IMPLEMENTING MEAT MESSAGING

Who can implement Meat Messaging?

The types of organisations suitable to register for using Meat Messaging include:

- Australian export establishments (processors, head offices, and third-party cold storage facilities)
- Australian non-packer exporters
- United States import inspection facilities
- United States buyers of Australian meat
- United States end users (grinders, value adders, retailers) of Australian meat
- Government departments and officials that monitor the export and import of Australian meat
- Audit authorities that provide third-party audit services related to Australian meat
- Software companies that provide services related to the meat industry.

It is important that you involve several departments within your company to ensure all the implementation requirements are met. These departments will include:

- Your quality assurance department
- The loadout and logistics team
- Team members who work specifically in export documentation
- Your company IT team; and
- Your system software vendor provider.

Your IT and system software vendor providers will be required to ensure that your internal software is able to provide meat messaging with the minimum data requirements in a standardised format.

8 steps to implement the system.

Step 1: Register with Meat Messaging.

To register with Meat Messaging, go to www.meatmessaging.org and click 'Register'.

As part of the registration process, you will be required to produce the following:

- Your GS1 Global Location Number (GLN) – if you do not have a GS1 membership, contact GS1 Australia to obtain a GS1 membership.
- Your GS1 Global Trade Identification Number (GTIN) – in other words, one of your carton barcode numbers (the number should be approximately 35 to 48 digits in length).

As part of this registration process, you will need to nominate several authorised company officials.
A Meat Messaging account will be created for each identified official – after the company has registered, further new users can be added. Each person who logs into Meat Messaging MUST have a unique login. This is a requirement for identification of Authorised Officers who complete actions within Meat Messaging systems.

The people who can be added to Meat Messaging are:

- Authorised signatories,
- Administrative personnel (manage users, generate reports, etc),
- Operational personnel (including the IT team and IT contractors for accessing system information, generating reports, etc).

Organisations that are registered with Meat Messaging are allocated a Meat Messaging Company ID (MMCID). The MMCID is used to identify the organisation's interactions, uploaded messages, and reports. The MMCID is an 8-digit number with the first digit being 1 and the last digit being a calculated check digit – an example is 10000014.

Each Meat Messaging user is allocated a unique Meat Messaging User ID (MMUID). The MMUID is an 8-digit number with the first digit being 8 and the last digit being a calculated check digit – an example is 80000013.

Step 2: Work with your IT team and software system vendor.

It is important that you communicate with your IT team and software system vendor early in your Meat Messaging implementation process. Because specific information is required to be sent to Meat Messaging, it is important to identify what information may not be currently available in your production system. This data, once identified, will need to be sourced to send to Meat Messaging.

Data will be sent from your production system to Meat Messaging through APIs. Your IT team and software provider will need to connect to Meat Messaging using these APIs and ensure all compliant data is sending correctly. This will allow messages to be created and start the process of communicating with your supply-chain partners.

Further technical information relating to the data your company must collect can be found at https://meatmessaging.org/documents

Step 3: Ensure you are using GS1-compliant carton and pallet labels.

Given the Meat Messaging system is based on the GS1 standards, it is important to ensure you are registered and are using correctly created and printed labels. This ensures that barcodes can be scanned anywhere in the world and that your company can be readily identified.

The GS1 system is based on having globally unique company prefixes for barcodes so that they can be scanned anywhere in the world and the company that made (or has the authority for) the product can be readily identified. For this to work correctly, all companies or brand owners that create carton barcodes are required to be registered with GS1.

The second requirement to ensure global compatibility is that barcodes on cartons and pallets are correctly created and printed. This is the responsibility of your system vendor to ensure that barcodes comply with GS1, as well as the meat industry barcode guidelines.

For information of the GS1 standards go to: www.gs1au.org

There is also a requirement to send samples of carton labels, pallet labels and photos of carton end panels to GS1 for testing. A Meat Messaging label test request form can be found under documentation on the Meat Messaging website at https://meatmessaging.org/documents

This is to be completed and sent to GS1 with the labels for testing. After barcodes are tested, you will receive a test report from GS1 which forms part of your approval process.

Where the export establishment uses MTCs, the production-system software will need to be able to create, print and send eMTC forms based on the data related to MTCs. Generating eMTCs replaces the process of manually creating them in paper form.

Step 4: Ensure information is available for sending to Meat Messaging.

The information required for Meat Messaging is based on the importing country requirements for consignment and product traceability and verification. This means that the information needs to be recorded into your production system before the information is sent to Meat Messaging.

Work practices must be reviewed to ensure that those related to accessing information, such as Health Certificate numbers, are accessed in a timely manner and correctly entered into the system prior to sending to Meat Messaging.

The quality of data is critically important; incorrectly entered information may result in a consignment being rejected at the time of inspection.

Work practices must be reviewed and aligned to new processes that will be required for using Meat Messaging. The work practices and procedures will be monitored by the QA team to ensure costly mistakes are minimised.

Step 5: Ensure internal workflows and processes are correct.

Errors associated with incorrect shipping marks, product loading, and consignment information result in many import inspection failures every year.

As part of the Meat Messaging implementation process, a review of existing workflows and work practices is required to ensure that the processes are efficient as well as accurate. Many export establishments have identified operational deficiencies when they conduct this review process.

Some areas to review include:

- Order picking
- Staging
- Scanning
- Port marking or palletising
- Loadout; and
- Documentation.

Step 6: Implement a Quality Assurance program to demonstrate compliance.

A well-run QA program will reduce the likelihood of rejections at the port of entry, ensuring that product seamlessly and efficiently enters commerce. A company's quality assurance program must identify the Standard Operating Procedures, monitoring processes and records required to demonstrate that the order picking, staging, scanning, port marking or palletising, loadout and documentation activities are under tight process control.

The QA records should be based on sampling plans that check all nominated consignments.

There is a QA monitoring frequency calculator available on the Meat Messaging website at https://meatmessaging.org/qafreq.

QA monitoring processes must be accepted before the export establishment is included on the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) list of export establishments registered to use Meat Messaging. The export establishment's approved arrangements must reflect QA procedures and monitoring processes.

Step 7: Start using Meat Messaging on a testing or preliminary basis.

The system supports a testing or preliminary usage model that allows establishments to start using Meat Messaging before being approved and listed by DAFF. The export establishment may operate in this mode for several months to ensure all operational and system issues are resolved, and that QA monitoring has been sufficient to ensure complete system accuracy.

Issues that often become apparent involve either modifications to workflows or production system software. These revisions are due to processes related to consignments or product details that were unknown when the implementation of Meat Messaging commenced.

You must ensure that your system software vendor is aware that updates are likely once production volumes commence uploading to Meat Messaging.

During this stage, the establishment often updates their approved arrangements and prepares the necessary QA monitoring procedures in readiness for submission to DAFF.

At the end of this period, and prior to approval, it is necessary that all export consignments – as well as MTCs – are being routinely uploaded to Meat Messaging as consignments are finalised.

Step 8: Ensure your company is listed on the export establishment register to use Meat Messaging.

Upon successful completion of the previous implementation steps, inclusion by DAFF on the list of export establishments registered to use Meat Messaging will be formalised.

At this point in time, you must ensure that your approved arrangements are up to date. This includes having the U.S. Bar Coding Admin under the Country Listing on your Certificate of Registration. Once completed, DAFF will advise FSIS that the company has endorsement to proceed.

It will also be important to ensure your trading partners – both in Australia and overseas – are approved to use Meat Messaging as well. This is the only way to get the maximum benefits of the program.

Lastly, and once all other processes have been completed, AUSMEAT will issue the company with a Certificate of Registration to use Meat Messaging.

If you have any issues or questions, please contact Meat Messaging support:

https://meatmessaging.org/ | +617 30739234 | info@meatmessaging.com