EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

EOI Reference	2024-1080-EOI101	EOI Close Date	

Project Code	2024-1080	Research Organisation	All Things Meat
Project Title	Criteria for offal disposition following plant stoppage		

Project Summary

This project aims to develop and test a disposition protocol to enable offal that has not been removed from a body when a plant breakdown occurs to be assessed for human consumption rather than condemned.

When the slaughter chain is stopped for more than 2 hours, uninspected offals from slaughtered cattle are condemned. This project aims to compare offals that are currently condemned with those processed from a normally operating chain. By comparing offals processed when there is greater than 2-hour delay with those processed from a normally operating chain, the project aims to develop a disposition criteria to enable offal that has not been removed from a body when a plant breakdown occurs to be accepted for human consumption rather than condemned.

Type of Industry Participation Required

Consultation
Provide Data
Provide Samples
Steering Committee
Telephone Interview

Detailed Requirements for Participation

1. **Steering Committee Involvement**
   Participants will join an industry Steering Committee comprised of representatives from key stakeholders such as the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry (DAFF), AMPC, AMIC, and other industry members. The Steering Committee will meet quarterly to provide strategic guidance, monitor the project's progress, and ensure compliance with legislative standards.
2. **Sampling and Data Collection**
   Participants will collect samples of offal from breakdowns that exceed two hours. The offal types required for assessment are:
   Group 1: Head, tongue, and tail
   Group 2: Red viscera
   Group 3: Green viscera
   Each abattoir will assign a project lead (e.g., QA Manager) responsible for coordinating the sampling process, ensuring that data loggers are placed correctly for temperature recording, and following uniform sampling methods as outlined in the protocol. All microbiological testing will be conducted by a NATA-accredited laboratory.
3. **Legislative Compliance**
   The project will comply with Australian Standard AS4696:2023, particularly Section 11 concerning chilling and freezing of offal, as well as the Microbiological Manual for Sampling and Testing of Export Meat and Meat Products.
   Participants must ensure their offal collection processes meet these legislative requirements during trial conditions.
4. **Organoleptic Assessments**
   QA officers or laboratory technicians from each participating abattoir will perform organoleptic assessments on the collected offal samples. These assessments will evaluate the appearance, smell, and texture of offal to determine its suitability for human consumption. Findings will be documented for each offal type using a standardized sensory assessment sheet provided in the work instructions.
5. **Microbiological Testing**
   Participants will be responsible for collecting at least 200 grams of offal tissue per sample to ensure the microbiological testing meets industry standards. The testing will focus on Total Viable Count (TVC) and E. coli levels to assess the safety and suitability of the offal following prolonged breakdowns.
6. **Refrigeration Index (RI) Monitoring**
   Participants will be required to monitor and report the Refrigeration Index (RI) of offal processed during the trial. The RI is a critical measure for evaluating whether offal has been adequately chilled according to AS4696:2023 standards.
7. **Protocol Review and Trial**

Participants are expected to review and provide feedback on the trial protocol, particularly in terms of its feasibility and relevance to their operations. Once the protocol is finalized, abattoirs will trial it and provide feedback on its implementation.

Benefits of Participating
Participating abattoirs will benefit from: 1. Waste reduction: The project will establish a validated protocol to safely harvest and process offal that would otherwise be condemned after a breakdown, reducing waste and improving profitability. 2. Compliance with standards: Participants will gain insights into optimizing their microbiological testing, food safety processes, and compliance with regulatory standards for export. 3. Shaping industry standards: By contributing to this project, participants will help shape protocols and guidelines that could benefit the broader industry.

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