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DRAFT EAST AFRICAN STANDARD

Rabbit meat (carcasses and cuts) — Specification

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

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Foreword

Development of the East African Standards has been necessitated by the need for harmonizing requirements governing quality of products and services in the East African Community. It is envisaged that through harmonized standardization, trade barriers that are encountered when goods and services are exchanged within the Community will be removed.

In order to achieve this objective, the Community established an East African Standards Committee mandated to develop and issue East African Standards.

The Committee is composed of representatives of the National Standards Bodies in Partner States, together with the representatives from the private sectors and consumer organizations. Draft East African Standards are circulated to stakeholders through the National Standards Bodies in the Partner States. The comments received are discussed and incorporated before finalization of standards, in accordance with the procedures of the Community.

East African Standards are subject to review, to keep pace with technological advances. Users of the East African Standards are therefore expected to ensure that they always have the latest versions of the standards they are implementing.

EAS nnn-n was prepared by Technical Committee EAS/TC 004, *Meat, poultry, game, eggs and their products*.

Rabbit meat (carcasses and cuts) — Specification

1 Scope

This Draft East African standard specifies the requirements, sampling and method of test for rabbit meat (carcass and cuts) intended for human consumption.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

CAC/GL 50, *General guidelines on sampling*

CAC/MRL 2, *Maximum residue limits for veterinary drugs in food*

CAC/RCP 58, *Code of hygienic practice for meat*

CODEX STAN 192, *General standard for food additives*

EAS 38; *Labelling of pre-packaged foods — Specification*

EAS 39, *Hygiene in the food and drink manufacturing industry — Code of practice*

ISO 4833-1, *Microbiology of the food chain — Horizontal method for the enumeration of microorganisms — Part 1: Colony count at 30 degrees C by the pour plate technique*

ISO 5961, *Water quality — Determination of cadmium by atomic absorption spectrometry*

ISO 6633, *Fruits, vegetables and derived products — Determination of lead content — Flameless atomic absorption spectrometric method*

ISO 6637, *Fruits, vegetables and derived products — Determination of mercury content — Flameless atomic absorption method*

ISO 6579, *Microbiology of food and animal feeding stuffs — Horizontal method for the detection of Salmonella spp.*

ISO 6888-1, *Microbiology of food and animal feeding stuffs — Horizontal method for the enumeration of coagulase-positive staphylococci (Staphylococcus aureus and other species) — Part 1: Technique using Baird-Parker agar medium*

ISO 7251, *Microbiology of food and animal feeding stuffs — Horizontal method for the detection and enumeration of presumptive Escherichia coli — Most probable number technique*

ISO 7937, *Microbiology of food and animal feeding stuffs — Horizontal method for the enumeration of Clostridium perfringens — Colony count technique*

ISO 10272-1, *Microbiology of the food chain — Horizontal method for detection and enumeration of Campylobacter spp. — Part 1: Detection method*

ISO 11290-1, *Microbiology of the food chain — Horizontal method for the detection and enumeration of Listeria monocytogenes and of Listeria spp. — Part 1: Detection method*

ISO 16649-1, *Microbiology of the food chain — Horizontal method for the enumeration of beta-glucuronidase-positive Escherichia coli — Part 1: Colony-count technique at 44 degrees C using membranes and 5-bromo-4-chloro-3-indolyl beta-D-glucuronide*

ISO 17294-2, *Water quality — Application of inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (ICP-MS) — Part 2: Determination of 62 elements*

ISO 17604, *Microbiology of the food chain — Carcass sampling for microbiological analysis*

OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this standard, the following terms and definitions shall apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <http://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1
meat
parts of an animal that are intended for and have been judged as safe and suitable for, human consumption

3.2
rabbit meat
all parts of a rabbit that are intended for, or have been judged as safe and suitable for human consumption

3.3
boning
means the removal of meat from bones of a carcass or a portion of carcass

3.4
dressing
the removal of head, skin, viscera (including or excluding the kidneys) genital organs, bladder, feet up to the carpal and tarsal joints and for female animals, the mammary glands.

4 Requirements

4.1 Rabbits shall be slaughtered in a hygienically managed slaughter-house in accordance with CAC/RCP 58. The slaughter shall be supervised by a competent authority and shall be prepared in licensed premises.

4.2 The carcass shall be certified as being sound and free from contagious and infectious diseases and fit for human consumption by a competent person.

4.3 The certified carcasses and cuts shall bear suitable marks of such inspection, the symbol or number or name of the establishment where they were prepared, and the legend 'PASSED' denoting wholesomeness of the carcass. The marking fluid used shall be food grade ink.

4.4 Cutting, trimming and boning of cuts shall be accomplished with sufficient care to maintain cut integrity and identity and to avoid scores in the lean. 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 Quality characteristics of rabbit meat

5.1 Carcasses and cuts

Carcasses and cuts shall be:

- a) Intact, taking into account the presentation;
- b) Free from visible blood clots or bone dust;
- c) Free from any visible foreign matter (e.g. dirt, wood, plastic, metal particles);
- d) Free of offensive odours;
- e) Free of visible bloodstains;
- f) Free of unspecified protruding or broken bones;
- g) g. Free of bruises;
- h) Free of freezer-burn;
- i) Free of spinal cord (except for whole unsplit carcasses); and
- j) Free from fur.

5.2 Grading carcasses

For the purpose of this standard, the rabbit meat category shall be determined as follows in table 1;

Table 1 — Grading of Rabbit meat carcasses

SN	Category	Description
i)	Very young rabbit	Weaned rabbits four to five weeks
ii)	Young rabbit	Less than 12 weeks of age
iii)	Young mature rabbit	12 weeks to 6 months of age
iv)	Mature rabbit	More than 6 months of age
v)	Open doe	More than 6 months of age, unfertilized mature rabbit
vi)	other	Can be used to describe any other category of rabbit

6 Preparation of rabbit carcasses and cuts

6.1 Rabbit carcasses shall be properly dressed, washed, butchered, trimmed, weighed, properly packaged and labelled and shall be free from bruises or blemishes of any kind. They shall also be neatly trimmed with head, feet, and all offal removed.

6.2 Temperature treatment – rabbit carcasses and cuts shall be subjected to the following temperature treatment.

6.1.1 Chilling – Fresh rabbit carcasses sides or cuts shall be brought to a temperature of between 1 °C and 3 °C within 24 hours. Carcasses and cuts meant for chilling shall be further chilled to temperatures of -2 °C to 4 °C and should be consumed within a period of 4 weeks.

6.1.2 Freezing and Storage – The rabbit carcasses sides or cuts shall be pre-chilled before freezing. Freezing shall be at minus (-) 18 °C and (-) 12 °C at the highest. The rabbit carcasses and cuts shall be stored at (-) 12 °C at the highest. The frozen product shall be consumed within 12 months

6.3 Rabbit carcass and cuts may be presented according to the following in relation to temperature treatment:

6.3.1 Fresh Carcass -The deepest part of the carcass near the bone shall be cooled to the atmospheric temperature when delivered and shall show no evidence of deterioration.

6.3.2 Fresh, Chilled Carcass - The carcass shall be chilled so that the temperature at the deepest portion of the flesh near the bone shall be 1°C and shall show no evidence of deterioration.

6.3.3 Fresh, Frozen Carcass -The rabbit meat shall be quick frozen preferably at a temperature of not higher than -12°C for frozen and -18°C for deep frozen in the minimum possible time and shall show no evidence of deterioration, such as dehydration and advanced changes in texture.

6.3.4 Rabbit meat cuts, fresh -These shall be prepared from carcasses which conform to the requirements given in fresh carcass.

7 Food additives

Food additives, if used in rabbit meat shall comply with CODEX STAN 192.

8 Contaminants

8.1 Heavy metals

Rabbit meat shall comply with maximum limits for heavy metals as specified in Table 2, when tested in accordance with the methods given therein.

Table 2 — Maximum limits of heavy metals

S/No.	Heavy metals	Maximum limits ppm	Test method
i)	Arsenic (Ar)	0.1	ISO 17294-2
ii)	Lead (Pb)	0.1	ISO 6633
iii)	Cadmium (Cd)	0.05	ISO 5961
iv)	Mercury (Hg)	0.03	ISO 6637

8.2 Veterinary drugs residues

The Rabbit meat shall comply with the maximum residue limits specified in CAC/MRL 2.

8.3 Pesticide residues

Rabbit meat shall comply with the maximum pesticide residue limits as specified by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

9 Hygiene requirements

9.1 Rabbit carcasses and cuts shall be produced and handled in accordance with CAC/RCP 58 and EAS 39.

9.2 Rabbit carcasses and cuts shall comply with the microbiological limits given in Table 2.

Table 3 — Microbiological limits for rabbit carcasses and cuts

S/No.	Microorganism	Limits, Max.	Test method
i)	Total plate count, cfu/g	10^5	ISO 4833-1
ii)	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> , cfu/g	10^3	ISO 6888-1
iii)	<i>Escherichia Coli</i> , cfu/g	10^2	ISO 16649-1
iv)	<i>Escherichia Coli</i> 0157:H7 per 25 g	Absent	ISO 16654
v)	<i>Salmonella</i> spp, per 25 g	Absent	ISO 6579
vi)	<i>Clostridium perfringes</i> , per 25 g	Absent	ISO 7937
vii)	<i>Listeria monocytogens</i> , per 25 g,	Absent	ISO 11290-1
viii)	<i>Campylobacter</i> per 25 g	10^2	ISO 10272-1
ix)	<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> , cfu/g	10^2	ISO 13720

10 Packaging

10.1 Packaging of Fresh, chilled and frozen rabbit meat shall be done in food grade packaging materials that protect the meat product from any physical, microbiological, chemical or any other type of contamination during storage, distribution and handling.

10.2 Vacuum-packed cuts shall be delivered intact.

11 Transportation

Transportation of the products covered by this standard shall be in accordance with the relevant regulations of the partner states

Chilled meat shall be handled and transported at temperature between 1 °C and 4 °C.

Frozen meat shall be transported below -12 °C and the packages shall be handled with care to preserve quality and safety of the product.

12 Labelling

Each carcass inspected and passed as fit for human consumption shall bear an approval mark on a label attached to the package. In addition to the requirements given in EAS 38, the following labelling requirements shall apply and shall be legibly and indelibly labelled.

- a) name of the product “Rabbit meat”;
- b) name of the cut as appropriate
- c) rabbit carcasses and cuts grades
- d) name, and physical address of manufacturer;
- e) net weight in metric unit;
- f) rabbit carcasses and cuts grades
- g) declaration of preservatives used;
- h) date of packaging;
- i) expiry date;
- j) batch number;
- k) storage conditions;
- l) country of origin
- m) date;
- n) inspection stamp

13 Sampling

Sampling shall be done in accordance with CAC/GL 50 for general sampling and ISO 17604 for microbiological analysis.

Bibliography

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