Meat Inspection Reform

Towards a Safer, Saner, Simpler Approach to Meat Safety and Trade

Richard Arsenault, dmv MSc - Meat Programs Division

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Outline

Why reform is needed now
What is preventing reform
What is the vision for reform
What are the keys to success
Why Reform?

The basic approach to meat inspection has not significantly changed since Van Ostertag

Everything else has changed

- Animal production practices
- Food technology
- Consumer behaviour
- Trade

...Systems are more and more complex and integrated
“Dissociative” Meat Inspection

The control measures associated with traditional meat inspection remain mostly organoleptic-based. Today’s hazards are not detected by the naked eye. We keep “catching up” with new hazards by layering new requirements on top of old ones but have not critically looked at the old practices. Many historical practices may or may not still be contributing to food safety in a meaningful way and may actually be getting in the way of safer food.

We can no longer afford to keep doing this.
Why Has Reform Not Taken Place Already? ... Because:

Reforms are complicated – science is not black and white and implementing risk management decisions takes time, $$$, and courage.

Talking about where meat comes from isn’t easy – gaining and sustaining consumer awareness of the issues and support for changes is difficult.

Stakeholders who see reform as a “winners and losers” exercise – the “losers” are fighting and blocking the process.

Change management isn’t easy.
What is the Vision?

Veterinary Public Health Medicine must move from being based on carcass inspection to being based on a systems’ approach for food production and food safety that focuses on:

• Current risks and hazards
• Linking controls from gate to plate
• Keeping things simple and practical

The veterinary profession needs to show leadership

• Trans-national initiatives: OIE, One Health, Roundtable
• National initiatives
Keys to Success

Leadership by the Veterinary Community
Expanding the dialogue beyond the usual suspects and building the necessary linkages between historical silos
- Pre-harvest – Harvest – Post-Harvest
- Agriculture and Public Health
- Industry and Public Citizens
- Trading Nations

Public transparency and accountability
Charging what it costs for science-based programs (delivery & development)
Sharing knowledge and adopting common approaches