Butchers’ Booklet

Guidance on Food Safety and Labelling Requirements relating to Butchers’ Counters

produced by the

Environmental Health Officers’ Association

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document which has been compiled by members of the Environmental Health Officers’ Association aims to address some important food safety and labelling issues that apply to butcher shops. Due to the nature of their operations, butcher shops present unique hazards and it is important that butchers are aware of their obligations under Food Safety & Labelling Regulations.

All of the areas outlined in this guide will be examined during routine food hygiene inspections of your business by Environmental Health Officers from the Health Service Executive (HSE).

Although this guide will address some food safety issues that are of specific concern to butchers, it is not a complete food safety guide. Further information on food safety can be found in IS: 341 ‘Hygiene in Food Retailing & Wholesaling’. This guide can be purchased from the National Standards Authority of Ireland. This guide also provides guidance on HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) as well as food operations associated with retail butchers such as mincing and meat processing operations.

Useful guidance for butchers can also be found in the resource and publications section at www.fsai.ie which can be downloaded free of charge.
2. E. coli

E. coli O157 can kill

Escherichia coli (E. coli) is the name given to a large family of bacteria commonly found in the gut of humans and animals. While the majority of E. coli are harmless, some types can cause illness. One particular type, known as E. coli O157 may cause serious illness in humans ranging from diarrhoea to kidney failure and even death.

Human infection has been increasing worldwide since the early 1980s. In 1996 Scotland had a large outbreak that affected over 500 people and 21 people died. Here in Ireland the number of reported cases is on average 50 per year.

E. coli can be found in raw meat. Foods associated with E. coli outbreaks in the past have included minced meat, beef burgers, roast beef and turkey roll as well as beansprouts, apple juice and a range of other foods.

What makes E. coli so dangerous?

E. coli has a low infectious dose. Normally, it takes hundreds if not thousands of germs to make someone ill. Unfortunately, with E. coli O157 the number required may be as little as 10 so even a small number of germs can cause serious illness, particularly in the young, the elderly and those already suffering from other diseases.

Up to 30% of people infected with E. coli O157 can develop kidney failure and 3-5% of these people die.
Control Measures for Butchers

In cases where raw meat is handled in the same premises where ready to eat cooked meats are produced or sold, it is essential that the processes are separated so that the risk of cross contamination between raw and cooked meat is avoided. The onus is on you as a food business operator to implement adequate control measures. Therefore it is strongly advised that if you propose to sell cooked meats or other ready to eat foods in your butcher shop you contact your local EHO prior to commencing this activity.

Butchers have a very important role to play in the control of E. coli O157, especially where both raw and ready to eat or cooked foods are handled on the premises.

Since it is not possible to eliminate E. coli O157 from raw meat it will find its way into butcher shops.

Other harmful bacteria that are associated with raw meats and poultry include Salmonella, Campylobacter and a range of other food poisoning organisms.

Butcher shops that are selling both raw and cooked meats must be extremely careful in order to prevent the risk of cross contamination from E. coli and other harmful food poisoning bacteria.

Prevention of Cross Contamination

E. coli O157 can be passed from raw food to cooked and ready to eat foods through cross contamination. Cross contamination is where harmful bacteria can be transmitted from raw meats to cooked or ready to eat foods either directly or indirectly.

Food poisoning bacteria can be transmitted directly from raw meats if there is direct contact between raw meats and cooked or ready to eat foods.
Food poisoning bacteria can also be transmitted indirectly from raw meats to cooked or ready to eat foods through a vehicle, such as the contaminated hands of a food worker, shared equipment or a dirty cloth.

Cross contamination can be prevented in your butcher shop by ensuring that the following controls are in place:

**Zoning**

- Raw and ready to eat or cooked foods must be physically separated at all times during handling, storage and display.

- Raw and ready to eat or cooked foods should be stored in completely separate refrigerated units to prevent cross contamination. Where this is not possible, cooked and ready to eat foods must be stored on separate shelves above raw meats in the cold room.

- The layout of the butcher shop should be adequate to ensure that cross contamination risks are prevented. Proper systems of zoning (i.e. the physical separation of activities) should be in place. Further advice can be obtained from your local Environmental Health Officer.

**Equipment**

- Completely separate equipment, such as separate knives, work tools, sinks, wash hand basins, trays, weighing scales, slicers and vacuum packers should be provided for use with cooked meats and ready to eat foods. Equipment for use with cooked and ready to eat foods should be clearly identifiable to prevent mistakes.
• It is recommended that all containers and packaging should be stored in such a hygienic manner to prevent contamination.

Staff

• Staff must wash their hands thoroughly using liquid bactericidal soap between handling raw and cooked or ready to eat foods.

• Ideally, a separate member of staff should be involved in the handling and serving of cooked and ready to eat foods.

• Where separate staff cannot be provided it is very important that cross contamination is prevented by implementing strict hygiene procedures. The procedure should be as follows:
  ◆ Hands should be thoroughly washed on leaving the raw meats area
  ◆ Separate clean outer clothing (e.g. white coat or apron) should be worn before entering the cooked meats area.
  ◆ Hands should be washed again in the cooked meats area before handling any cooked meats or ready to eat foods, or before working with cooked meats equipment.

This procedure should be followed each time.

Cleaning

• Separate cleaning equipment should be provided for use in the cooked meats area.

• It is essential that all equipment in use in your butcher shop is thoroughly cleaned and sanitised prior to use and between operations as necessary. For this
purpose you must ensure that suitable cleaning agents, that contain bactericidal properties, are provided.

Processing

- Where cooking of raw meats takes place in a butcher shop normal cooking of meats to a core temperature of at least 75°C will be sufficient to kill harmful bacteria such as E. coli O157.

- If you are cooking meats in your business, foods must be cooled as quickly as possible to prevent bacterial growth. Ideally this cooling should take place in a blast chiller.

- If you are selling pre-packed cooked meats or ready to eat products in your butcher shop, these products must be stored completely separately from raw meats. Even though the products are pre-packed, they must still be stored completely separately to prevent contamination of their outer packaging.

- Vegetables are often sold in butcher shops. To prevent cross contamination during storage, vegetables should never be stored underneath or alongside raw or cooked meats in the coldroom.

These controls should be carried out within the framework of a formal food safety management system such as HACCP.
3. SPECIFIED RISK MATERIAL (SRM)

The EC (Removal of Bovine Vertebral Column) Regulations 2004 and the EC (Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies and Animal by-Products) Regulations 2008, as amended place restrictions on butcher shops who wish to sell T-Bone Steaks or handle beef with backbone still attached in their premises.

What is Specified Risk Material?

Specified risk material (SRM) is the general term designated for materials including the brains, eyes, spinal cord, and other organs of certain animals such as cows, sheep and goats. Specified Risk Material also includes the vertebral column (backbone) of bovine animals aged over 30 months. There are tight controls for Specified Risk Material because it has been determined that BSE causing prions concentrate in these parts of animals. BSE is commonly known as ‘Mad Cow Disease’ in cattle. Prions have been associated with a fatal disease called new variant CJD (Creutzfeldt–Jakob Disease) in humans. It is believed that the disease may be transmitted to human beings who eat the brain, spinal cord or material infected with Specified Risk Material from infected carcasses.

Controls for Butchers

As traditional T-Bone steaks include the backbone of bovine animals, there are tight controls in place for butchers who wish to sell these products. Therefore T-Bones may only be cut from animals under 30 months old.

There are certain controls which butchers must put in place if they wish to sell T-Bone steaks or take in Beef with vertebral column (backbone) still attached.
Documentation

On delivery, you must ensure that all consignments of Beef with backbone attached are accompanied by appropriate documentation which states whether or not the vertebral column is to be removed. One way that this information can be provided is for your supplier to state the age of the beef on the document. For example an invoice might read ‘Sides of Beef from animals under 30 months’.

Where beef is over 30 months old, and removal of the vertebral column is required, this should also be clearly stated on the delivery document. For example the invoice might read ‘Sides of beef from animal over 30 months’.

Blue Stripe

All beef with vertebral column attached should be closely examined at delivery stage to ensure that its tag or label displays a blue stripe, which indicates that the beef is from an animal aged under 30 months and therefore does not contain SRM.

Authorisation to handle SRM

The Health Service Executive may grant authorisation for certain butchers to handle beef with backbone attached from animals aged over 30 months, if certain stringent controls are put in place. You should contact your local Environmental Health Officer for further advice.

If you do not have authorisation from the HSE to handle SRM in your butcher shop, beef with backbone attached from animals aged over 30 months should not be handled on your premises under any circumstances. Similarly such beef without a blue stripe on its tag or label must be rejected at delivery stage. It is an offence to handle SRM on your premises without authorisation from the Health Service Executive.
4. ANIMAL BY-PRODUCTS

What are Animal By-Products?

Animal By-Products (ABP) are entire bodies or parts of animals or products of animal origin not intended for human consumption. A legal definition of ABP is given in Regulation (EC) No. 1774/2002. Epidemiological studies carried out on BSE and animal diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease and Classical Swine Fever have all identified ABP as the source. This is the scientific basis for the ABP Legislation. It is believed that the outbreaks in the UK in recent years of both Foot and Mouth and Classical Swine Fever were caused by contaminated catering waste. This is the main reason why we need to ensure that all ABP are properly disposed of.

How should Animal By-Products be disposed of?

The methods of disposal of ABP depend on the categorization of the by-product. This is set out in Regulation (EC) No. 1774/2002.

- Category 1 material is regarded as high risk. It includes catering waste from means of transport operating internationally. Category 1 material may only be disposed by incineration or by processing in a plant approved to handle category 1 ABP. Category 1 catering waste may be disposed of in an approved landfill.

- Category 2 material is medium risk. It may be disposed of in a wider variety of ways than category 1 ABP. Subject to a number of restrictions, some types of category 2 materials may be composted or used in biogas production.
- Category 3 is lower risk. It can be disposed of by various means including processing in a plant approved to handle category 3 ABP, used in the manufacture of pet food, in the oleochemical industry or in the manufacture of technical products such as fertilizer. Some category 3 materials can be composted or used in biogas production.

Under this legislation raw meat and fish waste generated from premises such as butchers shops, manufacturing units, butcher’s sections within supermarkets and fish shops falls under Category 3 Animal By-Products. This includes any trimmings, bone and blood waste and waste raw meat/fish products as well as out of date raw meat/fish or such products which are otherwise not intended for human consumption.

**What are the requirements for handling, storage and disposal of ABP?**

The Regulation sets down certain restrictions for the handling, storage and disposal of these products, which can be summarised as follows:

- Category 3 Animal By-Products must be identifiable and kept separate and stored and transported in sealed, covered, leak proof containers.
- They may only be transported by a registered haulier (list available on the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food website).
- They may only be disposed of to an approved Category 1 or Category 3 rendering plant (list available on the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food website).
• During transportation a label should be attached to the vehicle, container, carton or other packaging material, displaying the words “Category 3 - Not for human consumption”.

• During transportation a commercial document must accompany animal by-products which must be retained on file for a period of 2 years. Documentation must be kept by the persons consigning, transporting and receiving animal by-products.

• Butcher shops with their own off-site slaughterhouse can return Category 3 material to the slaughterhouse for final collection and disposal. However there may only be return from a single retail shop to the slaughterhouse.

• Waste fish and meat produced during on-site cutting and storage may be supplied directly to customers as raw pet food for domestic pets. Supplying large quantities of material for feeding packs of hounds or greyhounds is not permitted.

• **Category 3 Animal By-Products as detailed above cannot be disposed of to landfill.**

Environmental Health Officers will be ensuring compliance with Regulation (EC) No. 1774/2002 as part of their inspections of butcher shops.
5. Traceability

Since 1 January 2005, all food businesses, including butcher shops, have a legal responsibility to implement a traceability and recall system. The requirements are laid down in Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002 of the European Parliament, and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety.

Traceability means the ability to trace and follow a food, feed, food-producing animal or substance intended to be, or expected to be incorporated into a food or feed, through all stages of production, processing and distribution.

Traceability is necessary to ensure food safety, and to assist in the removal of unsafe food/feed from the market.

General Requirements for Traceability Systems

Requirements Regarding Information Maintained in Traceability Systems

Required (Category 1)

(This mandatory information must be kept by all butcher shops):

- The names and addresses of the suppliers of all meats and products supplied to your butcher shop

- The names and addresses of any customers and the nature of products delivered to that customer (this does not apply if you are only supplying meats/products
to the final consumer). This will apply if you are supplying meats/products to other shops or food business such as pubs and restaurants.

- Date of transactions/deliveries

Category 1 information must be made available to the Competent Authority upon demand.

**Recommended (Category 2)**

*It is advisable, but not mandatory, that this additional information should be kept:*

- Volume or quantity of foodstuffs
- Batch number (if any)
- Detailed description of the product

All food business operators, including butcher shops, must have systems and procedures in place so that information regarding supplier traceability and customer traceability is available to the Competent Authority upon demand.

Adequate labeling is required to ensure that any food that is placed on the market is properly identified to ensure traceability throughout the food chain.

Traceability information can be stored in any form, either paper or electronic. However, you must organise the information into a proper traceability system that can be examined by an Environmental Health Officer.

Delivery dockets may be an effective mechanism for maintaining this information if they contain the required information, are organised into a traceability system, and the information can be made available to the Environmental Health Officer immediately on demand.
6. BEEF LABELLING

The purpose behind these Regulations is to ensure that adequate information is provided to the consumer in relation to the origin of beef, and to be able to trace the source of the beef back to the farm in the event of a food safety incident. If you are selling Irish or non Irish beef you must declare the country of origin at the point of sale, in addition to other required information.

All beef must be labelled in accordance with the EC (Labelling of Beef and Beef Products) Regulations 2000, as amended. The labels must be attached to individual pieces of meat or to their packaging material. Where beef is not wrapped the information must be provided in written and visible form to the consumer at the point of sale. (This could be on a poster or a white board above/beside the meat counter). The legislation also allows for some information to be made available at the request of the consumer (see below).

1. Beef Labelling Requirements for Non Pre-packaged (loose beef)

The information that must be displayed in your butcher shop for non-pre-packaged (i.e loose) beef at the point of sale to the ultimate consumer must include the following:-

(a) The Country of Origin.

This is used when the animal was born, reared and slaughtered in the same country e.g. 'Origin Ireland'

Or

When the country of birth, rearing and slaughter are not all the same, then they must be stated separately. The country of rearing will be the country where the animal spent the longest period of time. Where an animal spent less than 30 days in a country, this country need not be stated.
Example:

- Born in France
- Reared in Ireland
- Slaughtered in Ireland

followed by the name of the country in which the carcasses were cut up. Meat of
animals born and/or raised and/or slaughtered in different countries must be clearly
separated when displayed for sale. Information must be displayed in your butcher
shop by such meats so as to allow the final consumer to distinguish easily between
meat from different origins.

(b) The Batch Number or Traceability Code

This enables the beef to be traced back to an animal or group of animals from which
it was derived.

In addition, butchers who display loose cut meats for sale each day must record,
along with the date, the following information and must provide it to consumers
who request it:

- The Approval No. of the Slaughterhouse
- The Approval No. of the Cutting Plant
2. Beef Labelling Requirements for Pre-Packed Beef

Where you are selling pre-packed beef in your butcher shop directly to the ultimate consumer the following information must be provided on the product label:

(a) **The Country of Origin.**

Same as indicated above

(b) **The Batch Number or Traceability Code**

Same as indicated above

(c) **The Approval No. of the Slaughterhouse**

Same as indicated above

(d) **The Approval No. of the Cutting Plant**

Same as indicated above

3. Beef Labelling Requirements for Loose Minced Beef

If you are selling loose minced beef in your butcher shop then you must display the following information for the mince at the point of sale:

(a) **The Country of Origin – where the State or States involved are not the State of Preparation**

(b) **The Batch Number or Traceability Code**

(c) **Where the minced beef was prepared**

  e.g. ‘Prepared in’ (Name of Member State or Third Country)
(d) Member State/Third Country where the slaughter took place

Minced Beef labels may also contain one or more of the indications listed below:

- The date on which the meat was prepared

- The approval number of the slaughterhouse at which the animal/animals were slaughtered and the Member States/Third Country in which the slaughterhouse is established

- The approval number of the cutting hall and the name of the Member States / third country in which the cutting hall is established

- Member State or Third Country of Birth

Voluntary Claims

Additional voluntary claims with respect to beef (for example ‘Angus Beef’, ‘Matured’ etc.) may not be made unless they are approved by the Beef Policy Division in the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.
Sample Beef Labelling Information to be Displayed to Customer at Serve Over Counter:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Name</th>
<th>Batch</th>
<th>Slaughtered in **</th>
<th>Cut in **</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Voluntary information*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sirloin Steak</td>
<td>12345</td>
<td>Ireland: 901</td>
<td>Ireland: 902</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Organic*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minced Beef</td>
<td>23456</td>
<td>Ireland: 903</td>
<td>Ireland: 904</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minced Beef</td>
<td>34567</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Prepared in Ireland</td>
<td></td>
<td>(using derogation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rib Roast</td>
<td>45678</td>
<td>Ireland: 905</td>
<td>Ireland: 905</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Board Bia Quality Assured*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fillet Steak</td>
<td>56789</td>
<td>Ireland: 906</td>
<td>Ireland: 907</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Tray Label at Serve Over Counter:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Fillet Steak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Batch</td>
<td>34567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slaughtered in **</td>
<td>Poland 123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut in **</td>
<td>Poland 123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origin</td>
<td>Poland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* requires approval from DAFF

** This information must be provided for consumers who request it
Notes:

1. Beef labelling requirements are currently under review by the FSAI and the above information may be subject to change in the future. Further information on beef labelling can be accessed in Guidance note 17 on the Labelling of Meat. This can be downloaded from the FSAI’s website www.fsa.ie

2. Additional labelling requirements will be required for beef under General Food Labelling rules. Please contact your local Environmental Health Officer for further information.
7. FISH LABELLING

Information that must be displayed for fish at the point of sale

If you are selling fish in your butcher shop, it is important to note that there are special labelling rules that apply for fish. The rules in relation to fish labelling are outlined in the EC (Labelling of Fishery & Aquaculture Products) Regulations 2003. Basically, there are 3 important pieces of “consumer information” to be provided at the point of sale:

1. The commercial designation of the species of fish
2. The method of production
3. The origin

The commercial designation is the name associated with the particular species of fish, (e.g. the commercial designation for Gadus morhua is ‘Cod’). The full list of commercial designations can be found in the schedule attached to the Regulations mentioned above or on the FSAI’s website – www.fsai.ie.

The method of production is simply the means by which the fish have been obtained. In other words, whether they have been caught (either at sea or in freshwater), or produced (farmed) by aquaculture.

For fish caught at sea the word “caught” may be used to indicate the method of production. For freshwater fish “caught in freshwater” must be used. However,
where it is obvious from the commercial designation and/or the catch area that the fish were caught at sea, then the method of production may be omitted (e.g. cod may be described as “Cod. Caught in the North East Atlantic.”) Alternatively the expression “North East Atlantic Cod” would also be acceptable.

In respect of fish produced through aquaculture, the expressions “farmed” or “cultivated” must be used (e.g. rope grown mussels could be described as “Cultivated Irish Mussels” or “Mussels “Cultivated in Ireland.”)

The origin of the fish must also be provided. For fish caught at sea, the origin must be specified by reference to one of 12 “catch areas.” These are:

1. North-West Atlantic
2. North East Atlantic (excluding the Baltic Sea)
3. Baltic Sea
4. Central-Eastern Atlantic
5. South-East Atlantic
6. Mediterranean Sea
7. Central-Western Atlantic
8. South-West Atlantic
9. Indian Ocean
10. Pacific Ocean
11. Antarctic
12. Black Sea
The requirement to provide consumer information applies whether the fish are sold loose (e.g. from a fish counter) or in a pre-packed form. The information must be provided at the point of retail sale to the final consumer.

The required “consumer information” may, therefore, appear on the labelling of a package or on a counter label placed in close proximity to the fish to which it relates. For more information on the display of fish and seafood please refer to the BIM (Seafood Handbook). The Regulations do not specify requirements in respect of the layout and prominence of the consumer information.

It is recommended that the consumer information is presented such that it is:

- Visible
- Legible
- Understandable
- Indelible

If you are wholesaling/selling on fish to other businesses from your butcher shop, the consumer information (i.e. the commercial designation, the method of production, and the origin) as well as the scientific name of the species must be available at each stage of marketing of the product and passed along the supply chain.
In the case of the origin, FAO (the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the WHO) catch area designations may be used in place of the descriptive name of the area (e.g. “Area 27” may be used in commercial documentation in place of “North-East Atlantic”).


Further detailed information on fish labelling can be downloaded at www.fsai.ie
8. FREEZING OF FOODSTUFFS & ‘USE BY’ DATES

Freezing of Foodstuffs

As a general rule, foodstuffs should not be frozen more than once. Where products have been taken into your butcher shop chilled they should be assigned with a date of minimum durability or ‘use by’ date on either the product label or on the associated delivery documentation.

Some butchers may decide to freeze products so that they can be defrosted and sold at a later date. This practice is not recommended because it can cause confusion in establishing ‘use by’ dates. If you decide to engage in this activity, consumers should be advised that such products will not be suitable for home freezing.

To avoid confusion, meats and poultry should ideally be bought in fresh and sold as such. Similarly products brought into the premises in a frozen state should be sold as frozen.

‘Use by’ Dates

It is important that ready to eat foods are consumed within a safe period of time, and that appropriate ‘use by’ dates are adhered to.

If you are slicing cooked meats in your butcher shop, it is normal practice to buy in vacuum packed rolls of product. The products are later opened so that they can be sliced.

It is important to remember that when vacuum packed cooked meats are opened for use, the ‘use by’ dates on the original packaging no longer apply. When you open
these packets and break the seal, oxygen is introduced to the products and bacteria will immediately start to grow. These products should then be consumed within two days.

For other products that may be packed in your butcher shop (e.g. dinner trays, stir fry mixes, meat balls in sauce, chicken kievs etc.) appropriate use by dates and cooking instructions should be provided on the label for consumers.

You can check the product specifications with your supplier for further information in this regard to establish the applicable ‘use by’ dates once packaging has been opened.
9. GAS FLUSHED POULTRY

There are certain labelling rules that must be followed when opening up packets of gas flushed poultry fillets for individual resale in your butcher shop. These requirements are listed below.

Background

• It is a legal requirement that a ‘use-by’ date is included on the label of all packaged poultry and also that a ‘use-by’ date is displayed next to loose poultry.

• When poultry meat is removed from modified atmosphere conditions of gas-flushed bulk-packs, the ‘use-by’ date of the bulk-pack is invalidated.

• Therefore, retailers must apply a new shorter ‘use-by’ date to loose or re-wrapped poultry once removed from gas flushed packs.

How can the retailer comply?

Does the label on the gas-flushed poultry pack provide instructions on the safe storage and shelf-life of poultry once the pack is opened?

If yes:

follow the on-pack instructions regarding storage temperature of unopened gas flushed poultry packs and also the instructions on storage temperature, handling and application of ‘use-by’ dates to poultry once gas-flushed packs are opened for retail sale.

If no:

• follow the on-pack instructions regarding storage temperature of unopened gas
Or

• follow the on-pack instructions regarding storage temperature of unopened gas flushed poultry packs and then apply appropriate ‘use-by’ dates to gas-flushed packed poultry that is opened, as determined through validation studies.

Microbiological validation studies must be conducted by an accredited laboratory. In doing these validation studies, consumer storage times should be validated at 8°C. Studies should examine multiple time points during retail storage using at least three samples at each time point during the storage period.

**Best practice advice**

• Gas-flushed packs of poultry may only be opened for retail sale, either loose or re-wrapped, up to and including seven days after the kill date or date of production indicated on the label of the pack.

• Poultry from opened gas-flushed packs should be stored at 5°C or less and sold with a two day ‘use-by’ date from date of pack opening.

• Consumers should be advised to refrigerate poultry at 5°C or less and consume it before the end of the ‘use-by’ date.

For more information please contact your local Environmental Health Officer.
10. MINCED MEAT

If you are selling minced meat or meat preparations in your butcher shop you are obliged to inform the consumer of the need for thorough cooking of the products prior to consumption. This applies to minced meat and meat preparations, made from meat other than poultry meat, intended to be eaten cooked. The requirement applies to all such products whether they are pre-packaged or sold loose. In the case of product sold loose, point of sale notices should be used.
USEFUL CONTACTS:-

**Environmental Health Officers’ Association**

4 Carlton Terrace,
Novara Avenue,
Bray,
Co. Wicklow,
Ph: 01 276 1211
www.ehoa.ie

**Food Safety Authority of Ireland**

Abbey Court,
Lower Abbey Street,
Dublin 1
Ph: 01 8171300
www.fsai.ie