

Guide for meat processing facilities in the cattle tick free zone

This document provides information for meat processing facility owners/operators in the cattle tick free zone to assist them in meeting their general biosecurity obligation (GBO) when cattle tick carriers are introduced into the meat processing facility.

A **meat processing facility** is defined under the *Biosecurity Act 2014* as “an abattoir or other facility at which designated animals are killed for meat for trade or commerce”.

Under the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries’ [Surveillance Program for Cattle Tick under the Biosecurity Act 2014](#), abattoirs may be subject to surveillance to:

- monitor compliance with the Act and regulation proposed to be implemented under the Act; or
- monitor for the presence or confirm the absence of cattle tick in the cattle tick free zone; or
- monitor the effects of measures taken in response to a biosecurity risk.

General Biosecurity Obligation

The *Biosecurity Act 2014* imposes the general biosecurity obligation which requires all persons who deal with biosecurity matter (cattle tick) or a carrier (cattle), if they know or ought reasonably to know that it poses a biosecurity risk, to take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent or minimise the risk.

The biosecurity manual will prescribe the risk minimisation requirements that a livestock owner must comply with to discharge their GBO.

The meat processing facility may need to apply additional risk mitigation procedures at the facility to be able to demonstrate how they meet their GBO.

This guide provides some procedures that could be implemented to deal with the risk of cattle tick.

Regardless of what risk mitigation processes are applied, it is important to remember the presence of cattle tick or tick fever at a place (including a meat processing facility) in the cattle tick free zone is a notifiable incident for which a person is required to advise an inspector under the *Biosecurity Act 2014* and Biosecurity Regulation 2016.

What are the risk minimisation requirement options?

Cattle (which are classed as high risk cattle tick carriers) may be introduced into meat processing facilities in the cattle tick free zone from a place in the cattle tick infested zone when the risk minimisation requirements have been satisfied and, where applicable, an acceptable **biosecurity certificate** has been issued by an accredited certifier stating the carrier meets the risk minimisation requirements.

The biosecurity manual provides a number of options that meet the risk minimisation requirements for moving cattle to a prescribed facility in the cattle tick free zone.

For feedlots in the cattle tick infested zone, refer to the Biosecurity Manual and [“Procedure for dealing with high risk tick carriers in a stated way”](#).

Procedure	Description	Risk dealt with	Level of risk minimisation	Comment and additional risk mitigation procedures to apply
Manual inspection and chemical treatment	<p>This procedure presents a very low risk of introducing cattle ticks to the cattle tick free zone.</p> <p>This option will allow cattle to be unloaded and spelled at any place in the cattle tick free zone.</p> <p>Manual inspection is by an accredited certifier.</p>	<p>The risk is dealt with by the consignor and accredited certifier.</p> <p>Assuming effective inspection process and chemical susceptible tick, this procedure gives the highest possible risk minimisation.</p> <p>This procedure gives a high level of risk minimisation and poses minimal requirements on the abattoir for further mitigation of risk.</p>	Highest ****	Monitoring of cattle consigned to paddock to ensure effective inspection process and chemically resistant ticks have not survived.
Visual inspection and chemical treatment	<p>This procedure means that there are no adult cattle ticks observed during the procedure but larval or nymphal stages of the cattle tick lifecycle may be present.</p> <p>Visual inspection is by an accredited certifier.</p>	The majority of risk is dealt with by consignor and accredited certifier in the cattle tick infested zone.	High ***	<p>The residual risk is chemically resistant adult ticks or larval and nymphal ticks arriving at the facility.</p> <p>The receiver may need to apply additional risk mitigation procedures at the facility and develop and implement standard operating procedures.</p>
Manual inspection – tick free	This procedure means that no cattle ticks are found during the manual inspection by an accredited certifier.	<p>Assuming an effective inspection process, this procedure gives a high level of risk minimisation.</p> <p>The majority of risk is dealt with by consignor and accredited certifier in the cattle tick infested zone</p>	High ***	<p>The risk is that low level infestation and early stages of the tick lifecycle are not detected and not dealt with by the application of chemicals.</p> <p>The receiver may need to apply additional risk mitigation procedures at the facility and develop and implement standard operating procedures.</p>

Procedure	Description	Risk dealt with	Level of risk minimisation	Comment and additional risk mitigation procedures to apply
Manual inspection – adult tick free	This procedure means that there are no adult cattle ticks detected during manual inspection by an accredited certifier.	<p>Assuming an effective inspection process, this procedure gives a moderate level of risk minimisation.</p> <p>This means the immediate risk of adult cattle tick has been dealt with by consignor and accredited certifier in the cattle tick infested zone.</p>	Moderate **	<p>The risk is that low level infestation and early stages of the tick lifecycle are not detected and not dealt with by the application of chemicals.</p> <p>The receiver may need to apply additional risk mitigation procedures at the facility and develop and implement standard operating procedures.</p>

Procedures to assist meat processing facilities meet their General Biosecurity Obligation

In meeting their general biosecurity obligation, it is recommended that meat processing facility owners/operators establish a set of standard operating procedures that will provide guidance to all staff with the aim to:

- prevent the introduction of cattle tick onto the meat processing facility; or
- manage the biosecurity risk if cattle ticks are found at the facility; and
- prevent the spread of cattle tick from the facility.

The standard operating procedures may include the following:

- Ensuring agents, buyers, consignees, transport operators, accredited certifiers or other relevant people who deal with cattle are aware of the risk minimisation requirements for any cattle tick carrier to enter the meat processing facility.
- Staff are trained and aware of the risk minimisation requirements and the procedures to follow when:
 - booking consignments to inform clients of requirements; and
 - for receiving and unloading cattle tick carriers at the facility; and
 - establishing a procedure to identify cattle tick at any point in the pre-slaughter and slaughter chain processes; and
 - cattle ticks are identified at the facility.
- Cattle are not unloaded unless all paperwork (including National Vendor Declarations, cattle health statements, biosecurity certificates, waybills or movement records) are received and inspected to ensure cattle have met the entry requirements.
 - Biosecurity certificates stating that the cattle tick carrier meets the risk minimisation requirements for the carrier should be retained for 5 years.
- Cattle are inspected as they are unloaded to ensure they are free of adult cattle ticks or that they meet the meat processing facilities' risk minimisation requirements.
- Cattle are held in designated concrete or some other suitable hard standing area until slaughtered.
- Slaughter as soon as practicable after arrival and not more than 72 hours after arrival.
- All drainage from the unloading area, laneways, holding yards and slaughter floor is appropriately managed through an effluent system where it poses no risk of cattle ticks coming into contact with any areas grazed by cattle tick carriers.
- Any solids removed from the drainage system are buried, heaped or mulched in an area inaccessible to cattle tick carriers.
- The complex is securely fenced to prevent cattle tick carriers in adjoining areas from having access or cattle tick carriers arriving at the facility from escaping.
- Vehicle wash down facilities are available if required.