



*Long-Term Thinking
for Today's Issues*

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Small Abattoirs: Issues and Concerns

Position Statement

Introduction

Small abattoirs across the province of Ontario face continual concerns regarding the implementation of tightening food safety and workplace safety rules and regulations.

The perception among farmers is that regulation is the single greatest factor in the closure of abattoirs. While regulation is a factor, there are others that must temper the CFFO approach to this issue.

Important Balancing Factors

Just because an abattoir closed doesn't mean that regulations are the reason. Before a blanket statement is placed that "regulations is closing them down!" consider the following:

1. **Old facilities:** Many of the abattoirs that are struggling with these changes are old facilities which the owners have not chosen to invest in to keep up with modern food processing practices.
2. **Retired owners and lack of succession:** Just like many farm operations, many small abattoirs struggle to be an attractive business option for the next generation.
3. **Grants are available:** There are, and continue to be, cost-sharing grants to help abattoirs make improvements related to new regulations.
4. **There is an industry voice:** The Ontario Independent Meat Packers represent small meat processors across the province.
5. **Food Safety:** The CFFO will not endorse measures that create or increase food risks to consumers.

CFFO Recommendations

The CFFO recommends the following actions need to be taken to support small abattoirs

1. The various regulatory rule-sets enforced by the different enforcement agencies in Canada need to be harmonized with the goal of achieving food safety. However, the approach taken must allow for multiple options that achieve the goal of food safety. Differences in size can result in a disproportionately heavy cost because of prescriptive regulations. A results-based approach would better serve small abattoirs in meeting food safety goals.

2. Non food-safety regulations need to recognize the differences between large scale processing and small facilities that are often family run with little help.
3. Small processors require a neutral appeal process that they can turn to in order to challenge inspection requirements that seem onerous or unnecessary. They must be able to place their challenge within a results-based framework of regulatory requirements. This would have the secondary effect of making inspectors more accountable for the requirements they place on abattoirs and processing plants.
4. There is the need for new grant money to help abattoirs to make adjustments to on-going environmental and food safety regulatory changes.

*Adopted by
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