

# NEWS RELEASE

*for immediate release*



## **BC FOOD PROCESSORS ASSOCIATION CRITIQUES FARM GATE MEAT SALES BILL**

Abbotsford, BC, December 1, 2009. "The proposed Food Safety Amendment (Farm Gate Sales) Act takes a step backwards in protecting public health while doing nothing significant to help encourage safe, local food production," says Robin Smith, Chair of the Board of Directors of the BC Food Processors Association (BCFPA). "There are better ways to do this: and we are working on them."

BC introduced the Meat Inspection Regulation in 2004. "BC has no choice but to join the rest of the world in response to increasing public health concerns about animal- and food-borne disease," Smith emphasizes. "Livestock for meat should be processed in licensed plants, inspected by a third party, and the meat sold through clean, refrigerated facilities."

For BC, stepping into compulsory meat inspection has been a challenge, given the geography of the province and its diverse farm and food businesses. The Province has invested almost \$12 million over the past five years in programs to assist slaughter plants with the transition to licensing. The goal of these programs is to ensure adequate access to licensed slaughter capacity for all livestock species all around the province. Smith points out: "Many smaller meat processors have invested millions of dollars to ensure that local livestock can be processed in humane, sanitary, and safe conditions. These processors are established all over rural and urban British Columbia, which gives consumers the opportunity to purchase safe local meat products right in their communities."

"I understand the challenges facing the livestock and meat sector," says Smith, "but I think this bill is a step backwards. It proposes exempting a category of sellers (at the farm gate) from the Meat Inspection Regulation. It compromises the development of high-quality, competitive meat products for new markets, and it denies opportunities to guarantee product quality, to strengthen farm and food organizations and businesses, and to build stronger community-based food systems."

BCFPA CEO Nico Human agrees: "BC needs strong livestock and meat businesses that produce high-quality, safe, local, fully traceable products with an appropriate standard of care and level of oversight. Exemption is not the way to go. Flexibility is. That's why we are working on a couple of new initiatives announced by the Minister of Healthy Living and Sport in April of this year. Through our Meat Industry Enhancement Strategy, we are working with remote sites on compliance options that will be appropriate for them, and also on development of a couple of prototype slaughter units for demonstration purposes."

Smith summarizes: "Balancing the interests of industry (producers and processors) and the consuming public is always a challenge but we believe that in partnership with government we

are evolving an approach that will enable BC to have licensed, inspected slaughter facilities and a locally-based livestock and meat sector with a strong future. The safety of the consumer must always come first.”

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The **BCFPA** ([www.bcfpa.ca](http://www.bcfpa.ca)) is a non-profit organization dedicated to represent all segments of the food, beverage and nutraceutical processing industry, and to coordinate common industry activities and resources under one umbrella. The Association represents micro, small, medium, and large processing companies.

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The following reprint of the electronic version of the Proposed Act from the BC Government’s website ([www.leg.bc.ca](http://www.leg.bc.ca)) is for informational purposes only. The printed version remains the official version.

**2009 Legislative Session: 1st Session, 39th Parliament  
FIRST READING**

**BILL M 205 — 2009  
FOOD SAFETY AMENDMENT  
(FARM GATE SALES) ACT, 2009**

**Explanatory Note**

This Bill amends the *Food Safety Act* in order to allow for the sale of locally produced meat to local consumers at the farm gate, without impacting the trade in meat for re-sale.

The Bill exempts a category of sellers from the licensing requirements of the Meat Inspection Regulation. It establishes a separate licensing scheme for these sellers, who must sell at the farm gate.

The Bill adds a purposes section to the *Food Safety Act* to clarify the intent of the Act as a whole. The purpose section includes a provision making it clear that the Act is intended to protect the public, as well as all food producers in the Province.

This Bill addresses concerns over food security, individual health, animal health, the environment, and the economies of small communities.

HER MAJESTY, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of British Columbia, enacts as follows:

**1. The following definition is added to the Food Safety Act: "farm gate"** means land owned, leased, or used by a food establishment to raise animals for sale and includes an individual's residence

**2. The following section is added after s.3 and before s.4 of the Food Safety Act:**

#### **Purpose of Act**

**3.1** The purpose of this Act is to govern the agriculture industry in the Province through efficient, effective and appropriate food inspection systems providing consumers with safe and wholesome British Columbia food products while recognizing the following principles:

- (a) the ability of the consumer to purchase inspected meat;
- (b) the ability to produce and sell wholesome product direct to the consumer;
- (c) that the diverse nature of British Columbian agriculture be reflected by a flexible regulatory system governing food production which supports both large and small producers of food;
- (c) the responsibility of producers and processors of food products to provide a safe and wholesome product;
- (d) that slaughter be conducted in a humane manner;
- (e) that producers, processors and retailers of meat products, government and the consumer have a shared responsibility concerning meat for human consumption;

**3. The following section is added after s.4 and before s.5 of the Food Safety Act:**

#### **Designation of farm gate**

- 5.1**
- (1) Sections 4 and 5 do not apply to food establishments designated as being at the farmgate.
  - (2) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may, by regulation, designate a type or class of slaughter establishment as at the farm gate.
  - (3) A person who operates a slaughter establishment designated under subsection (2) must hold a licence issued under this section.
  - (4) The Minister may issue a licence to a person for the slaughter of animals that are
    - (a) slaughtered by a slaughter establishment for sale at the farmgate, and
    - (b) sold to a consumer for his or her personal use or consumption and where the consumer does not sell or intend to sell the meat or meat product or use the meat or meat product for other commercial purposes.

- (5) It is a condition of a licence issued under subsection (4) that the licence holder comply with this Act and the regulations.
- (6) A designation under subsection (2), in relation to farmgates where animals are slaughtered or processed for food purposes, may be limited, by regulation, to a specified geographical area in British Columbia.
- (7) A person to whom a licence is issued under subsection (4) must pay the prescribed licence fee in accordance with the regulations.
- (8) The minister may
  - (a) amend, add or impose terms, restrictions or conditions on a licence issued under subsection (4), and
  - (b) suspend, cancel or refuse to renew a licence.
- (9) A licence issued under subsection (4) is not transferable.

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