Veterinary public health and food safety:
Meat Hygiene: Integrated food safety management principles for red meat

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Introduction
In the red meat industry the integrated food chain approach is internationally recognised as the foundation for both food safety and quality. The red meat food chain is usually divided into pre-harvest, harvest and post-harvest phases and these will be described and discussed. Meat production in the pre-harvest phase may involve veterinary supervision to ensure that meat comes from a healthy animal. Herd or farm status accreditation can be part of this. The harvesting phase starts at slaughter and is called processing. In a formal food chain, it occurs in an abattoir and includes primary and secondary meat inspection. Post-harvesting deals with packaging, distribution and sales of meat products. Veterinarians share responsibilities with medical and environmental health professionals, during the harvesting and post-harvesting phases.

Popularly, the food chain approach is described as “farm to fork” or “stable to table”. This module will describe and critically analyse relevant legislation in South Africa for food safety and quality control during pre-harvesting, harvesting and post-harvesting phases of red meat production and processing. International regulatory norms and guidelines will be examined in the light of long food chains that go beyond country borders. Food safety in short or informal food chains such as those associated with informal goat slaughter, or hunting for venison, will also be critically appraised.

The integrated food chain approach includes hygiene assessment and management systems (HAS) associated with food safety and quality auditing. Practical guidelines on performing and interpreting audits will be included. Auditing that is aligned to the International Standards Organisation (ISO) as well as those of retailers, will be examined. The Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point approach will be examined with reference to the roles of veterinary and para-veterinary professionals in the production and processing of red meat and game.

Other relevant information
- Meat hygiene: Zoonoses and red meat processing
- Meat hygiene: Humane harvesting and welfare auditing in red meat processing
- Meat hygiene: Prevention and control of chemical contaminants and drug residues in red meat
- Meat hygiene: Biosecurity and environmental impacts of red meat production and processing.

More information can be found under the topic International trade and marketing of animal commodities and products:
• General issues associated with international trade
• Standards and norms associated with international trade in animal commodities and products
• Assuring the biological safety of animal production (value) chains.