

# LIVESTOCK MEAT



In general, all animal products – meat, poultry, eggs, etc. – donated to an Emergency Food Organization (EFO) must meet the same standards as animal products sold in a retail store. There are a few exceptions to this rule for some lower risk foods. Both donors and EFOs should take steps to make sure donated food is safe for clients. This guide addresses meat donations (beef, pork, lamb/ sheep and goat).

All livestock meat (beef, pork, lamb/sheep and goat) intended for clients must come from a USDA inspected slaughter facility. Any meat given to a client must have passed USDA inspection.

After slaughter, meat must be cut and wrapped at a USDA-inspected facility or a retail food establishment inspected by a local health jurisdiction for retail meat processing. The meat must be labeled with the type (Beef, pork, sheep, lamb, or goat) and the other food safety information listed in this guide.

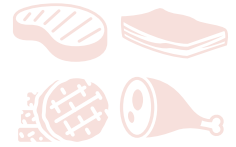
Find USDA-inspected slaughter facilities at [fsis.usda.gov/mpidirectory](https://fsis.usda.gov/mpidirectory).

Always transport and store meat in accordance with your local health jurisdiction's standards. Contact them for information and questions.

# LIVESTOCK

(Beef, Pork, Lamb and Goat)

## Donations Guide



### Inspection Requirements for Livestock Meat

Donated meat **must** be harvested (slaughtered) under USDA inspection. Meat must also be processed (made into primal cuts, individual cuts, ground meat, sausage, etc.) at a USDA-inspected facility. A USDA stamp of inspection will be put on meat that is harvested, processed, and packed under USDA regulations.



### Retail Exemption for Processing

After slaughter, the meat must be cut and wrapped at a USDA-inspected meat facility. Alternatively, if the meat is properly transported between slaughter and processing, the meat may be cut and wrapped by a meat processor in a retail food establishment inspected by a local health jurisdiction. For example, a USDA-inspected mobile facility can slaughter an animal and transport the meat to a grocery store with a licensed meat cutter who has volunteered to cut and wrap.

### Labeling

Donated meat must include: Product name and animal type (ex. ground lamb, T-bone steak); processor name and address; all allergen information; safe handling instructions; and the following statement:

*“This product was prepared from inspected and passed meat. Some food products may contain bacteria that could cause illness if the product is mishandled or cooked improperly.”*



Washington  
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Find your local health jurisdiction at [doh.wa.gov/about-us/washingtons-public-health-system/washington-state-local-health-jurisdictions](http://doh.wa.gov/about-us/washingtons-public-health-system/washington-state-local-health-jurisdictions)

**DOH:** Department of Health

**EFO:** Emergency Food Organization (food banks, food pantries, meal programs)

**FSIS:** Food Safety Inspection Services

**USDA:** U.S. Department of Agriculture

**WSDA:** WA Department of Agriculture

**Jurisdiction:** Local or county health department or district

**Livestock:** Cattle, swine, sheep, lamb, and/or goats

**Meat:** Muscle from a slaughtered livestock animal, including tongue, esophagus, diaphragm, and heart

**RCW:** Revised Code of Washington



Washington  
State Department of  
Agriculture

**Food Safety and  
Consumer Services Division  
Food Assistance**

[foodassistance@agr.wa.gov](mailto:foodassistance@agr.wa.gov)  
[agr.wa.gov/services/food-access](http://agr.wa.gov/services/food-access)

**AGR PUB 609-558 (R/10/23)**

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## Handling

Follow these safe handling instructions:

- Keep refrigerated or frozen.
- Thaw in refrigerator or microwave.
- Keep raw meat separate from other foods.
- Wash working surfaces (including cutting boards), utensils and hands after touching raw meat.
- Cook thoroughly.
- Keep hot foods hot.
- Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard.

## Transportation/Storage

Meat must be transported frozen or at a temperature of 40°F or lower. Frozen meat must remain frozen at all times. Refrigerated meat should be distributed or used within 3-5 days, and frozen meat may be kept frozen for 4-12 months. Thermometers should be used at all stages of storage and transport for any meat and/or egg product.

## Retail Donations

An approved retail establishment can donate uncooked meat to an EFO as long as it has been properly inspected and labeled. Safe transportation and storage should be maintained at all times.

## Private Citizen Donations

An EFO may not accept meat from a private citizen because it is a high-risk food (even if the donor is known to the EFO as a decent and reliable person, and the meat came from an approved retail establishment).

## A Note About the Good Samaritan Donation Act

RCW 69.80.031 offers food donors protection from criminal and civil liability. However, it does not relieve donors and EFOs of their duty to act responsibly. The Act requires donated food be “apparently wholesome.” Animal products can visually look fine but still carry E. coli, Salmonella, or other illness-causing microbes. Food donors and EFOs should be able to help verify whether food is “apparently wholesome” by knowing the food safety standards and how food was handled before donation.