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**GENERAL AND MANDATORY RULES CONCERNING THE
SLAUGHTERING AND DISSECTION OF POULTRY WITH
PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO WATERFOWL**

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SUMMARY

The authors refer about the evolution of the Economical European Community (EEC) Legislation regarding the slaughtering houses. The changes induced in Italy by the approval of the Communitary and the National Laws are discussed. The effects of some proposal for further Regulations under examination of the EEC Council are debated

The structure of poultry slaughtering houses and of poultry meat processing houses has been changing in these last twenty years similarly to what happened to mammal slaughtering and processing houses. The technological improvement of the killing technology determined a big improvement of the hygiene and healthy of the processed meats. Certainly the technical evolution was important in determining the observed improvement of meat hygiene but legislation approved by European Economical Community (EEC) and then by Italy was of fundamental importance.

In 1972 following DPR 967/72 ⁽³⁾ may small slaughtering houses, family managed, were outlawed. A big number of slaughtering houses closed down and that one remained were obliged to rebuild the activity. These slaughtering houses locally commercialized small quantities and often "from producer to consumer", they were located near sales and in some cases they processed waterfowl carcasses of low quality slaughtered by big slaughtering installations.

DPR 967/72 ⁽³⁾, by forcing most of these small slaughtering houses to close down improved directly hygiene. As a corollary the first disassembly lines started to be built and the waxing machines started to be commonly used for removing the down from waterfowl carcasses.

Contemporary to the development of technology the percentage of presence of Veterinarians in the slaughtering houses was increasing. The necessity of an inspection of waterfowl carcasses and cuts determined a

starting connection between the slaughtering companies and the European Veterinary service.

Following this first act the approval of the DPR 503/82 ⁽⁵⁾, further increased the sanitary level of the slaughtering houses even if, on our opinion, the complete taking up of this law must be still reached.

The DPR engaged the EEC norms and banishes the double possibility of meat production still in force for mammals (see Dir 91/497 - 91/498/EEC) ^(10,11).

DPR 503/82 ⁽⁵⁾ assigned the competence of verifying the adequacy of the slaughtering houses to local authorities (in Italy the Regional Districts). The Italian Healthy Ministry get the list of the slaughtering and meat-processing houses and is the only authority which can issue the identification number for the slaughtering houses.

This way to operate displayed the different efficiency of Regional Sanitary Districts (UU.SS.LL.) in Italy. Some Districts worked very efficiently (by controlling all the slaughtering houses bearing to the District and by prescribing the necessary adjustments). Other UU.SS.LL. worked insufficiently (see circular of the Italian Ministry of Human Health n. 14 of June, 6, 1990) ⁽¹⁾. Notwithstanding DPR 503/82 ⁽⁵⁾ allowed to Districts to rule the minimum requirements for authorizing small slaughtering houses, built by producers, to sell directly their products, actually no Italian District legislated on this matter.

The problem which regards the production of effilee waterfowl still provokes particular interest. Notwithstanding complete evisceration is advisable from a sanitary point of view, several acts repealed in part the duty of complete evisceration: DPR N.1000 November, 12, 1976 ⁽⁴⁾ delayed the duty of complete evisceration till Aug, 18, 1982; Law n.175 May, 30, 1984 ⁽¹⁴⁾ and D.M. Dec, 29, 1984 ⁽²⁾ delayed the duty of complete evisceration till the penalties approved by EEC Council which should have been applied in Italy within Aug, 15, 1986. These last penalties are not yet in force and consequently DPR May, 17, 1988 n. 193 ⁽⁶⁾ delayed the duty of complete evisceration under condition that effilee carcasses must not be dissected or processed (5% of the effilee carcasses must be inspected if lot is smaller than 500, larger percentages are scheduled for larger lots).

Effilee carcasses must be signed by a mark or an impression displaying the name and the address of the slaughtering house. In European Countries the problem of commerce of effilee carcasses will continue also in the future. The DPR 503/82 ⁽⁵⁾ modified by DPR 193/88 ⁽⁶⁾ completely harmonizes the Italian laws to the basal directive 71/118 of February, 15, 1971 ⁽⁷⁾ with

following changes so that the adequacy of Italy to the directives of the EEC is at a good level.

The last Directive approved by the Council (Directive 91/494) ⁽⁹⁾ regards the rules for commerce of fresh waterfowl meat within the EEC and between EEC and other Countries. This last Directive completes the basal Directive 71/118/EEC ⁽⁷⁾ and defines some problems connected to meat exchange in relationship to prophylaxis of Avian influences and New Castle disease (use of live vaccine).

The import of waterfowl meat from Third Countries in past times was mostly ruled by bilateral consents between the exporting Country and the importing European Country till the approval of Directive 90/539 ⁽⁸⁾.

Actually, a proposal of further Regulations is under examination of the EEC Council (90/C 84/05 of February, 12, 80 modified by 91/276/07 of October, 4, 91) ^(13,12) to put fresh waterfowl meat on the market. If these new Regulations will be approved as proposed, they will come into force immediately in all EEC. These new Regulations will harmonise the legislation concerning the slaughtering and dissection of waterfowls all over the EEC. However, these new Regulations, will still maintain exemptions for slaughtering houses which commercialize small quantities from producer to consumer. Finally, these new Regulations will definitively abrogate the Directive 71/118 ⁽⁷⁾ in force from more than twenty years.

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