

Reducing the Risk of E. coli and Other Disease Causing Organisms in Slaughterhouses

- Various strains of *Escherichia coli (E.coli)*, *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* are just some of the disease causing organisms (pathogens) that are likely to be found in slaughterhouses.
 - Some pathogens originate from the intestinal track of infected animals and can be brought into the slaughter facilities on the hides and hoofs of animals.
 - It is not possible to eliminate many of these pathogens from animals but there are ways to minimize the risk.
 - Reducing the chances of meat becoming contaminated cannot be accomplished at just one step in the process. Reducing contamination must be considered at **all** steps from receipt of the animal, through processing and shipment of the product.
 - Insist on clean animals from your supplier.
 - Provide clean bedding in your live animal holding areas.
 - Ensure staff are completing carcass dressing in a sanitary manner. Key steps include but are not limited to:
 - Bringing dry animals into the slaughter plant area whenever possible.
 - Removing manure 'tags' where knife cuts will be made during skinning.
 - Using care during skinning to avoid cross contamination from the hide surface to the underlying muscle.
 - Ensuring knives and other equipment are cleaned and sanitized effectively and frequently.
 - Keep the time that carcasses are at room temperature to a minimum.
 - Ensure coolers and refrigerators are maintained at 4°C or lower at all times.
 - Prevent cross contamination by:
 - Using boot baths between slaughter and processing areas.
 - Providing clean smocks for staff entering the processing area.
 - Ensuring staff thoroughly wash their hands when leaving slaughter area and after hands become contaminated.
 - Providing dedicated knives for the slaughter area.
 - Providing dedicated knives for least sanitary parts of the dressing process (e.g. sticking, skinning, bung removal).
 - Consider rotating the type of sanitizer every 6-9 months. Microorganisms can build resistance to the same sanitizer when it is used on a repetitive, long-term basis.
 - Ensure staff is trained in safe food handling practices including: personal hygiene, cleaning and sanitizing of food contact surfaces, utensils and equipment, temperature control and the prevention of cross contamination.
- The Saskatchewan Food Processing Facility Best Management Practices* document contains more information on safe food handling practices and facility operation and maintenance. Please visit:
- <http://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/environment-public-health-and-safety/environmental-health/environmental-health-legislation>
- For more information of food borne illness, please visit:
- <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/food/consumer-centre/food-safety-tips/food-poisoning/eng/1331151916451/1331152055552>
- Anyone requiring additional information is encouraged to contact your local public health inspection office. The link below will provide contact information for public health officers throughout the province:
- <http://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/understanding-the-health-care-system/saskatchewan-health-regions/regional-public-health-inspectors>