

## **Evaluation of Meat Safety Practices and Hygiene among Different Butcheries and Supermarkets in Vhembe district, Limpopo province, South Africa**

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### **Abstract**

Good hygienic practices are required to reduce the risk of microbial contamination during meat processing. We evaluated good hygiene and meat safety practices among different village butcheries (6), commercial butcheries (8), and supermarkets (18) through direct personal observations. The supermarkets and commercial butcheries wore personal protective equipment (PPE) and used proper waste procedures. Moreover, there were pest control devices, a safe water supply, and staff handling money away from meat. At village butcheries, wearing hairnets and aprons, and the display of raw meat being separate from offal were identified as good practices. The irregular washing of hands (67%), less use of gloves (83%), wearing of open sandals (67%) and jewellery (33%), use of the same coat for different activities (100%), lack of paper towels (100%) and pest control devices (67%) and mismanagement of waste (33%) were practices that led to unsafe meat handling. Our study identified good meat safety practices at supermarkets. A combination of good and unhygienic meat handling practices was identified at commercial and village butcheries. These findings suggest a need for intervention through training on food safety in order to improve the hygienic practices of meat handling along the beef supply chain, more especially in commercial and village butcheries.