

Meat and Meat Products

User guide to Standard 2.2.1 – Meat and Meat Products

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Background

In this user guide, the ‘old Code’ means Volume 1 of the *Food Standards Code* (the *Australian Food Standards Code*). The ‘new Code’ means Volume 2 of the *Food Standards Code* (the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*). The ‘New Zealand regulations’ means the *New Zealand Food Regulations 1984*.

In adopting the new Code in November 2000, the Ministerial Council agreed to a two-year transition period. After this, the new Code will replace both the old Code and the New Zealand regulations.

During this two-year phase-in period, foods in Australia may comply with either the old Code or the new Code (but not a combination of these). In New Zealand, foods may comply with the old Code or the new Code or the New Zealand regulations (but not a combination of these).

After this, the old Code and New Zealand regulations will be repealed and all food sold in Australia and New Zealand will have to comply with the new Code.

The new Code will mean changes in the way manufacturers and retailers make and present food for sale.

The Australia New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA) has developed this user guide, in consultation with Australian and New Zealand government and industry representatives, to help manufacturers and retailers interpret and apply Standard 2.2.1 – Meat and Meat Products in the new Code. The guide may also be used by food officers to help interpret food standards in the new Code.

This user guide, unlike the standard itself, is not legally binding. If in any doubt about interpreting the standards, you should seek independent legal advice.

As well as complying with food standards requirements, you must also continue to comply with other legislation. In Australia, this legislation includes the *Trade Practices Act 1974*, the *Imported Food Control Act 1992* and State and Territory Fair Trading Acts and Food Acts. In New Zealand, this legislation includes the *Food Act 1981* and *Fair Trading Act 1986*. In addition, Australian standards relevant to the meat processing industry are adopted by various legislation in all states and territories.

Purpose

This user guide clarifies the intent of many of the provisions in Standard 2.2.1 and explains how other standards in the new Code relate to meat and meat products. It should be used in conjunction with Standard 2.2.1 itself.

What has changed?

The meat standards in the old Code and the New Zealand regulations contained provisions regulating the use of food additives and processing aids. The new Code has generic standards that cover all foods including meat and meat products. All foods unless specifically exempted must comply with these generic standards. The generic standards include:

- Labelling standards grouped together in Part 1.2 – Labelling and Other Information Requirements. These include provisions relating to naming foods, ingredient labelling, percentage labelling, nutrition labelling, and date marking;
- Standard 1.3.1 – Food Additives, which regulates the use of food additives in the production and processing of all foods including meat and meat products;
- Standard 1.3.3 – Processing Aids, which regulates the use of processing aids in food manufacture, including meat and meat products;
- Standard 1.6.2 – Processing Requirements, which sets out requirements for processing foods, including the following meat and meat products:
 - poultry (Section 4)
 - dried meat (Section 5)
 - crocodile meat (Section 6)
 - game meat (Section 7)
 - fermented comminuted processed meat (Section 8)
 - production of fermented comminuted meat which has not been cooked (Section 9)
 - semi-dry heat-treated processed meat (Section 10).

Note that Standard 1.6.2 – Processing Requirements does not apply to food produced in, or imported into New Zealand.

Certain meat products are not specifically regulated in Standard 2.2.1 because, as mentioned in *What has changed?*, generic standards and/or provisions elsewhere in the new Code contain all the provisions needed to regulate them. Examples include self-basting poultry and smoked meats.

- Self-basting poultry may be considered a mixed food, so the separate ingredients of the product (poultry and oil, margarine or butter) are regulated under the standard(s) for each of the food ingredients in the mixed food.
- Smoked meats are not regulated specifically in the new Code. One of the generic labelling requirements is that a label on a package of food must include a name or description of the food sufficient to indicate its true nature, or its prescribed name if there is one. Thus, a meat product produced using a smoking process would be required to be labelled with an appropriate description, e.g. ‘smoked’. Where a smoked flavour is produced by addition of a liquid, the smoking is not a process but a flavour addition. Such a product should not be labelled ‘smoked’ because it may mislead or deceive consumers. ‘Smoke-flavoured’ would be a more appropriate description for a product made using a liquid smoke flavour.

Standard 1.3.1 regulates the use of flavourings in processed foods including meat products.

Clause 1 of Standard 1.2.2 – Food Identification Requirements regulates naming of food.

For further information on naming foods and ingredients, including additives, see ANZFA’s user guides on representations about food and on ingredient labelling.

Definitions of meat and meat products

The new Code provides several definitions for meat and meat products (see details below). However, it does not provide definitions for minced meat, comminuted meat, mechanically separated meat, frozen meat or poultry because the meanings of these are widely agreed and understood.

Attachment 1 lists some examples of products defined in the standard and summarises the meanings of some phrases used in the definitions. Attachment 1 also includes a separate table on food additive permissions for meat and meat products, with examples of foods included in each category.

There is a general legal requirement that food sold by manufacturers and retailers must be safe and suitable for human consumption. Processors of raw meat products must also comply with relevant hygiene and processing standards in both Australia and New Zealand to produce a safe and suitable product.

Clause 1 of Standard 2.2.1 defines the meat and meat products regulated by the standard.

Meat

In the new Code meat means the whole or part of a carcass of:

any buffalo, camel, cattle, deer, goat, hare, pig, poultry, rabbit or sheep that is slaughtered other than in the wild state; or

any other animal that is permitted for human consumption under a law of a State, Territory or New Zealand.

The definition of meat does not include eggs or fish because these foods are regulated elsewhere in the new Code.

Meat flesh

Meat flesh is defined as skeletal muscle to distinguish it from other parts of a carcass of meat such as offal, bone and bone marrow. Meat flesh includes any **attached** fat, connective tissue, rind, nerves, blood vessels and blood, and skin (if poultry).

Offal

Offal is defined to distinguish it from meat flesh and to assist with provisions relating to offal such as labelling requirements. Offal means parts of a carcass such as blood, brain, heart, kidney, liver, pancreas, spleen, thymus, tongue and tripe, but excludes meat flesh, bone and

bone marrow. The use of offal in meat products is restricted subject to specific labelling requirements (see *Declaration of the presence of offal in food*).

Clause 4 of Standard 2.2.1 restricts the use of offal subject to labelling requirements.

Processed meat

Processed meat as a category is a continuum of products ranging from meat products with a minimum of 30% meat to products that are all meat flesh. The meat must have undergone a method of processing other than boning, slicing, dicing, mincing, or freezing. It includes manufactured meat and cured and/or dried meat flesh in whole cuts or pieces.

Examples of processed meat containing between 30% and 66% meat would include some sausages and some frankfurts, whereas processed meats that contain more than 66% meat would include products like ham or prosciutto. The definition for processed meat encompasses the processes of smoking, drying, salting, curing, fermenting, pickling, cooking, and forming. Processed meat may contain other ingredients but must contain no less than 300 g/kg meat, i.e. they must consist of at least 30% meat.

Products containing less than 300 g/kg meat, e.g. hamburger patties or meat loaf, are not prohibited by the new Code. They are regarded as mixed foods and must comply with the general food standards and any food product standards that apply to components of the food.

Cured and/or dried meat flesh in whole cuts or pieces

Cured and/or dried meat flesh in whole cuts or pieces is meat flesh including attached bone and must contain at least 160 g/kg meat protein on a fat-free basis, i.e. it must have at least 16% protein on a fat-free basis. Note that fat-free meat flesh is measured analytically by determining the amount of meat protein present, it does not mean meat flesh without visible fat.

Cured and/or dried meat flesh in whole cuts or pieces is exempt from the percentage labelling requirements of the new Code. This is in contrast to, for example, manufactured meats under Standard 2.2.1, which are not exempt from percentage labelling.

Standard 1.2.10 – Characterising Ingredients and Components of Food regulates percentage labelling requirements for all foods.

For further information on percentage labelling requirements see ANZFA's user guide on percentage labelling.

Manufactured meat

Manufactured meats are a category of processed meats. They are products made from meat and are usually processed with other foods. They must contain at least 660 g/kg meat.

Manufactured meat also includes any cured and/or dried meat flesh products in whole cuts or pieces that have had other foods added to them.

Manufactured meats are not exempt from percentage labelling requirements.

Sausages

Sausages are a category of processed meat. They are minced processed meat and/or comminuted meat, which may be combined with other foods, and are encased or formed into discrete units. They do not include meat formed or joined into the semblance of cuts of meat. A separate definition for sausages assists with referring to the other provisions in the Code that specifically regulate sausages including compositional requirements (see *Composition of sausages*) and food additive permissions for sausages.

Clause 3 of Standard 2.2.1 regulates the specific composition requirements for sausages.

Category 8.3 in Schedule 1 of Standard 1.3.1 – Food Additives lists specific food additive permissions for sausage and sausage meat containing raw unprocessed meat.

Meat pies

A meat pie must contain at least 250 g/kg of meat based on the total weight of the pie including pastry. This is a major change from the New Zealand regulations, which specify that the meat content be based on the filling only, i.e. minus the pastry.

Limit on fluid loss from thawed poultry

Poultry is purchased by weight, and the presence of additional moisture in frozen poultry would increase the final weight of the product. To help prevent deceptive or misleading

practices, the standard requires that fluid loss from frozen thawed poultry be limited to 60 g/kg, as determined by the method prescribed in the schedule to the standard.

The schedule to Standard 2.2.1 prescribes the method for determining fluid loss from thawed poultry.

Composition of sausages

Adults and children consume significant amounts of processed meat products (including sausages), often using them as substitutes for meat flesh. Therefore, it is important to maintain the nutritional profile of these products. To assist in this, the standard requires that sausages must contain at least 50% fat-free meat flesh. The standard also requires that they have a maximum of fat allowed. This maximum is 50% of the fat-free meat flesh. For example, if you make a sausage with 600 g fat-free meat flesh per kg of final sausage, you are allowed to have up to 300 g per kg of fat in the final sausage (i.e. 50% of the 600 g fat-free meat flesh per kg).

Note that fat-free meat flesh is measured analytically by determining the amount of meat protein present, it does not mean meat flesh without visible fat.

There is no specific restriction on the use of offal as part of the meat content of sausages because the presence of these ingredients must be declared (see *Declaration of the presence of offal in food*).

Clause 3 of Standard 2.2.1 gives compositional requirements for sausages.

Clause 4 of Standard 2.2.1 sets out requirements for the declaration of the presence of offal.

Category 8.3 of Schedule 1 of Standard 1.3.1 – Food Additives lists food additives permitted in sausages.

Declaration of the presence of offal in food

If offal is present in food it must be clearly declared. Where the product is not required to bear a label, e.g. if the product is sold unpackaged, there is a requirement that the presence of offal must be declared to the purchaser.

Certain types of offal (brain, heart, kidney, liver, tongue and tripe) can be declared either by the class name, 'offal', or by the specific name, e.g. liver can be referred to as 'offal' or as 'liver'. Other types of offal (such as blood, pancreas, spleen and thymus) are not permitted in meat and meat products unless labelled specifically by name. That is, their presence may not be declared only by the class name 'offal'.

Clause 4 of Standard 2.2.1 sets out requirements for the declaration of offal.

Mandatory fat declaration where a reference is made to the fat content of minced meat

Minced meat may contain significant amounts of fat. The requirement for a declaration of percentage fat content for packaged or unpackaged minced meat, where implied or express reference is made in relation to its fat content, allows consumers to make informed purchasing decisions. The declaration is not required if no reference is made to the fat content of the minced meat. However, the use of words such as 'lean' or 'trim' in relation to minced meat may trigger the fat declaration requirement.

Meat is exempt from nutrition information labelling if it is exempt from general labelling requirements under Standard 1.2.1. For example, where it is packaged in the presence of the purchaser, or made and packaged on the premises from which it is sold, nutrition information labelling is not required. However, if a nutrition claim is made for any meat, including minced meat, full nutrition information is required. This information must be included on the label of packaged meat or, in the case of unpackaged meat, displayed either on or in connection with the display of the food, or provided either verbally or in writing to the purchaser on request.

Complying with the requirement for fat content declaration in minced meat is not of itself considered a nutrition claim and so does not trigger the full nutrition information requirement.

Clause 5 of Standard 2.2.1 describes cases where declaration of the fat content of minced meat is required.

Clause 3 of Standard 1.2.8 – Nutrition Information Requirements lists foods exempt from nutrition information labelling requirements.

Clause 1 of Standard 1.2.8 – Nutrition Information Requirements defines nutrient claims and lists exemptions.

Information required in relation to raw meat joined or formed into the semblance of a cut of meat

Manufacturers and retailers must declare clearly when raw meat has been joined or formed in the semblance of a cut of meat, using a binding system without the application of heat, to ensure that consumers are not misled about the nature of the product. Such products must also include cooking instructions on how the food should be cooked to ensure that it is safe to eat. This is because risk of microbial contamination is greater for formed meats than for meat in whole cuts and pieces. This information must be included on the label or, if the food is not required to be labelled, must be provided to the purchaser.

Clause 6 of Standard 2.2.1 sets out information requirements for formed or joined raw meat.

Inspection brands

The colours permitted in the food additives standard may be used as surface brands for the purpose of identification, such as grading or inspection, and their presence is not required to be declared on the label. Information on other food additives permitted in meat or meat products is given in Category 8 of Schedule 1 of Standard 1.3.1 – Food Additives.

Clause 7 of Standard 2.2.1 permits colours for use as surface brands and exempts their use from being declared on the label.

Labelling of fermented comminuted meat

The labelling requirements set out in clauses 8–10 of Standard 2.2.1 are designed to promote public health and safety by advising consumers that a product is either uncooked, heat treated or cooked. Note that there is very specific wording required on the label of these products and also specific wording that is required to be displayed in connection with the food if these products are sold unpackaged. Consumers can then avoid storing uncooked products in contact with foods that are to be eaten without further cooking. For example, some salamis are uncooked and, although they themselves are safe to eat without being cooked, they should not be stored in contact with other foods that are to be eaten without further cooking.

Clauses 8 – 10 of Standard 2.2.1 detail labelling requirements for fermented comminuted meats.

Where can I get more information?

For more information on the new standards call the:

Standards Information Unit

1300 652 166 (Australia)

0800 441 571 (New Zealand), or

Email: [**advice@anzfa.gov.au**](mailto:advice@anzfa.gov.au)

See also

ANZFA's user guides on:

- Percentage Labelling
- Representations about Food
- Ingredient Labelling.

Attachment 1

Examples of meat and meat products and their additive permissions

Examples of meat and meat products as defined in Standard 2.2.1 – Meat and Meat Products

The following table lists some examples of products defined in the standard and also explains the meanings of some phrases used in the definitions. The different definitions are based on the proportion of meat or meat flesh or meat protein in the product.

Definition	Types of products
Meat	Any part of the carcass including offal and fat.
Meat flesh	Skeletal muscle with any attached animal rind, fat, blood, connective tissue, nerve, blood, blood vessels and skin (in the case of poultry).
Meat protein on a fat free basis	Meat protein measured analytically. Does not mean meat without visible fat.
Fat-free meat flesh	Analytically estimated from measurement of meat protein.
Offal	Includes blood, brain, heart, kidney, liver, pancreas, spleen, thymus, tongue and tripe, but excludes meat flesh, bone and bone marrow.
Cured and/or dried meat flesh in whole cuts or pieces	Processed products made from skeletal muscle (see above) that is still in a whole cut or piece. These products must have 16% meat protein on a fat-free basis (see above). Includes ham, bacon, prosciutto, pancetta, and speck.
Processed meat	Any meat that has been processed by a method other than boning, slicing, dicing, mincing, or freezing. These products must contain more than 30% meat where 'meat' includes all parts of the carcass, including offal and fat.

	<p>Includes all manufactured meat (see below).</p> <p>Products with 30–66% meat include some frankfurts, some wursts, some meat pastes and patés.</p>
Manufactured meat	<p>These products must contain at least 66% meat, where ‘meat’ includes all parts of the carcass, including offal and fat.</p> <p>Products with more than 66% meat include cured and/or dried meat in whole cuts or pieces and may include some meat pastes and pates, and some sausages.</p> <p>Includes whole muscle cuts that have been cured and/or dried but which have water or other foods added so that they no longer meet the requirement for 16% meat protein on a fat-free basis, e.g. sandwich ham.</p>
Sausages	<p>Must contain at least 50% fat-free meat flesh. Fat content (measured analytically) must be no more than 50% of the meat flesh content. Sausages are commonly made from unprocessed meat, e.g. beef, pork and BBQ sausages.</p>

Examples of meat and meat products as categorised in Schedule 1 of Standard 1.3.1 – Food Additives

The meat products listed in the table below are numbered and categorised according to the same categories used in Schedule 1 of the food additives standard. Food additive permissions, based on technological need, vary on the basis of production method. These permissions are also shown in the table. Note that each separate category and sub-category have different food additive permissions.

These food categories are classified according to a system developed by the Confederation of Food and Drink Industries of the European Community. The Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants has adopted this system, with some variations, into the draft Codex General Standard on Food Additives.

In this system, foods are ranked in a hierarchy based on the primary commodity they are derived from and the processing they have undergone. For meat and meat products, as shown in the table below, there are five sub-categories (8.1–8.5). The first three of these have further sub-categories, e.g. 8.2 (processed meat, poultry and game products in whole cuts or pieces) is further divided into commercially sterile canned cured meat, cured meat, dried meat, and slow dried cured meat.

8. MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS (including poultry and game)			Schedule(s) of additives permitted			
			2	3	4	Other specific food additives listed in Schedule 1
8.1	Raw meat, poultry and game	Includes uncooked cuts or portions of beef, pork, lamb, veal, rabbit, chicken, duck, turkey, game animals, game birds, as well as offal (such as brain, heart, kidney, liver, tongue and tripe), minced meat, minced meat which may be shaped into patties/rissoles. Excludes raw pickled or salted meats such as raw corned beef and pickled pork (these products belong under 8.2).	No	No	No	No (except as for fresh poultry below)
		Fresh poultry	No	No	No	Yes
8.2	Processed meat, poultry and game products in whole cuts or pieces	Includes salted or smoked or dried or cured and/or cooked whole cuts or pieces of meat (including game) such as raw corned beef, cooked corned beef, pickled pork, roast beef, leg and shoulder ham, bacon, gammon, speck, smoked chicken, turkey, pastrami.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No (except as for sub-categories below)
		Commercially sterile canned cured meat	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Cured meat	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

8. MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS (including poultry and game)			Schedule(s) of additives permitted			
			2	3	4	Other specific food additives listed in Schedule 1
		Dried meat includes beef jerky, biltong, dried/pressed duck. Dried meat is defined in Standard 1.6.2 as having a water content less than 85% and does not include slow dried cured meat.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Slow dried cured meat includes pancetta, prosciutto, parma ham.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8.3	Processed comminuted meat, poultry and game products	Includes all smallgoods such as frankfurts, saveloys, kransky, devon, lap cheong, sucuk sausages, mortadella, some salamis, liverwurst, brawn, Polish sausage, cabanossi, clobassy, mettwurst, pepperoni, strassburg, manufactured hams, weisswurst, some meat pastes or meat spread.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Fermented, uncooked processed comminuted meat products includes csabai, gyulai, mettwurst, pepperoni, toscano, and some salamis and may include such products as lap cheong and sucuk sausages depending on their production method.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (plus those permitted under 8.3 above)

8. MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS (including poultry and game)			Schedule(s) of additives permitted			
			2	3	4	Other specific food additives listed in Schedule 1
		Sausage and sausage meat containing raw, unprocessed meat includes breakfast sausages, BBQ, beef and pork sausages, chipolata, loukanika, Toulouse sausage, as well as some meat patties and some meat rissoles, e.g those made with sausage mince.	No	No	No	Yes (but only those permitted for this sub-category)
8.4	Edible casings	Includes casings made from animal gut/intestine or bladder as well as collagen casings.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (plus those permitted under 8.3 above)
8.5	Animal protein products	Includes gelatine, collagen.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No (plus those permitted under for 8.3 above)