison, and meat processors.

Hunters

- Lead particles found in hunter-harvested venison have not been linked to any illnesses.
- Lead is a neurotoxin, but toxicity depends on the level and frequency of exposure. It is particularly harmful to children 6 and younger and pregnant women.
- Lead can have physiological effects on human bodies and brains at levels below that which would cause any noticeable signs of sickness.
- The following guidelines and suggestions can eliminate or reduce and minimize the potential risk of consuming lead fragments, depending on the risk tolerance of the hunter.
- Consider alternatives to ammunition that is prone to fragment — these alternatives could include non-lead (copper) or other high-weight retention ammunition.
- Lead particles in venison will likely be too small to detect by sight, feel, or when chewing the meat.
- If you process your own meat, do not use deer with excessive shot damage. Trim a generous distance away from the wound channel and discard any meat that is bruised, discolored or contains hair, dirt, bone fragments or grass.
- Practice clean field handling techniques. Dress, thoroughly rinse, and keep the carcass cool.
- Practice marksmanship and outdoors skills to get cleaner, closer shots and better shots. For example, additional shots may be needed if shooting at a moving target.

Consumers

- Venison is a high-protein meat that has nutritional benefits. Venison donation programs are an excellent source of protein for needy families.
- Hunter-harvested deer may contain lead particles.
- Lead particles found in hunter-harvested venison have not been linked to any illnesses.
- Lead is a neurotoxin, but toxicity depends on the level and frequency of exposure. It is particularly harmful to children 6 and younger and pregnant women.
- If there is any concern, children 6 and younger and pregnant women should not consume venison.
- Lead can have physiological effects on human bodies and brains at levels below that which would cause any noticeable signs of sickness.
- Initial tests indicate that ground meat has a higher tendency to contain lead particles. Lead fragments are rare in whole muscle-cuts.
- Provide recipes for those not familiar with preparing whole muscle-cuts.
- Consider avoiding vinegar and other acidic substances when preparing venison. Acids can make any lead more soluble and more easily absorbed in the body.
- Venison donation programs are tools that help wildlife officials manage wild deer herds.

Meat Processors

- There is a high likelihood that any deer shot with a firearm using lead ammunition will contain lead particles.
- Use care when selecting meat for grinding. Do not use deer with excessive shot damage. Trim a generous distance away from the bullet wound channel and discard any meat that is bruised, discolored or contains hair, dirt, bone fragments or grass.
- Lead is a neurotoxin but toxicity depends on the level and frequency of exposure. It is particularly harmful to children 6 and younger and pregnant women. Care should be taken to minimize any contamination.
- Lead can have physiological effects on human bodies and brains at levels below that which would cause any noticeable signs of sickness.
- Most lead particles in venison are too small to be seen or felt.
- Periodically check grinders for lead fragments.
- Minimize batching of multiple deer to avoid cross-contamination.

Helpful Hints

By Shaun Quissell

In recent months meat inspectors have been noticing changes in custom exempt product labeling that have resulted in noncompliances. North Dakota Administrative Code 7-13-04 outlines labeling requirements for custom exempt carcasses and products:

“7-13-04-01. Marking of products. All custom-exempt plants are required to mark all custom-exempt meat and meat food products, other than poultry, with the words “NOT FOR SALE”, stamped in block letters. The letters must be at least three-eighths of one inch in height.”

This is the same requirement within USDA’s regulations and has been for many years. The observed noncompliance does not state this but rather “NOT FOR RESALE”. Although this may be close, those two letters make a big difference. Next time you order packaging supplies be sure to verify with your supplier that the correct words are used.

Resources for Small Plants

Wisconsin HACCP for Meat Processor: www.meathaccp.wisc.edu

Penn State Food Safety: www.foodsafety.psu.edu

FSIS Small Plant News: www.fsis.usda.gov/Small_Very_Small_Plants/index.asp

U.S. Food & Drug Administration Homepage: <http://www.fda.gov/>