



Job Specification

Position Title: REGIONAL VETERINARIAN
Job Code: AMAPCEO - Veterinary Science, 19PVT
Job ID: 35688

Purpose of Position:

Regional Veterinarians provide professional veterinary science expertise to the ministry, primarily to the Food Inspection Branch. Review and approve activities, animals, carcasses and parts of carcasses as required by Ontario legislation and regulations as appropriate. Develop and deliver technical training to ministry staff and meat plant operators. Evaluate and make decisions related to ante-mortem and post-mortem findings in food animals based on professional experience and scientific principles. Contribute veterinary science expertise to the planning and implementation of programs to assess the safety of meat at licensed facilities related to animal health and welfare, veterinary drug residues, parasites and environmental contaminants. Advise external clients including plant operators, veterinarians, livestock producers and other agencies concerning food animal and veterinary meat hygiene. Acts as Manager, Veterinary Inspection & Audit as required.

Duties/Responsibilities:

Professional, licensed veterinarians are ministry experts in food animal disease conditions and welfare, handling, diagnostics and meat pathology and within the context of relevant legislation and scientific principles. Regional Veterinarians are responsible for:

1. Evaluating situations and providing professional veterinary advice as it pertains to food animal and veterinary meat hygiene.
2. Approving suitable animals, carcasses or parts of carcass for use in the human food chain.
3. Approving plant activities to ensure proper procedure and operations controls are in place within the scope of the Food Safety and Quality Act and the relevant regulations.
4. Approving emergency slaughter as appropriate.
5. Perform veterinary inspections and compliance verification audits of slaughter plants.
6. Support Meat Inspection Program's progressive compliance policy by providing advice to the program and the Regulatory Compliance Unit as appropriate.
7. Conduct verification activities related to Canada's Enhanced Feed Ban regulations as it relates to Specified Risk Material in provincially licensed plants, including joint audits with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.
8. Developing and delivering of technical training material for Meat Inspection Program staff and management.
9. Participating in policy development related to animal health, meat production, veterinary meat hygiene, food animal handling and welfare.
10. Collaborating with other veterinarians, area managers/coordinators and regional managers in developing and delivering monitoring programs for staff involved in animal and carcass inspection procedures.
 - Delivering in-plant programs to upgrade meat inspectors' skills;
 - Presenting new and remedial training
 - Collaborating with Veterinary Scientists and Food Safety Advisors in developing technical training materials for ministry Appointed Veterinarians and Certified Examiners.

Training areas to include:

- i. Food animal anatomy, physiology, pathology and behaviour including animal welfare
 - ii. Pharmacology, microbiology
 - iii. Zoonotic diseases related to veterinary meat hygiene;
11. Participate in investigating complaints from the public pertaining to veterinary meat hygiene, animal health and welfare at meat plants.
 12. Act as expert witness at hearings before the Director, the Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeals Tribunal, and in courts of law.
 13. Maintaining professional veterinary knowledge and skills, plus current food animal and meat industry awareness.
 14. Participate on ministry and interagency veterinary and meat hygiene committees as required.
 15. Emergency response role as required.
 16. Facilitating the dissemination of veterinary meat hygiene information to ministry staff.

17. Contribute to the development of briefing material for ministry senior management.

Knowledge:

Professional licence to practice veterinary medicine in the province of Ontario granted by the College of Veterinarians of Ontario with specialized knowledge in food animal medicine, meat hygiene, veterinary public health, pathology, microbiology or a combination thereof. In-depth knowledge of livestock husbandry and welfare, anatomy, physiology and pathology of food animals (ruminants, avian, exotic, fish, porcine), disease diagnostics and treatment, zoonotic diseases. Superior skills in diagnosing disease conditions of animals during ante and post-mortem inspections, and the ability to recognize the suitability of animals, meat and meat products intended for food and identify associated risks. Knowledge of meat hygiene, meat and meat products. Ability to understand and apply regulatory policies, procedures and standards. Understanding of process control and sanitation practices generally acquired through experience in the regulated food industry. In-depth knowledge of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles and application supported by knowledge of food safety standards and legislation. Demonstrated time management and organizational skills to plan, coordinate and deliver veterinary inspection and audit services, collect and analyze data, evaluate acceptable premises and slaughter/inspection procedures. Excellent communication skills to deal effectively with ministry staff, plant operators and the public when making difficult decisions that affect economic interests, in resolving conflicts and corresponding in writing. Working knowledge of computer applications for internet/computer based research, word processing, spreadsheets, and email.

Judgement:

Under the leadership of the Manager, Veterinary Inspection and Audit, and working within pertinent legislation, branch practices, policies and standards, the Regional Veterinarian must exercise professional judgment in evaluating animals, meat and meat products, situations in meat plants, transport vehicles, etc. to identify hazards that may pose a risk to consumers of Ontario produced meat. Decisions made by Regional Veterinarians have significant implications to the health of consumers of Ontario meat and poultry. Judgment is required to determine the nature and potential impact of a violation; provide advice on suitable corrective and compliance actions to Meat Inspection Program management. This advice may result in serious legal and/or economic consequences for producers or plant operators. As per regulations under the Food Safety and Quality Act, a Regional Veterinarian assigned authority to approve and recommend approval in certain specific circumstances. Examples include: recommending to the Director plans for new licence applications, disposition of animals in certain situations, emergency slaughter, holding animals over at plant, etc. Professional judgment must be used when determining the practices for handling food producing animals with emphasis on human handling and sanitary procedures; in training ministry inspection staff, Appointed Veterinarians, auditors and Certified Examiners. The Regional Veterinarian may be involved in making decisions concerning withdrawal of inspection services, detention and/or condemnation of livestock and/or meat or meat products. Regional Veterinarians are critical to the compliance activities of the ministry and are relied upon for expert testimony at judicial and semi-judicial proceedings. Judgment is exercised in transferring knowledge and expertise to field inspection staff, providing the tools and resources on an ongoing basis.

Accountability - Programs:

Position is directly accountable for providing professional veterinary advice on compliance with various animal and meat related legislation, regulations and policies administered by the ministry/branch.

Accountability - Personnel:

Position works closely with Meat Inspection Program Area Managers/Coordinators, Regional Managers, Inspectors, Regulatory Compliance Unit, Appointed Veterinarians and Certified Examiners.

Accountability - Finance & Material:

Position works with Veterinary Inspection and Audit Unit manager to deliver programs within allocated budget.

Accountability - Impact of Errors:

Errors in judgment could result in the sale/consumption of unsafe meat or meat products, jeopardize consumer health, economic loss to plant operators, livestock producers and communities, and a loss of public confidence in ministry programs.

Contact - Internal:

Regular and ongoing contact with Meat Inspection Program staff and managers, Veterinary Scientists and, to some extent, the Animal Health and Welfare Branch, Food Safety Programs Branch and other branches of the ministry to exchange information and collaborate on projects, to prevent or investigate contravention of the various legislation and regulations regarding food safety and animal health.

Contact - External:

Regular contact with plant operators, livestock producers, Appointed Veterinarians, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) Regional Veterinary Officers and other CFIA staff, meat plant auditors, Certified Examiners, local Public Health Units.

