

POULTRY MEAT

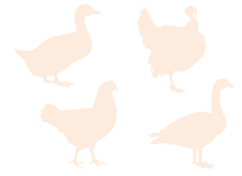


In general, all animal products – meat, poultry, eggs, etc. – donated to an Emergency Food Organization (EFO) must meet the same standards as animal products sold in a retail store. There are a few exceptions to this rule for some lower risk foods. Both donors and EFOs should take steps to make sure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

The USDA regulates poultry producers who process more than 20,000 birds per year. WSDA regulates poultry producers who process less than 20,000 birds per year. If the right labeling, transportation, and storage practices are followed, an EFO can accept poultry meat processed from either USDA or WSDA certified facilities.

A poultry producer processing less than a 1,000 birds per year cannot donate poultry meat to an EFO if they are operating with a Special Poultry Permit. Special Poultry Permits do not allow for off-farm distribution.

POULTRY Donations Guide



Inspection Requirements for Poultry Meat

Donated poultry meat must be harvested (slaughtered) under USDA inspection or under a WSDA license for Food Processing of Poultry, which can be issued to producers who process less than 20,000 birds per year. Meat harvested, processed, and packed under USDA inspection will have a USDA stamp of inspection. WSDA licensed facilities do not use stamps, but the EFO can request a copy of the WSDA Food Processor license.

Retail/Labeling

Donated poultry meat must include: Product name and animal type (ex. ground turkey sausage); processor name and address; all allergen information; and safe handling instructions.

USDA inspected product labeling will include:

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

Handling

Follow these safe handling instructions:

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



Washington
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For farmers without access to a USDA Facility who want to donate poultry meat, consider contacting WSDA Food Safety to learn more about requirements and facilities that may have an exemption for EFO donations. Find contact information at agr.wa.gov/departments/food-safety.

Find your local health jurisdiction at 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)
- USDA:** U.S. Department of Agriculture
- WSDA:** WA Department of Agriculture
- Poultry:** Living animal
- Meat:** Slaughtered animal
- RCW:** Revised Code of Washington



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Transportation and 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.

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.