

Part A: General

1. Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this manual is to set out the Director-General (D-G) specifications for:

- branding of stock, farmed deer and certain specified products,
- the format and performance standards for official devices
- procedures for the production, security and handling by manufacturers and suppliers of official devices.

Application

The branding requirements of this manual will apply only to meat, (slaughtered cattle, goats, horse, pig and sheep), game meat (slaughtered deer), game (e.g. shot deer, hare, rabbit) and possum.

The requirements in this manual for container seals shall apply to all edible products that are exported with MAF official assurances (e.g. meat, game, game meat, possums, seafood, poultry, ostriches and emus).

Background

Branding of stock, farmed deer and certain products are required by Sections 35 and 36 of the Meat Act 1981 and pursuant regulations. Regulations have been made in respect of branding meat, game and game meat. Regulations have not been made in respect of branding seafood, poultry or product from any other avian species.

The brand includes carcass brands, carton seals, intervention seals and reduced sized inspection legends.

The brand and container seals are official devices and are part of the security of New Zealand product that has been found wholesome and fit for human consumption. These official devices also satisfy regulatory authorities and importers in an importing country that products comply with New Zealand law. Furthermore they can provide security against tampering and substitution while products are in transit.

Mandated certification is defined as:

- certificates or marks that are required by statute; or
- indicating a status under statute (e.g. registered); or
- indicating conformance to a legislative or government to government standard; or
- being required for access at the border of an importing country.

The words Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Te Manatu Ahuwhenua Ngaherehere, MAF and the MAF logo are protected. They are owned by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and shall be used in accordance with the law covering the use of brands, trademarks and emblems, in particular the Fair Trading Act 1986, the Flags, Emblems and Names Protection Act 1981 and the Trade Marks Act 1953. The production or use of any MAF devices by non-MAF persons must be approved by the D-G or those people who have delegated authority.

MAF Food is required to maintain a credible system of surveillance and control over the devices to assure the integrity of mandatory certification. MAF Food is responsible for certification and for approving, verifying and auditing the process, approving signatories and authorising supply of official devices. MAF Food acts on behalf of the New Zealand Government as the "competent authority" and is recognised by overseas authorities that depend on MAF assurances.

New Zealand's credibility in the marketplace, and MAF's credibility as the competent authority, must be protected. The use of MAF devices must not bring mandated certification into disrepute. All endorsements associated with an official device must be truthful and verifiable. Supplies of goods (including seals) bearing any official device or Government Coat of Arms can only be purchased from a MAF approved supplier.