

# NEWS RELEASE

*for immediate release*



**BC Food Processors Association**

## **B.C.'s Meat Inspection Regulation – Making it work**

**(March 29, 2008.)** BC Food Processors Association's new CEO, Nico Human, is enthusiastic about the Association's work to date on B.C.'s Meat Inspection Regulation. "Our job is to help make it work," he says. "We are pleased to partner with the Province of British Columbia on program delivery."

"The Food Processors Association recognizes the burden of compliance for small operations, however food safety is paramount," adds Robin Smith, BCFPA President. "Inspected plants should experience greater market potential to large retail chains and others."

BC's Meat Inspection Regulation, which came fully into force on 30 September 2007, requires all meat for sale in the province to come from a licensed slaughter facility where animals are inspected ante and post mortem. Prior to 2004 only a few facilities in major urban centres met this requirement. Introduction of the Regulation has required slaughter plant operators in most of the province to make significant adjustments to their facilities and practices.

In recognition of this, the Province supports two initiatives that are delivered by the BCFPA. The first is the Meat Industry Enhancement Strategy (MIES). Its goals are to ensure reasonable access to provincially licensed slaughter facilities for all BC regions, increased licensed livestock slaughter capacity, and a basis for future expansion.

The MIES Team consists of a team leader and four part-time field staff in different parts of B.C. The team's primary task is to assist slaughter facility operators through the steps to acquiring a licence from the BC Centre for Disease Control.

At the recommendation of the MIES, the Province also introduced in 2006 a capital cost assistance program, the Meat Transition Assistance Program (MTAP). It provides 50-cent dollars to a maximum level to help defray eligible capital costs for slaughter facility upgrades or new builds. The first phase of the MTAP, which ran from April 2006 to September 2007, has been fully committed, and announcement of the second phase is pending.

The two programs have been instrumental in the successful award of provincial licences to 18 plants (6 poultry, 12 red meat and one mobile red meat) that were not licensed before 2007. About 40 more are still working towards licensing. The BC Centre for Disease Control also introduced a Class C transitional licence so that facilities with approved plans could continue to provide slaughter service while completing their licensing requirements. Currently there are 9 such licences in place.

"The BCFPA has put in a tremendous effort in support of the plant operators," says Human, "and it should be noted that there has been an unprecedented level of support from agencies including the Ministry of Health, BC Centre for Disease Control, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. We are in constant discussion with all of them and have been able to work together to address a number of challenges plant operators have brought to us."

The level of effort required for licensing has proven to be significant, involving additional compliance requirements for waste, potable water, zoning and more. "Again in these areas, the BCFPA has had great success working with Ministry of Environment, the Health Authorities and other agencies," Human points out. "With the cooperation of MOE we were able to help develop a slaughter waste Code of Practice that works effectively on the ground. Our capable staff continue to work closely with these agencies and others."

"The goals of the Meat Inspection Regulation are to protect food safety and maintain consumer confidence and to ensure a viable meat processing sector. That's what the BCFPA is here to support," concludes Smith. "The work so far has been a highly productive partnership with government, which should be positive for the livestock and meat sector in future. We are committed to help making it work."

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### **For further information:**

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BCFPA programs and services [www.bcfpa.ca/mies.html](http://www.bcfpa.ca/mies.html)

BC's Meat Inspection Regulation under the Food Safety Act:

[www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/protect/meat\\_inspection.html](http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/protect/meat_inspection.html)

BC Centre for Disease Control licensing requirements: [www.bccdc.org/content.php?item=144](http://www.bccdc.org/content.php?item=144)