

RULES RELATED TO FOOD AND FOOD PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL ORIGIN

*Dr. P.C. Alex, Associate Professor
University Veterinary Hospital, Kokkalai*

Judicial system of India has three basic tiers; Courts at district level, state level and national level. The main functions of the court are interpretation of laws, invalidation of laws/rules that violates the principles stated in the constitution, enforcement of laws and legislation on issues which are not covered by any written laws.

A Veterinarian should have a fair knowledge of all the subjects of Veterinary Sciences. He should be acquainted with the animal related Acts and the legal procedures in the criminal courts. Some of the important Rules related to Foods and Food products of Animal origin are briefly mentioned in this article.

Two sections of the Indian Penal Code are related to Food and Food Products.

Section 272: Deals with adulteration of food or drink. Punishment is imprisonment upto six months and or fine which may extend to Rs.1000/-.

Section 273: Deals with sale of food articles which has been rendered or has become noxious/unfit for food or drink.

Frauds in the sale of milk

(i) Addition of water: Detected by (i) determination of specific gravity of milk, (ii) Presence of nitrates in the milk.

Common methods in the adulteration of milk are (i) reduction of fat by adding water and by skimming of milk.

(ii) Addition of thickening agents such as starch and gelatin to increase the consistency of milk.

(iii) Addition of colouring agent to make milk more attractive.

(iv) Addition of preservatives (formalin, boric acid, hydrogen peroxide, sodium bicarbonate etc.)

(v) Accidental adulteration with urine, dung, dirty water etc.

Frauds in the sale of ghee

Vegetable oils, hydrogenated oils, animal fat etc. are used for adulterating ghee.

Frauds in the sale of meat

Costly or superior quality meat are substituted with cheaper and inferior quality meat. The common methods used for the identification of meat of various species of animals are by (a) physical examination, (b) chemical examination and (c) immunological methods.

Proper ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection is

necessary to avoid sale of meat unfit for human consumption.

Travancore-Cochin Public Health Act, 1955 Chapter XII, Food Control

Salient points are mentioned below

This Act prohibits the sale of unsound food. It is presumed that any food found in the possession of a person or his employees who is in the habit of keeping, storing or preparing such food for sale for human consumption has been kept for the same purpose.

No person shall knowingly consume the flesh of any animal, which has died on account of natural causes.

No person is expected to bring into any local area without the written permission of the Health Officer/Veterinary Surgeon, the flesh of any animal slaughtered outside the local area other than a licensed slaughter house. Any flesh brought into the locality in violation of the above section can be seized by the Officer concerned. Cured/presented meat, meat brought in for self use and meat that is transported/carried through the local area are exempted. The Health Officer has the authority to enter premises used for food trade and conduct inspection. He may examine or cause to be examined any person engaged in selling or preparing food for sale for the presence of infectious diseases. If the Health Officer has reason to believe that milk/dairy products is the source of an infectious disease, he may seek all necessary information from the person supplying the milk/dairy products and may conduct inspection of the Dairy suspected. He may make an order prohibiting the supply of any milk/dairy produce from such Dairy and this order shall be cancelled on rectification of the defects noticed.

As per the Government Notification No. 81650/F2/62 Health dated 05.02.1963 all the powers conferred by Section 9 of the Act has been given to Veterinary Surgeons of AH Department also.

The Kerala Panchayat Act 32 of 1960 (Chapter V)

Slaughter Houses

The owner of any place, which is used as a slaughter house has to apply to the executive authority for a licence. Slaughtering of animals is generally permitted only in licensed slaughter houses. There shall be separate slaughter houses for pigs. The slaughter houses should be away from dwelling places or public roads. Only licensed butchers are to be engaged for the purpose of slaughtering animals and the slaughter time is from 6 am to 11 am and 3 pm to 6 pm. Animals that are certified to be

free from contagious diseases are only to be admitted to the slaughter houses. The certificate will be valid only for 24 hours and a register showing all relevant details is to be maintained by the person in charge of the Slaughter house. No certificate shall be granted in respect of a bull, bullock, cow, calf, or buffalo unless the animal is over 10 years of age and is unfit for work and breeding or the animal has become permanently incapacitated. Diseased, dying or dead animals are not to be brought to slaughter houses. No person is permitted to sell meat in the slaughter house premises, but the offal, skin etc. may be sold to permitted purchaser. The meat is to be sent to the stalls as quickly as possible. Animals before slaughter shall be taken to the waiting sheds where they could be tethered and fed for 12 hours.

All carcasses are to be inspected carefully and stamped by the examining authority. The Veterinary Surgeon having jurisdiction over the area has authority to conduct surprise checks. Unfit meat shall be seized and destroyed.

Meat stalls

All meat stalls vending meat from animals slaughtered in a slaughter house in a panchayat area shall be within the limits of that panchayat area. The meat stall shall be located only in approved places. The stall holder shall put up in front of his stall a sign board showing his name and stall number.

The meat offered for sale shall be of animals slaughtered

in a public slaughter house and must be wholesome. The stamped portion of the animal slaughtered shall be preserved until all the meat is sold out. Offal, skin, etc. shall not be brought to the stalls. All unwholesome meat, offal, skin, entrails etc. found in the stall shall be seized and destroyed by the executive authority. The instruments and other articles in the meat stall shall always be kept clean. Bones and other refuse shall not be thrown out.

Kerala Municipality Act 1960, Chapter XII, regulates the Municipal slaughter houses, sale of meat, milk, fish etc. No licence is required for a place used for the selling of preserved flesh or fish contained in airtight and sealed receptacles. It is the duty of the Commissioner to make provision for the constant and vigilant inspection of animal carcasses, meat, poultry, flesh, milk, ghee and any other articles brought to any place for the purpose of sale. It is the responsibility of the Commissioner, with the sanction of the council, to regulate the sale of articles in public places.

The power to implement the rules and laws of the municipality is vested with the Municipal Commissioner/Person authorized by him as per the Municipal Act. Schedule V of the Act deals with the penalties to be imposed for violating the provisions of the Act.



OBITUARY

Dr. Kuruvilla Varghese (34) - a 1988 batch graduate from COVAS, who did his post graduation in Animal Nutrition, passed away on 12-03-04 after a brief illness. He has been working as Deputy Manager at the KLD Board at Mattupetty. He has associated himself with the Association activities whole heartedly and has been lending a helping hand to fulfil our vision. His demise is a great loss for the Association and we deeply mourn your untimely departure. He leaves behind his wife Dr. Sunu and children Vivek and Raichu.



Dr. Mercy Roy (40), Senior Veterinary Surgeon, Kuzhalmannam, Palakkad, passed away on 17th, June 2004 in a tragic accident. She belongs to 1979 batch. A warm hearted and successful practitioner, she shall particularly be remembered for her sincere and dedicated service. She is survived by her husband Adv. Roy Kurian, President, District Consumer Forum, Palakkad and daughter Anjali. Our heartfelt condolence to the bereaved family and may her soul rest in peace.

