Composition of meat products

What are meat products?
Meat products are regulated products; all regulated products are covered by the Products Containing Meat etc (England) Regulations 2014.

A 'regulated product' is defined in the Regulations as "a food that contains one of the following as an ingredient (whether or not the food also contains any other ingredient): (a) meat; (b) mechanically separated meat …; (c) the heart, the tongue, the muscles of the head (other than the masseters [cheeks, which are considered to be meat]), the carpus [lower forelimb], the tarsus [lower hindlimb], or the tail of any mammalian or bird species recognised as fit for human consumption".

This guidance is for England

The Products Containing Meat etc (England) Regulations 2014 define 'meat' and 'regulated product'. They require certain types of regulated meat products to contain a minimum amount of meat.

There are also further requirements when the product contains particular types of meat.

These are collectively known as reserved descriptions.
The following are not meat products:

- raw meat with no added ingredients (except proteolytic enzymes)
- uncooked poultry with no added ingredients except additives, water, self-basting preparations or seasonings
- fat with no meat

'Meat' is the skeletal muscle of mammalian or bird species recognised as fit for human consumption with naturally included fat and connective tissue.

'Meat' is defined as "the skeletal muscle of mammalian or bird species recognised as fit for human consumption with naturally included or adherent tissue" (fat and connective tissue).

Mechanically separated meat and heart, tongue, etc are not meat.

A certain amount of fat and connective tissue, up to set limits, will be considered to be meat. Any fat and connective tissue over the set limits will not be meat and, if the permitted levels are exceeded, you will have to declare added fat and/or connective tissue in the ingredient list of the product.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of meat</th>
<th>Pork</th>
<th>Birds and rabbits</th>
<th>Beef, lamb and other species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fat</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>connective tissue</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Making your own meat products

If you make your own products ensure that you know, and stick to, the exact recipe and make due allowance for variations in mixing and/or manufacture.

Compositional requirements for certain meat products

Some meat products must have a minimum amount of meat and some can only include certain types of meat. These are summarised in the table below.

If your product does not contain enough meat, or contains a different type of meat to that allowed, you cannot use the description given in the 'Name of product' column below. For example, a beef burger must contain a minimum of 62% meat; if it has less than 62% it cannot be called a beef burger.

Please note:

- X is used to refer to a specific type of meat, such as beef in beef burgers, pork in pork pies, etc
- meat content for numbers 7-13 should be calculated by reference to the weight of uncooked ingredients
- 'meat' includes cured meat
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of product</th>
<th>Pork only</th>
<th>Birds and rabbits only</th>
<th>Beef, lamb and other species, or other mixtures of meat</th>
<th>Type of meat used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. burger</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>if described as an X burger, the amount of X must be at least equal to the minimum required meat content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. economy burger</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>if described as an X economy burger, the amount of X must be at least equal to the minimum required meat content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. hamburger</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>all pork, all beef or a mixture of pork and beef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. chopped X</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. corned meat, corned X</td>
<td>120%</td>
<td>120%</td>
<td>120%</td>
<td>all the meat must be X. Total fat content must not exceed 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. luncheon meat, luncheon X</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of product</td>
<td>Pork only</td>
<td>Birds and rabbits only</td>
<td>Beef, lamb and other species, or other mixtures of meat</td>
<td>Type of meat used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. meat pie, meat pudding, X pie, X pudding, game pie, weighing more than 200g</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. meat pie, meat pudding, X pie, X pudding, game pie, weighing not more than 200g and not less than 100g</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. meat pie, meat pudding, X pie, X pudding, game pie, weighing less than 100g</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Scottish pie, Scotch pie</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. meat and something else pie, meat and something else pudding, X and something else pie, X and something else pudding</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. something else and meat pie, something else and meat pudding, something else and X pie, something else and X pudding</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of product</td>
<td>Pork only</td>
<td>Birds and rabbits only</td>
<td>Beef, lamb and other species, or other mixtures of meat</td>
<td>Type of meat used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. pasty, pastie, bridie, sausage roll</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. pork sausage (but not pork liver sausage or pork tongue sausage), pork link, pork chipolata, pork sausage meat</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. sausage (but not liver sausage or tongue sausage), link, chipolata, sausage meat</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sales to caterers & other food businesses**

These must comply with the same minimum standards as retail.

**Uncooked meat products**

Certain parts of the carcase of mammalian species may not be used in uncooked meat products (brains, feet, small and large intestine, lungs, oesophagus (gullet), rectum, spinal cord, spleen, stomach, testicles, udder). Uncooked intestines may be used as casings for sausages. If sausage casings are inedible then this must be stated.

**Specified risk material (SRM)**

SRM is the parts of an animal that represent the highest risk of carrying disease.

The sale of SRM and the sale of any food containing SRM for human consumption is banned, as is the use of SRM and the sale of SRM for use in the preparation of food for human consumption.

For cattle, SRM varies according to whether it originated in the UK and its age, but generally includes the skull (including brain and eyes), tonsils, spinal cord, thymus, spleen and intestines. For sheep and goats there
are also differences for age, and for UK and non-UK animals, but generally SRM includes the skull (including brain and eyes), tonsils, spinal cord and spleen.

**Meat content declaration**

Any ingredient mentioned in the name of the food, emphasised on the food, or generally associated with the food must be given a 'quantitative ingredient declaration' (QUID), which states how much of the ingredient is in the food in the form of a percentage of the entire product. If specifying the species or cut of the meat (for example 'Pork sausages') you will need to declare how much is present.

QUID calculations are done at the mixing bowl stage of production and can be calculated as follows: weight of meat divided by total weight of ingredients multiplied by 100.

The easiest way to give a QUID is in the ingredients list (for example, 'Ingredients: Pork (42%)') but you may also give it in the name of the food (for example, 'Pork sausage - contains 42% pork').

Any fat and connective tissue over the permitted limits is not meat and you must account for this in your calculations.

Where multiple types of meat have been used you must declare the content of each.

**Mechanically separated meat (MSM)**

Mechanically separated meat is the product obtained by removing meat from bones after boning, or from poultry carcases, using mechanical methods that cause the muscle fibre structure to be lost or changed.

MSM is not meat and will not count towards the meat content of the product. If the product contains MSM it must be declared separately in the ingredient list in the format 'mechanically separated meat' followed by the animal species it comes from.

**Formed meat**

Any meat product that looks like a single piece of meat, but is actually several pieces joined together with other ingredients, needs to be labelled with the statement 'Formed meat'.

**Additives**

The types and amounts of additives, such as colours and preservatives, that can be used in meat products are strictly controlled. Some are banned, whereas for others only permitted additives may be used. For more detail on colours please see 'Colours in food'; there is also information and business guidance on additives and E numbers on the Food Standards Agency website. Please ask your local trading standards service if you require further details.

**Name of the food**

If any meat product contains added proteins from a different animal it must be stated in the name of the food (for example, 'Beef meatballs with added pork protein').
If you produce or sell uncooked cured or uncured meat products with the appearance of a cut, joint, slice, portion or carcase of meat that contain more than 5% water, you must include the words ‘added water’ in the name of the food (for example, ‘Bacon with added water’).

In most cases prepacked foods must be labelled with a descriptive name that accurately describes the food. You will need to decide on a case-by-case basis whether any added ingredients will need to be stated in the descriptive name in order for the product to be accurately described.

**Protected food names**

Certain food products, including Cornish Pasties, Traditional Cumberland Sausage, and the Melton Mowbray Pork Pie, have been accredited with protected status. Any products using this name must comply with the compositional (what it contains) and/or origin (where it is made) requirements. More information on protected food names is available on the GOV.UK website.

**Minced meat**

Mince has specific labelling requirements, including the country of slaughter, mincing and preparation, as well as a traceability reference number or code. For more information see 'Labelling of beef'.

**Penalties**

Failure to comply with trading standards law can lead to enforcement action and to sanctions, which may include a fine and/or imprisonment. For more information please see 'Trading standards: powers, enforcement & penalties'.

**Key legislation**

- [EU Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eu-regulation-1169-2011-on-the-provision-of-food-information-to-consumers)
- [Food Information Regulations 2014](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/food-information-regulations-2014)

Last reviewed / updated: June 2019

**Please note**

This information is intended for guidance; only the courts can give an authoritative interpretation of the law.

The guide’s 'Key legislation' links may only show the original version of the legislation, although some amending legislation is linked to separately where it is directly related to the content of a guide. Information on amendments to legislation can be found on each link’s 'More Resources' tab.
This site contains impartial free information, and is Government-backed.

The content on Business Companion is written and verified by expert contributors, but is not designed to be a replacement for professional advice and is intended only for guidance; only the courts can give an authoritative interpretation of the law.

Though not marked as relevant for Northern Ireland, the advice and guidance that applies to England can be taken to reflect the 'spirit' of the law in NI, but should not be relied upon without professional advice.

If you are in any doubt about your legal responsibilities with regard to the topics on this site and would like more guidance, start by getting in touch with your local trading standards service; you can find their contact details by using the search tool on the Chartered Trading Standards Institute website.

We store cookies on your computer to help us improve this website. If you proceed, we'll assume you're happy with this; otherwise, you can change your cookie settings at any time.

© 2020 Chartered Trading Standards Institute