

PRESS RELEASE

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Public Safety Alert: Beware Stolen Meats

It has come to the attention of the Consumer Affairs Commission (CAC) that a number of cattle farmers have been subjected to praedial larceny, and further, have had their cattle, some including pregnant cows, slaughtered in their own fields and their meats/ carcasses transported elsewhere for sale, supposedly to unwitting consumers and retailers. The Consumer Affairs Commission takes this opportunity to inform consumers that under the Public Health Act, it is illegal to offer for sale, condemned or unapproved meats. Meats offered for public consumption must be processed under the stipulations of the Public Health Act.

The CAC wishes to advise consumers that:

The Ministry of Health, under the Public Health Act – Butchers and Meat Inspection Regulations, has the mandate to ensure that the meat of animals slaughtered for sale is safe. Public Health Inspectors are assigned to undertake inspection functions with the objective to ensure that the meats of animals are healthy and disease free (from tuberculosis or other infections) so as to prevent the transfer of food borne illnesses and infections to the consuming public.

The process of inspection requires the inspector, to first determine if the meat and meat products have been slaughtered by a licensed butcher and prepared under sanitary conditions as stipulated under the Regulations. The carcass and organs are then inspected to determine if the meat is suitable for human consumption- that is, **wholesome**. If determined to be wholesome the meat is passed fit for human consumption and stamped.

The carcass is then marked with a distinct Government of Jamaica stamp which is in purplish in colour. The mark, which carries a parish and inspector code, allows for

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traceability and accountability, to ensure that the inspectors are operating within the policy guidelines of the Ministry of Health.

Consumers or vendors who have been approached to purchase stolen, condemned or meats not approved by the Public Health Department of the Ministry of Health, should reject them for the sake of public safety. You are further encouraged to report the matter to the Police; contact the Ministry of Health, Parish Council or call the offices of the CAC at 926-1650-2 or e-mail us at cacjam@infochan.com.