

Ian Macdonald

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Backyard butchers get the chop

A Government crackdown on illegal “backyard” meat processors in Sydney has shutdown seven unlicensed operators from selling high-risk smallgood products, Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald said today.

Inspectors from the NSW Food Authority targeted illicit meat processors, issuing prohibition orders, and confiscating almost 120 kilograms of homemade nem chua – a Vietnamese-style fermented pork mince.

“The Food Authority made ten seizures of the pork product from various illegal processors operating from residential premises that were being sold to butchers' shops, restaurants and private consumers,” Mr Macdonald said.

“The operation began in March and is ongoing, it puts on notice people who think they can flout the law by producing potentially dangerous food products from residential premises and unlicensed factories.

“Fermented meats are high-risk products because if they are not prepared carefully under strict safety conditions they can be a serious health risk.

“That is why smallgoods and ready-to-eat meat processors require a licence and to observe a rigorous food safety program that is regularly audited by the Food Authority.

“Backyard operations do not have the systems in place to minimise health risks to consumers.

“The Government is committed to ensuring food production is properly licensed and audited and we’ll crack down hard on those who think they can cut corners.

“Laws already in place mean anyone caught processing meat for sale illegally can face a fine of \$55,000 for an individual or up to \$275,000 for a corporation.”