

May, 2003

To Whom It May Concern

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

- 1- Frigorifico Suc. Carlos Schneck S.A. (Establishment N° 52) is approved by Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries (MGAP – Uruguay) to produce for export of bovine meat.
- 2- In Uruguay HACCP Program is mandatory. The Company has implemented HACCP since Jan 25, 1999. It has been evaluated and approved by National Authorities and audited by inspector of USDA. The Pathogen Reduction (PR) component mandated a program of bacteriological testing of bovine carcasses for the presence of *Escherichia coli* and *Salmonella spp* bacteria to verify the effectiveness of process controls for hygiene and sanitation under the plant's HACCP program.
- 3- The HACCP Program:
 - Complies with MGAP guidelines for meeting FSIS Pathogen Reduction/HACCP requirements.
 - Is audited by on-plant MGAP Inspectors
 - Audited at least each month by external MGAP Supervisors
 - Was audited by FSIS officers in 2002 and 2003 and accepted as satisfactory.
- 4- In the last two years, Salmonella has not been detected in any randomly selected carcass sample tested.
- 5- The Company also:
 - complies with MGAP regulations (Official Regulation of Veterinary Inspection N° 369/83)
 - is licensed by National Meat Institute INAC and MGAP for the slaughter of cattle for the production of meat for the Uruguayan market.
- 6- In relation to *E. coli* 0157:H7, establishment 52 confirms that its HACCP Plan has been reassessed in accordance with 'Federal Register Notice 9 CFR Part 417 Docket Number 00-022 N dated 7 October 2002 and titled *E. coli* 0157:H7 Contamination of Beef Products'. The HACCP team concluded, and the Senior Management Team agrees, that *E. coli* 0157:H7 is considered to be a hazard not reasonably likely to occur on meat products produced.
- 7- The reassessed HACCP Plan includes the following interventions and other measures, to reduce eliminate or control *E. coli* 0157:H7:
 - Washing or rejection of cattle with heavy hide faecal contamination
 - Occlusion of the oesophagus after stunning and/or bleeding
 - Use of 2 knives for hide removal procedures

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SUC. CARLOS SCHNECK S.A.

- Identification and removal by knives in carcass where faecal/ingesta leakage is suspected or occurs during dressing slaughter procedures. (PCC 1 - HACCP Plan)
- Line speeds appropriate to providing adequate time for operators to complete inspection and hygienic dressing of the carcase
- Sanitizing hands and equipment between carcases.
- Prevention of carcass to carcass cross contamination by spacing on lines and in chillers.
- Chilling and freezing regimes to control microbial growth.

This procedures are verified by Quality Control and Official Inspection.

- 8- The efficacy of those interventions are verified by microbiological testing of product for E.coli O157:H7 at the rate of 5 samples/day of production of manufacturing beef nominated by the Customer for export to the USA.

In the years 2000 and 2001 due to sanitary situation in Uruguay, the exports to U.S.A. were discontinued. In the last 2 years 158 samples from cartons of manufacturing beef have been tested for E. coli O157:H7 and none has returned a "positive" detection. If a "positive" detection were made, procedures are in place to prevent shipment of product. Only product that is compliant with HACCP requirements and tested "negative" for E.coli O157:H7 is shipped.

The samples are tested using the AOAC Official Method N°2000.14, Gold-Labeled Immunosorbent Assay (GLISA)

- 9- Following the reassessment of Establishment 52 HACCP Plan and its continued effective operation, as detailed above, Establishment 52 has concluded that the prevalence of E. coli O157:H7 has been reduced to undetectable levels.

Suc. Carlos Schneck S.A. is committed to producing the highest quality and safest product possible.

If you require further information please feel free to contact me.



Dra. ~~Cristina~~ López
Quality Assurance Director of
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