



Product Integrity – Species Testing

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) is the Australian Government agency responsible for regulating the Australian export meat industry. DAFF has responsibility for ensuring Australian product intended for export meets export legislation i.e. is safe, wholesome, accurately described and in compliance with importing country requirements.

DAFF requires under legislation that all product descriptions for meat and meat products be truthful and include correct identification of the species of that product (Schedule 7, Part 1 of the *Export Control (Meat and Meat Products) Orders 2005*).

DAFF conducts random species testing at all export registered meat establishments. These tests ensure that species descriptions are accurate and minimise the risk of meat substitution.

The test method used by DAFF is Enzyme-Linked ImmunoSorbent Assay (ELISA). This method involves the use of species specific reagents, which change colour to indicate the species present. ELISA testing is proven to be effective and accurate and will detect levels of 1% contamination for bovine, caprine, cervine, equine, ovine and porcine species. ELISA testing is an internationally accepted method for species identification.

Australian export registered establishments are tested multiple times each year. The date of each test is random and is determined using software specifically designed for the purpose. The frequency of testing for each establishment is determined based on the risk category of that establishment.

There are three risk categories, which are described below:

Level 1 – testing twice a year	Level 2 – testing six times a years	Level 3 – testing eight times a year
Full-time DAFF presence; and	Establishments with full time DAFF presence processing two or more species; or	Establishments with random part time daily DAFF presence processing two or more species; or
Single species production	Canneries with full time DAFF presence; or	Canneries with random part time DAFF presence; or
	Establishments with full time DAFF presence and have a domestic meat program in place; or	Establishments without daily DAFF presence such as cold stores and further processing establishments
	Establishments with random part time daily DAFF presence with single species production	



All testing is conducted by DAFF officers using test kits provided by a National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia (NATA) accredited laboratory.

Testing is conducted on a random selection of product. Product is selected by DAFF officers so as to ensure that all types of products for human consumption are included. Further, if the establishment being tested stores product originating from multiple establishments then samples are selected to ensure product from each originating establishment is tested.

The number of samples taken for testing is proportionate to the amount of product held at that establishment at the time of testing.

No. Items in Store	Sample Size
0-12 cartons/carcases	All
13-50 cartons/carcases	13
51-100 cartons/carcases	14
101-800 cartons/carcases	16
801-3000 cartons/carcases	17
3001 or more cartons/carcases	27

Additional note on Horse Meat:

Australian export registered establishments produce small quantities of horse meat for human consumption for the export market. These establishments are regulated by DAFF and operate under full government regulatory oversight, with daily DAFF veterinary officer presence.

All Australian export registered meat establishments operate under Approved Arrangements. These arrangements contain detailed conditions to ensure export legislated requirements are met, including; product integrity, food safety and wholesomeness. All horsemeat exported from Australia is clearly identified and certified as horse meat.

Export registered meat establishments are subject to regular DAFF audit and verification processes to ensure ongoing compliance with Australian export legislation and importing country requirements.

To protect product integrity in relation to species, all export registered meat establishments that produce horse meat operate a segregation program. The on-plant DAFF veterinarian ensures that the segregation program is being effectively implemented by the establishment.

No horse meat produced at export registered establishments is provided onto the domestic market.