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Ralphs Meat Company Pty Ltd
Establishment No:260
ABN: 80 080 995 777

To Whom it May Concern

9 April 2003

I wish to inform you of the following;

Ralphs Meat Company Pty Ltd Establishment 260 operate under an Approved Quality Assurance Arrangement (Certificate Number 520) with the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service.

The quality program is a HACCP based system, built upon a sound foundation of pre-requisite programs in the form of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) for the purpose of producing safe meat.

Establishment 260 confirms that the HACCP plan was reassessed in accordance with the US Federal Register Notice 9 CFR Part 417 Docket number 00-002a dated 7 October 2002.

This reassessment determined that E.coli is a hazard likely to occur without the implementation of the HACCP plan.

The HACCP plan has been recently been subjected to audit and was approved by AQIS.

Establishment 260 recognises that despite good manufacturing practices contamination of carcasses can occur. For this reason Establishments 260 has put interventions in place so as to improve microbiological safety of the carcasses.

The interventions which minimize the risk and control O157:H7 include,

Pre-slaughter wash.

Inside out incisions made on all initial hide openings.

Plugging of oesophagus.

Tying and bagging the bung.

Bagging the tail.

Knife trimming on the slaughter floor at the final trim station.

Carcass spacing so as to avoid any possible cross contamination.

Chilling/freezing programmes that inhibit the growth of pathogens.

Knife trimming at the boning room pre-trim station.

These interventions are verified by microbiological testing for E.coli O157:H7.

At Establishment 260 a carton of fresh trim is selected at random each production day.

The product selected represents the days lot.

A 70g sample is excised from the carton by the QA Monitor and placed into a sterile plastic bag.

The sample is placed in a plastic icebox with a cool pack and sent the Melbourne Diagnostic Unit University of Melbourne for analysis.

The Melbourne Diagnostic Unit is accredited by the National Australia Testing Authority as an approved laboratory.

All samples are tested by using the Etest technique.

We have sampled products in our boning room daily since commencing operations September 2000.

In that time approximately 600 samples have been analysed and all results shown that E.coli O157 : H7 was not detected or tested negative.

The O157:H7 testing is supported by the ongoing ESAM program at Establishment 260.

A Carcass is randomly selected from each 300 lot and tested for generic E.coli.

In addition a carcass is randomly selected from each 1500 lot and is tested for salmonella.

All samples are analysed by the Melbourne Diagnostic Unit.

All current ESAM results are below the national average.

Establishment 260 is committed in its endeavour to the production of meat in the highest level of safety at all times.

The information documented above has shown that Establishment 260's reassessed HACCP plan is effective and has continued to reduce E.coli O157:H7 below detectable levels.

This ensures that products produced by Establishment 260 are being produced to the highest degree of safety.

"Only product compliant with HACCP requirements and tested negative for E.coli O157 : H7 is shipped from Establishment 260 .



Gus Speakman
Quality Assurance Manager
Establishment 260