

## THE MEAT PRODUCTS REGULATIONS 2003 – SUMMARY GUIDANCE NOTES

These Guidance Notes are designed for **butchers** and similar small businesses that make and sell meat products. Comprehensive Guidance Notes covering all aspects of the new Regulations are available from the Food Standards Agency – see *section 5 below*

### 1. Why have new Regulations?

Although the Meat Products and Spreadable Fish Products Regulations 1984 have been the basis for meat product labelling for some time, there have been several changes in labelling laws which make it necessary to have new regulations. The main change has been a new European definition of meat for labelling purposes, which is different from the definition currently used in the UK. The new definition defines meat as “skeletal muscle with naturally included or attached tissue”, and sets specific limits for the amount of fat and connective tissue (i.e., rind, tendon, sinew, skin etc.) allowed (see table below). The definition specifically *excludes* MRM, feet and trotters, tail, and head meat but includes cheeks (Masseters). It also excludes non-muscle cuts such as liver, kidney, heart etc. **Products are still allowed to contain all of these ingredients – they will just need to be described differently, and they cannot count towards the declared meat content.**

	Pork	Birds and Rabbits	Beef, Lamb and other species
<b>Fat:</b>	30%	15%	25%
<b>Connective tissue:</b>	25%	10%	25%

*Throughout this Guidance, the phrase “EC meat” is used to mean “meat according to the new European definition”.*

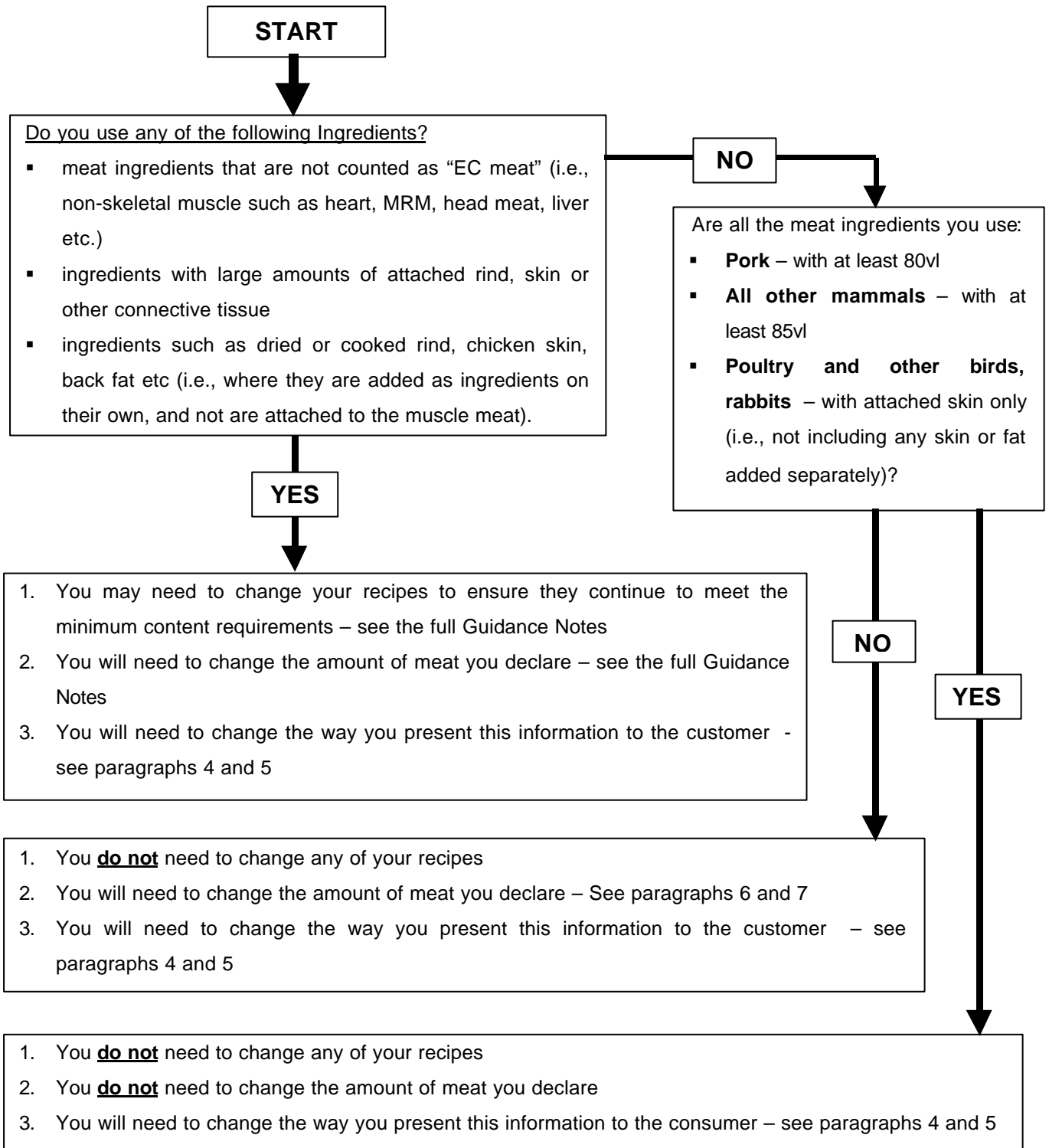
### 2. What are the main changes?

There are already limits on fat in the existing Regulations, but the new EC meat definition now has lower limits. There are also limits on connective tissue, which are new. **Products are still allowed to contain ingredients that do not meet these limits.** However, where meat ingredients have more fat or connective tissue than allowed, the excess must be deducted from the meat content, and must be declared separately in the list of ingredients (if there is one).

The other two main changes that will affect you are:

- The minimum meat contents required for sausages, burgers, pies etc. are now based on the new EC definition. Because the new definition has lower limits for fat, this means that the actual minimums are lower. However, the amount of lean meat required stays the same (provided the connective tissue is within the limits).
- The way the meat content is declared is now different: Instead of giving a “minimum meat content (%)”, you will have to give the actual meat content (%) of each species.

### 3. Will I have to change anything?



### 4. What products require a meat content declaration?

*Note – this paragraph applies to products sold loose, and not prepacked.*

Any food that contains “EC meat” needs to be labelled with a QUID declaration. (If the food contains meat-based ingredients such as kidney, liver, heart, offal etc, but no “EC meat”, a QUID is **not** required).

Note that it is the amount of “EC meat” that needs to be QUIDed. Any ingredient that is not “EC meat” does not need to be QUIDed. For example:

Product	QUID required for:	QUID <u>not</u> required for:
Pork and Leek Sausage	Pork	Leek
Steak and Kidney Pie	Steak (beef)	Kidney
Liver Pate	Any muscle meat present	Liver
Haggis	Any muscle meat present	Stomach, Intestine, Offal etc,

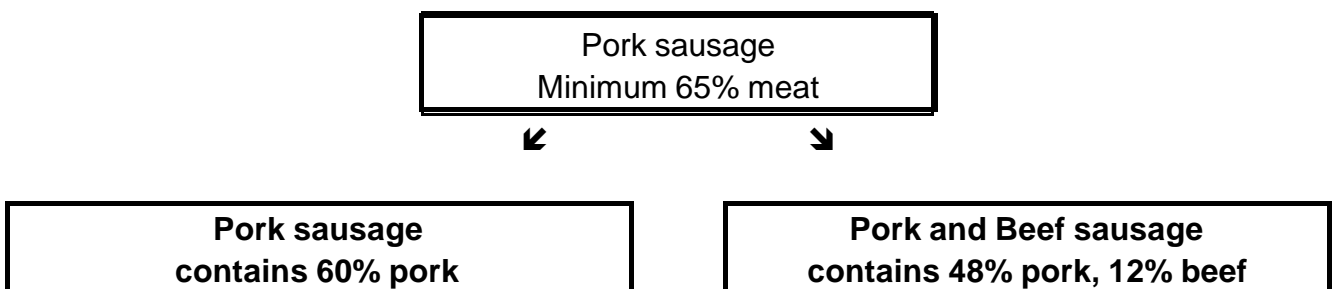
However, the following types of foods **do not require** any QUID declaration:

- Mince and other meat sold on its own and containing no additional ingredients.
- Sandwiches, filled rolls etc.
- Pizzas and similar products
- Single portion salads
- Food sold from a catering premises.

N B Regardless of whether a QUID is required, products must still contain the minimum amount of meat required to meet the compositional requirements

## 5. How do I present the information to the consumer?

Under current rules, you will be declaring the meat content in the form “contains minimum x% meat”, which relates to the *total* meat. The changes depend on whether one, or more than one species of meat ingredient is used. If more than one is used, you will need to declare each species separately. For example, a pork sausage presently being labelled minimum 65% meat, under the new Regulations might contain only 60% “EC pork” (see section 4 above), or if contains pork with beef will be labelled 48% pork and 12% beef.



Currently, most businesses will declare a lower percentage than the product actually contains, in order to give a “margin for error”, or to take account of the variability in production and the natural variability of the meat ingredients. The new declaration is no longer a *minimum* content, but an *actual* content – and must **accurately reflect** the proportion of ingredients going into the mixing bowl. However, it will still be acceptable to state a percentage that makes allowances for this variation.

## 6. How do I work out my new meat content percentage (QUID)?

The following explanation assumes that you have followed the flow chart at Paragraph 3.

Up until now, you will have been working out your meat content declaration by simply dividing the weight of the meat ingredients by the total weight of the product. Now, however, there are stricter limits for fat. If your meat ingredient contains more fat than is allowed by the new definition, you will not be able to count all of your ingredient towards the meat content. Fat content can be estimated by the visual lean, and any change to the meat content can be estimated without the need for chemical analysis. **NB – It is very important that you estimate the VL of your ingredients as accurately as possible.** The method in the Annex shows you how to work out how much of your ingredient you can declare as “EC meat”.

## **7. Where can I get more information?**

Comprehensive Guidance Notes covering all aspects of the new Regulations are available from the FSA. The Guidance can be downloaded from **[www.food.gov.uk/](http://www.food.gov.uk/)** - or obtained by phoning 020 7276 8154.

Businesses with specific queries may like to contact their Local Trading Standards (or home authority if appropriate). Contact details are available from the FSA website – [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk)

## MEAT CALCULATION – TABLE AND EXAMPLES

### How to use the table

First, you need to know the fat content of your ingredients. This is based on an estimation of the visual lean (VL). **It is very important that you estimate the VL as accurately as possible.**

Read across under the heading for the species of meat you are using. The number is the percentage of your meat ingredient that you can count as meat towards your QUID declaration. If you fall into the shaded area (i.e., where the number is 100%) this means that **all** of your ingredient can count (i.e, because you are within the limit for fat).

Column 1	How much of my ingredient counts as “EC meat”?	
Visual Lean (VL)	Pork	All other mammals (inc. Beef and Lamb)
100	100	100
95	100	100
90	100	100
85	100	100
80	100	96
75	96	90
70	90	84
65	84	78
60	77	72
55	70	66
50	64	60

**Poultry, Other Birds, and Rabbits** – Where skin or fat is added separately, this does not count towards the meat content. Where a product contains (e.g.,) chicken meat with *attached* skin, as well as chicken skin added separately, the QUID for “chicken” must be based on the weight of the chicken with *attached* skin only.

### Method

- If you have one meat ingredient:

Step 1 – [weight of ingredient] x [percentage “EC meat”] = [weight of “EC meat”]

Step 2 - [weight of “EC meat”] / [weight of product] X 100 = meat declaration (%)

- If you have two or more meat ingredients (including ingredients of the same species):

You need to do Step 1 for each ingredient, and then add up the total weight of “EC meat” you have. Then in Step 2 divide this total “EC meat” by the weight of ingredients (the example on the next page for a beefburger shows this in practice).

## Examples

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### Pork sausage – ingredients:

7kg	Pork forequarter 75VL	<b>Total product = 10kg</b>
1.5kg	Rusk	
1.45kg	Water	
0.05kg	Seasoning	

Step 1 - With 75VL Pork we can count 96% - so:  $96\% \times 7\text{kg} = \mathbf{6.7\text{kg}}$

Step 2 - Calculate the QUID:  $6.7\text{kg} / 10\text{kg} = \mathbf{67\%}$

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### Beefburger – ingredients:

3.5kg	Beef clod and sticking 85VL	<b>Total = 7.5kg</b>
3.0kg	Beef shoulder trimmings 70VL	
0.95kg	Water	
0.05kg	Seasoning	

Step 1 - With 85VL Beef we can count 100% - so:  $100\% \times 3.5\text{kg} = 3.5\text{kg}$   
With 70VL Beef we can count 84% - so:  $84\% \times 3.0\text{kg} = 2.5\text{kg}$

Step 2 - Calculate the QUID:  $3.5\text{kg} + 2.5\text{kg} = 6\text{kg}$   
 $6\text{kg} / 7.5\text{kg} = \mathbf{80\%}$

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