1 Scope

This Standard covers fresh, fresh chilled, or fresh frozen rabbit meat cuts and edible offals intended for markets, direct human consumption, or for further processing. It covers provisions on food safety and specification requirements of rabbit carcasses.

2 Normative References

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all their contents constitute the requirements of this document. The latest edition of the referenced documents (including any amendments) applies:

Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS)-Department of Agriculture (DA). (2022). General standard for contaminants and toxins in food and feed (PNS/BAFS 194:2022)

BAFS-DA. (2022). Prepackaged fresh chilled and fresh frozen meat — Product standard — Labeling (PNS/BAFS 339:2022)

BAFS-DA. (2022). Veterinary drug residues in food — Product standard — Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) (PNS/BAFS 48:2022)

BAFS-DA. (2022). Rabbit — Code of Practice — Slaughtering (PNS/BAFS 327:2022)

BAFS-DA. (2023). Primary and postharvest food and feed — Product standard — Microbiological criteria (PNS/BAFS 372:2023)

National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS)–Department of Agriculture (DA). (2012). Rules and regulations on hygienic handling of chilled, frozen, and thawed meat in meat markets. (DA Administrative Order No. 6, series of 2012). https://nmis.gov.ph/images/pdf/ao-06-2012.pdf

NMIS–DA. (2012). Rules and regulations on hygienic handling of newly slaughtered meat in meat markets. (DA Administrative Order No. 5, series of 2012). https://nmis.gov.ph/images/pdf/ao-05-2012.pdf

3 Terms and Definitions

For the purpose of this Standard, the following definition shall apply:

3.1
carcass
includes the whole body skeletal musculature and bone extending to and including the hock joint (tarsus) and knee joint (carpus), without the head (UNECE, 2013)

3.2
competent authority
government authority or official body authorized by the government that is responsible for the setting of regulatory food safety requirements and/or for the organization of official controls, including enforcement (Codex Alimentarius Commission [CAC], 2022) In the context of the DA, it refers to the bureau or agency mandated by law with responsibility and competence for ensuring and supervising the implementation of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures regulations, or standards (BAFS-DA, 2022)

3.3
fabrication
any means of cutting and/or altering the physical characteristics of carcass or meat into standards table/manufacturing cut but not its chemical composition for the purpose of satisfying customer's specification and/or for further production requirements (Department of Agriculture, 2004)

3.4
labeling
includes any written, printed, or graphic matter that is present on the label, accompanies the food, or is displayed near the food, including that for the purpose of promoting its sale or disposal (CAC, 1991; DA-DOH, 2015; DA-BAFS)

4 Recommended carcass handling prior to fabrication

4.1 Fresh, chilled and frozen rabbit carcass and cutting facilities shall comply with all the relevant regulations of the competent authority. All rabbit meat cuts shall originate from healthy animals slaughtered in establishments subject to official approval and official control systems applied according to food safety and inspection rules from the competent authority.

4.2 Cutting, trimming and boning of cuts shall be accomplished with sufficient care to maintain cut integrity and identity and to avoid unnecessary cutting on the lean

portion. Ragged edges shall be removed close to the lean surfaces. Except for cuts that are separated through natural seams, all cross-sectional surfaces shall form approximate right angles with the skin surface. Minimal amounts of lean, fat, or bone may be included on a cut from an adjacent cut. For boneless cuts, all bones, cartilage, and visible surface lymph glands shall be removed.

5 Rabbit meat cuts

5.1 The rabbit carcasses and cuts shall be obtained after slaughtering following the PNS/BAFS 327:2022 (Rabbit — Code of Practice — Slaughtering)

5.2 A “six-piece cut-up” cutting scheme may be used by cutting the carcass into (1) two forelegs, (2) two hind legs, (3) loin, (4) rib cage, (5) two flank, and (6) tail back



5.3 Retail Cuts

The retail cuts of rabbit carcass shall be composed of the following:

5.3.1 Hindleg

Hindleg should be separated from the rest of the carcass by cutting through the hip joint, separating the head of femur and acetabulum. The hindleg cut should be composed of femur and radio-ulna bones with the surrounding muscles.

5.3.2 Front leg

The front leg should be separated by cutting through the natural separation of the scapula from the ribcage. The front leg cuts shall be composed of scapula, humerus and radio-ulna bones with their attached muscles.

5.3.3 Rib cage-neck

Ribcage-neck is the part containing the thoracic region including all the ribs, and should be separated from the remaining parts by cutting perpendicularly to the backbone.

5.3.4 Loin

The loin part should be composed of all the loin (longissimus) muscles.

5.3.5 Tailback

The tailback is a bony cut composed of the ilium, sacrum and part of the caudal vertebrae.

5.3.6 Flank

The flank should be separated from the loin. It should be composed of the thin abdominal muscles.

6 Edible Offals of Rabbit Carcass

Edible offals of rabbit carcass shall be composed of the following:

6.1 Head

The whole head is skinned or scalded, including the ears.

6.2 White offals include the following organs:

a) stomach;
b) intestines; and
c) mesentery.

6.3 Red Offals include the following organs:

a) heart;
b) liver;
c) lungs (including esophagus and trachea);
d) kidney; and
e) spleen.

7 Contaminants

The rabbit meat cuts shall conform to contaminant limits and levels based on the following PNS:

a) Microbiological contaminants - limits set in PNS/BAFS 372:2023 (Primary and postharvest food and feed — Product standard — Microbiological criteria);
b) Chemical contaminants - Maximum Levels (ML) set in PNS/BAFS 194:2022 (General standard for contaminants and toxins in food and feed); and
c) Veterinary drugs - Maximum Residue Limits (MRL) set in PNS/BAFS 48:2022 (Veterinary drug residues in food — Product standard — MRL).

8 Labeling

Where applicable, labeling of rabbit meat cuts shall meet the requirements of the following standards and regulations:

a) PNS/BAFS 339:2022 (Prepackaged fresh chilled and fresh frozen meat — Product standard — Labeling);
b) PNS/BAFS 384:2024 (Packaged primary and postharvest foods — Product standard — Labelling);
c) DA Administrative Order (AO) No. 5, series of 2012 (Rules and regulations on hygienic handling of newly slaughtered meat in meat markets); and
d) DA AO No. 6, series of 2012 (Rules and regulations on hygienic handling of chilled, frozen, and thawed meat in meat markets).

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Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS)-Department of Agriculture (DA). (2022). Prepackaged fresh chilled and fresh frozen meat — Product standard — Labeling (PNS/BAFS 339:2022)

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