

MEAT HYGIENE (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries) obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Meat Hygiene Act 1994. Read a first time.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Meat Hygiene (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2004 is to include the processing of meat for retail sale within the regulatory scope of the Meat Hygiene Act 1994, from which it is currently excluded. The proposed amendment to the existing legislation would mean, in general terms, that meat processing operations, whether for wholesale or retail sale, fall under a single legislative framework. This approach is consistent with government policy and the recommendations following the national competition policy review of the Meat Hygiene Act 1994.

The principal recommendation of the review of the Meat Hygiene Act 1994, carried out in line with the National Competition Policy Agreement, was to broaden the scope of the act to cover retail meat processing operations, including supermarkets. Retail businesses involved only in the sale of packaged meats would be excluded, as would retail businesses that slice and cut ready-to-eat meats, such as delicatessens.

Currently, the processing of meat for wholesale is regulated under the Meat Hygiene Act 1994, which is administered by the Meat Hygiene Unit of the Department of Primary Industries and Resources. The processing of meat for retail sale is regulated by the provisions of the Food Act 2001 and the Public and Environmental Health Act 1987. These acts are administered and enforced by the Department of Human Services and local government. There are over 500 retail meat outlets in South Australia, including the butchering sections of many supermarkets. Of these, approximately 232 retail meat businesses, including the butchering sections of a number of supermarkets, are accredited under the Meat Hygiene Act 1994 to cover their wholesaling activities. That is, they supply small quantities of meat to other retail outlets, such as delicatessens or supermarkets, or they supply meat to the hospitality and catering industry, such as hotels, restaurants and sporting clubs.

The proposed amendments would not cover retail businesses that sell pre-packaged meats. Retail businesses that sell meat in the same package in which it is received, that is, where no further processing takes place, would remain under the Food Act 2001, administered by the Department of Human Services and local government. Similarly, regulation of businesses that slice and cut ready-to-eat meats for retail

sale, such as delicatessens, would remain under the Food Act 2001.

The inclusion of retail meat processing in the scope of the Meat Hygiene Act 1994 is supported by both the meat industry and the Department of Human Services. A memorandum of understanding between Primary Industries and Resources SA, the Department of Human Services and the Local Government Association of South Australia Incorporated will clearly define the responsibilities of each agency in regard to retail butchering operations. The memorandum of understanding will ensure that retail meat processors will be subject to only one regulatory regime, with the exception of supermarkets that process meat in conjunction with their general food business.

The bill also provides for a person to represent the interests of retail meat processors on the South Australian Meat Hygiene Advisory Council, ensuring that retail meat processors are represented on the council. Since 2001, an open invitation has existed for a retail representative to attend meetings of the council. The bill will formalise the appointment of a retail representative, giving them the same rights and privileges as existing members of council.

Other amendments outlined in the bill are administrative in nature, deleting references to outdated legislation and standards and updating references to organisations and terminology to reflect their current meaning and usage. I commend the bill to honourable members. I seek leave to have the explanation of the clauses inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

EXPLANATION OF CLAUSES

Part 1—Preliminary

1—Short title

2—Commencement

3—Amendment provisions

These clauses are formal.

Part 2—Amendment of Meat Hygiene Act 1994

4—Amendment of section 3—Interpretation

This clause amends section 3 of the principal Act by substituting the definition of *affected with a disease or contaminant* for the definition of *residue affected animal or bird*. This reflects amendments to the *Livestock Act 1997*, where the term is defined.

5—Amendment of section 5—Meaning of wholesome

This clause makes amendments consequential upon the amendment made by clause 4.

6—Amendment of section 9—Composition of Advisory Council

This clause provides that a person be appointed to the Advisory Council to represent the interests of retail meat processors.

7—Amendment of section 12—Obligation to hold accreditation

This clause amends section 12(2)(c) of the principal Act by excluding from the operation of the section further processing of meat that occurs in the course of retail sale, and consists of the storage of meat in the package in which it was received, or the cutting or slicing and packaging of ready-to-eat meat in a supermarket or delicatessen. The clause also defines *ready-to-eat meat*.

8—Amendment of section 29—General powers of meat hygiene officers

This clause makes amendments consequential upon the amendment made by clause 4.

9—Amendment of section 30—Provisions relating to seizure

This clause makes amendments consequential upon the amendment made by clause 4.

Schedule 1—Transitional provision

Schedule 1 provides that a member of the Advisory Council appointed under section 9(1)(c) of the principal Act as in force immediately before the commencement of this measure will continue to hold office for the balance of their term.

The Hon. CAROLINE SCHAEFER secured the adjournment of the debate.