

The Vermont Meat Inspection Program provides inspection services to meat and poultry producers that meet minimum Food Safety Standards for facilities, processes, procedures and sanitation. Producers operating under State Inspection have the ability to market their products anywhere within the state for wholesale and retail consumers including hotels, restaurants, institutions, retailers and other wholesalers. The program provides the daily inspection required to 15 different State Inspected establishments whenever they are producing products for sale. These establishments all operate with Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) and written Sanitary Standard Operating Plans (SSOP) in place. There are no fees for inspection for up to 8 hours per day and 40 hours per week. The program also covers 26 custom processing (processing products for the owners own use and "Not for Sale") establishments and 3 custom slaughter establishments for sanitation and recordkeeping as well as approximately 1600 retail establishments. We are also responsible for assuring that operations that are exempt from inspection are still being operated in a sanitary manner so that products do not become adulterated. The program also provides voluntary inspection services for a fee to producers for exotic species such as Bison, Alpacas, Red and Fallow Deer, Yaks, and game birds such as quail, pheasant and partridge as well as assisting the Health Department when producers of rabbits and game birds wish to market their products to restaurants.

The program receives 50% funding from USDA for State Inspection activities. In order for the program to exist it must meet standards that are "at Least Equal to" the federal program. This is accomplished by providing annual self-assessments explaining the processes and procedures used in 9 different categories. They are Statutory Authority and Food Safety Regulations, Inspection, Product Sampling, Staffing and Training, Humane Handling, Compliance, Laboratory, Civil Rights, and Financial Accountability. There are also on-site Federal Reviews of the program every three years and we are scheduled to be reviewed in April, 2017

In addition, all State Food Safety Specialists (FSS) participate in the same training as Federal Consumer Safety Inspectors (CSI) enabling Vermont to participate in the cross utilization contracts with USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) which reimburses the state for 100% of time and travel associated with covering federal plants and provides computers for administering the Public Health Information System (PHIS).

The program is approximately 67% funded by USDA for its activities reducing the burden on state taxpayers for Food Safety Assurances for all Vermont consumers.

For slaughter operations, the inspector is on site from start to finish performing inspection tasks associated with Humane Handling and Ante-mortem and Post-mortem inspection for each animal or bird. There are different inspection techniques for each species.

For processing activities, the Food Safety Specialist will cover several processing plants in a day verifying HACCP activities and sampling protocols as well as Labeling, Food Defense, Recalls, etc.

In addition to the Director of Food Safety and Consumer Protection, the program currently consists of an Assistant State Veterinarian/Assistant Director, Program Chief, Compliance and Enforcement Specialist, 1 Food Safety Specialist III/Enforcement, Investigations and Assessment Officer (EIAO), 1 Food Safety Specialist III/Compliance, 6 Food Safety Specialist II, 2 Food Safety Specialist I and an Administrative Assistant.

Below is a list of establishments receiving on-going technical support. As these operations come to fruition, it is conceivable that the program would be looking for more approved positions to provide the necessary inspection coverage.

New Businesses looking for State Inspection

- 1) David Wright – Bacon plant – Barton
- 2) Pierre Mesa - Beef Jerky – Essex
- 3) Campo Di Vino – Sausage, Ravioli's and meat sauce
- 4) Brian Leach – Red meat slaughter – Pawlet
- 5) Hillier – Smoking and Curing – Fair Haven
- 6) Randy and Lisa Robar – Poultry Slaughter and processing - Barnard (mobile unit)
- 7) Boyle – Poultry slaughter, processing and further processing (curing and smoking poultry) – Isle La Motte
- 8) Bahncks – Pork Processing, curing and smoking– Bridport
- 9) Kyungsoo Lee – Ready to Eat Korean meals - So. Burlington
- 10) Pete's Greens – Pork Slaughter – Craftsbury?
- 11) Mach's – Smoking, curing, red meat processing, cooking - Pawlet
- 12) Longe – Beef Jerky - Swanton

New custom (processing for owners use – Products “Not for Sale”) operations

- 13) Henry's - Pork Processing, curing and smoking – Bennington
- 14) Hill – Red Meat Processing – Island Pond

Starting as retail and progressing into inspection

- 15) Palmer – Springfield
- 16) Sharp/ Delauri – Rutland