Regulating "Good" Meat: The influence of socio-cultural and moral perspectives on meat safety regulations

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Tracing the unintended consequences of food safety regulations for community food security and sustainability: small-scale meat processing in British Columbia

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Every day, all across the world, hundreds of livestock animals are born, raised and slaughtered. A common misconception is the idea that animals are killed for food. However, this is not the case. Animals are slaughtered to meet the demand for meat.

About 95% of the cattle are born on one single generation. These are farms that normally breed the cattle on their own farms. As a result, each generation is required to be alive for a specific length of time, depending on the breed of cattle. The breed with the longest lifespan is the Hereford, which can live up to 15 years old. The lifespan of other breeds, such as Angus and Hereford, is shorter, often ranging from 7 to 9 years.

Feeder cattle, are raised and fattened until they graduate to the same of the育成 and are often slaughtered as a to as an income, with growth associated with this increase. The growth rate of the animals is often used to generate profit.

A small proportion of the animals are kept on their original farms and are used for their meat, or for animal production and meat. Small farmers who are concerned with food safety and sustainability often choose not to use antibiotics and hormones in their farming practices. This is because antibiotics and hormones can affect the health of the animals, reducing their lifespan and making them less productive. In addition, antibiotics and hormones can also be transferred to humans through the meat, which can lead to health problems.

Therefore, it is important to trace the unintended consequences of food safety regulations for community food security and sustainability. This is especially true for small-scale meat processing in British Columbia.
A TALE OF 3 JURISDICTIONS

...and 5 regulatory regimes

ONTARIO
- OMAFRA & CFIA

QUEBEC
- MAPAQ & CFIA

VERMONT
- USDA (FSIS) & Vermont Meat Inspection Program
HYPOTHESIS

- Meat inspection systems as a spectrum of food safety governance
- Social, cultural, moral, and economic factors influence the flexibility of animal slaughter regulations and inspection requirements
- Strong preference for local food should translate into more adaptive and tiered slaughter regulations

VERMONT ➔ QUEBEC ➔ ONTARIO

Federal
State
Custom
On-farm slaughter

Federal
Provincial
‘de proximité’

Federal
Provincial
CONTEXT AND COMPLEXITY

3 examples of context and complexity in meat inspection

1. Outcome-based requirements vs Prescriptive requirements
   • dichotomy does not capture nuance

2. Influence of market forces on individual experience of safety regulations
   • when barriers are not about regulations but economies of scale

3. Ritual slaughter exemptions
   • food safety/animal welfare
REGULATING ‘GOOD’ MEAT

- What is good food?
  - Context-specific

- All roads lead to Rome
  - Food safety as journey or destination (or both)?
  - Risk management: Risk is a “necessary corollary to freedom and choice” (Garland)

- The danger of the single story
  - Cannot understand food safety in isolation from agricultural policy and economics

- There’s more than one way to skin a cat
  - Ritual slaughter exemptions
Thank you

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