Rabbit and Poultry Slaughter/Processing Requirements for FSIS Inspection Exempt Producers
Authority: Agriculture Article, §§10-601 *et seq.*, Annotated code of Maryland

Program Purpose: Federal law allows the slaughter/processing for intrastate sale of rabbits and 20,000 poultry of a producers own production annually without continuous inspection by USDA/FSIS. The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's regulations do not consider rabbits and poultry slaughtered under these exemptions to be an approved source so they can only be sold directly to consumers on the farm. Producers that participate in this voluntary program and receive certification will be considered an approved source by DHMH and can sell anywhere intrastate (restaurants, retailers, farmer's markets). Both parts and whole poultry and rabbits certified by this program are allowed to be sold. Meat cannot be ground. The program requires: one person from each facility to attend MDA training, follow basic requirements of the program and access by MDA to conduct inspections. Producers that are not following the requirements at time of inspection will be notified of the non compliances, given time to make corrections and subject to a follow up inspection by MDA. Product that is not in compliance may be retained and disposal required if adulterated or corrections cannot be made. Continued failure to meet the basic requirements or denial of access to MDA for inspection will be grounds for certification revocation. Participation in this program does not guarantee compliance with other federal, state or local requirements (ex. Zoning, Environmental).

I. FSIS Exemptions/Requirements

Must meet all FSIS inspection exempt requirements: Slaughter less than 20,000 poultry per year of own production and/or rabbits for intrastate sales. Sell unadulterated product.

II. Poultry Health/Biosecurity

No slaughter of sick animals – must have an area to segregate sick animals from healthy animals. MDA's Animal Health Section will provide technical assistance in determining if the disease is of public health concern. Animal production living areas must be kept clean and measures in place to minimize rodents. Cleaning and disinfecting between flocks is recommended and may be required if evidence the production living area is contaminated. Feed must be kept clean and stored in a way to prevent contamination including insects and rodents. Withdrawal times for all medications must be followed. The Animal Health Section's diagnostic labs are available for carcass submission and information concerning poultry and rabbit diseases.

III. Slaughter/Processing Structures or Locations

The slaughter/ processing area does not have to be enclosed. All surfaces that will have direct contact with the slaughtered animal must be smooth and impervious and capable of being cleaned and sanitized. Written SSOP for the cleaning and disinfecting of these surfaces required. Overhead, side and ground protection is required when insects, dust, mud, pests or other contamination is likely to occur. Tarps, canopies, netting, and ground cover to prevent splashing are examples of protection that can be used. If there is minimal risk of contamination, the entire slaughter, cut up and packaging can occur outside.

IV. Equipment

Equipment that comes in contact with carcasses must be capable of being cleaned and sanitized. Must have written SSOP's for cleaning and disinfecting equipment prior to slaughter/processing, during slaughter/processing and after slaughter/processing. Knives or other equipment used in slaughter must be cleaned and sanitized prior to cutting up animals.

V. Water

Water used for washing, scalding, chilling or any other purpose that has carcass contact must be potable. A water sample must be tested annually (unless municipal source) and a copy of the test results available during inspection. If using a hose, must be food grade.

VI. Lighting

If slaughter/processing done outside at night or in an enclosure, must have adequate lighting.

VII. Toilet and Hand washing Facilities

Separate toilet and hand washing facilities are not required but anyone involved in the slaughter and processing must have access to toilet and hand washing facilities.

VIII. Temperatures

Thermometers must be calibrated and the dates of calibration be recorded in a cooling log. The animals must be chilled to 41°F within 4 hours of slaughter. Monitoring of the cooling time must be conducted by inserting a calibrated thermometer in the first animal slaughtered and recording the length of time it takes for the carcass to reach 41°F on the cooling log. After chilling, the poultry/rabbit meat must be stored in a cooler at 41°F or less.

IX. Personnel

At least one person at each farm must attend the initial training for MDA Slaughter/Processing and any refresher trainings offered. Initial training sessions will be offered regionally. It is anticipated that a refresher training will be offered once per year and MDA plans to offer both the initial and refresher on line in the future. No smoking, eating or drinking while slaughtering, preparing or handling the poultry. No one with a communicable disease, open sores or infected cuts on their hands or has diarrhea or is vomiting can work in the slaughter/processing area. Clothing must be clean at the start of the process and must be changed if it becomes soiled and inappropriate for other tasks in the slaughter process. (ex. Same person is conducting all slaughter , defeathering, evisceration, cut up – clothing must be changed before handling finished product).

X. Written Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP's), Standard Sanitary Operating Procedures (SSOP's) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) requirements

Written GMP's, SSOP's and HACCP plan must be maintained and any changes to the plan documented.

XI. Compounds

All non food compounds must meet the USDA requirements for the intended use. Proof of compliance with the USDA requirements must be maintained. A listing with NSF (www.nsf.org/usda) or a letter of guarantee from the manufacturer is sufficient proof of compliance. Labeling on compounds (detergents, sanitizers, etc.) must be maintained. If using smaller containers to take to slaughter site, the container should at a minimum have the name of the product.

XII. Packaging/Labeling/Weights

New plastic food grade bags, paper sacks or butcher paper. Must be labeled with name and address of producer, identity of product, Maryland issued number, net weight, "Exempt PL- 90-492", date of slaughter and safe handling instructions. If using random weights, a unit price

must be on the label with a total sale amount. If using a standard weight, not required to indicate a unit price, however, all product must meet or exceed the stated declaration weight. Tare (packaging) cannot be included in the net weight. If selling as packaged goods, a legal for trade scale registered with Weights and Measures is not required. If the product is not packaged, a legal for trade scale registered with Weights and Measures is required. To ensure the correct scale is purchased, it is recommended that you contact Weights and Measures at 410-841-5790 for guidance.

XIII. Offal and Waste Water disposal

Disposal methods must not contaminate or attract insects or rodents to the slaughter/processing area. Participation in this program does not provide for compliance with federal, state or local environmental or zoning laws. It is the producer's responsibility to make sure they comply with any other applicable laws. The Maryland Department of Environment has provided guidance for on farm composting and waste water from poultry and rabbit slaughter.

XIV. Recordkeeping

Written GMP's, SSOP's and HACCP plan.
Poultry/rabbit slaughter dates with number of poultry/rabbits slaughtered each date. Recording slaughter information on a calendar is acceptable.
Temperature control log monitoring poultry cool down and storage.
Proof of compliance with USDA regulations for non food compounds.
Annual bacteriological water test results (must indicate water is potable) unless water is from a municipal source.
Number of sick animals segregated from healthy animals.
If selling to a restaurant or retailer, must provide and keep a copy of an invoice that includes date of delivery, your name and address, buyer's name and address, identity and quantity of product (number of units, unit weight and total weight – ex. 10 - 25 lb boxes 250 lbs).
If selling directly to consumers from the farm or at a farmer's market, a record that includes the date of sale, number sold and location of sale must be kept. (Ex. 5/16/10 On farm, 20 fresh chickens; 5/20/10, Fine Farmer's market, 30 frozen chickens). Recording sales on a calendar is acceptable.

XV. Fees and renewals

Participants must submit an application and a $75.00 fee annually.