



Ontario Contract Meat Inspectors Group
c/o 100 Lesmill Road, Toronto, Ontario M3B 3P8

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contract meat inspectors sound alarm over provincial inspection

PETERBOROUGH/TORONTO – Ontario contract meat inspectors say they have no power and get little support from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF) in their efforts to enforce the *Meat Inspection Act*.

According to a survey conducted by the Ontario Contract Meat Inspectors Group, 60 per cent of contract meat inspectors say they don't have adequate backup from their OMAF managers.

“The survey results demonstrate real concerns about inspection, food safety and the need to improve the system,” said Brian Burdick, a contract meat inspector and spokesperson for the group.

Only thirty (30) per cent said they felt OMAF management took “necessary and appropriate action” when incidents and illegal activities were reported. “No action is taken,” some survey respondents said. “Incidents get swept under the carpet.”

The Ontario Contract Meat Inspectors Group surveyed 38 per cent of Ontario's contract meat inspectors from Sept. 8 to Sept. 14, 2003.

Fifty-seven (57) per cent of inspectors have concerns about their own health and safety, the survey said. Inspectors pointed to hostile and abusive abattoir owners, poor plant conditions, and risks of disease. Inspectors don't get sick pay or benefits despite the dangerous conditions.

Eighty (80) per cent of meat inspectors are concerned about the turnover rate in the occupation. Too many experienced inspectors are leaving. Respondents commented that too many inspectors are pushed into the field with inadequate training and little knowledge.

To view complete survey results, check the web at: <http://www.opseu.org/ops/meat/SurveyReportSep1903.pdf>. The Ontario Contract Meat Inspectors Group web site is at www.meatinspectors.org

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For more information: Brian Burdick (705) 741-1703; Jan Borowy (416) 427-0083