

## SOP Meat Product Labeling

Meat products will be labeled as follows:

- **PRODUCT NAME.** The product name is the “true” name of the product that reflects its “standard of identity”, if appropriate. A “common” name must be followed by a description of the product that relates to standardized, recognizable products. See the USDA *Food Standards and Labeling Policy Book* for more information:  
[https://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/larc/Policies/Labeling\\_Policy\\_Book\\_082005.pdf](https://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/larc/Policies/Labeling_Policy_Book_082005.pdf)
- **INGREDIENT/S STATEMENT.** An ingredient statement is required for any product composed of more than one ingredient. This list of ingredients must show common names of all ingredients in descending order of their predominance. The list is preceded by the word “Ingredients:” All sub-ingredients must be listed. Allergens must be clearly identified, including allergens present in sub-ingredients.
- **ALLERGEN CONTROL.** Labels of ingredients, such as spice mixes, used in making meat or poultry products shall be checked whenever a new batch is received to see if the ingredients now contain allergens. If a new allergen is found to be present in the ingredient, the label of each meat or poultry product containing the ingredient shall be examined, and changed if necessary, to ensure that the presence of the allergen is properly noted
- **SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS/PERISHABILITY STATEMENT (9 CFR 317.2) FOR NOT READY-TO-EAT PRODUCT.** Safe handling instructions are required if the meat or poultry component of a product is **raw, perishable, not shelf-stable or partially cooked**. Information shall be in lettering a size no smaller than one-sixteenth of an inch and shall be prominently placed with such conspicuousness (when compared with items on the label) as to render it likely to be read and be understood by the ordinary individual under customary conditions of purchase and use.

The safe handling information shall be presented on the label under the heading “Safe Handling Instructions” which shall be set in type size larger than the print size of the rationale statement and handling statements. The safe handling information shall be set off by a border and shall be one color type printed on a single-color contrasting background whenever practical. The labels of the meat and meat products shall include the following rationale statement as part of the safe handling instructions, **“This product was prepared from inspected and passed meat and/or poultry. Some food products may contain bacteria that could cause illness if the product is mishandled or cooked improperly. For your protection, follow these safe handling instructions.”** This statement shall be placed immediately after the heading and before the safe handling statements.

**Raw, perishable, not shelf-stable or partially cooked meat products shall bear the following:**

1. Keep refrigerated or frozen. Thaw in refrigerator or microwave. A graphic illustration of a refrigerator shall be displayed next to the statement.
2. Keep raw meat and poultry separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces (including cutting boards), utensils, and hands after touching raw meat or poultry. A graphic illustration of soapy hands under a faucet shall be displayed next to the statement.
3. Cook thoroughly.
4. Keep hot foods hot. Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard.

Label image and text available from [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov)

### Safe Handling Instructions

This product was prepared from inspected and passed meat and/or poultry. Some food products may contain bacteria that could cause illness if the product is mishandled or cooked improperly. For your protection, follow these safe handling instructions.



Keep refrigerated or frozen.  
Thaw in refrigerator or microwave.



Keep raw meat and poultry separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces (including cutting boards), utensils, and hands after touching raw meat or poultry.



Cook thoroughly.



Keep hot foods hot. Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard.

- **THE NET WEIGHT STATEMENT.** This includes a space for the net weight of the product. The net weight declaration is required on the lower third of the principal display panel of the label.
- **INSPECTION LEGEND & ESTABLISHMENT NUMBER.** If a product is wholesaled (sold to someone who will resell it) it must be fully labeled with all the features of a label and the Inspection Legend. Establishment number and legend are provided by the inspection agency. The legend shall appear on all packages and containers of processed meat and meat food products, so that it is clearly visible to prospective purchasers.
- **NAME AND ADDRESS.** The label needs to show the name and address of the plant (including the ZIP code). A second line can be added to indicate the farm from which the product came from. If the product is made at another location, the name and address of the person selling the product may be used if it is qualified by a statement such as “MANUFACTURED FOR...” or “DISTRIBUTED BY...”.

More information may be found in *A Guide to Federal Food Labeling Requirements for Meat, Poultry and Egg Products*. [https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/f4af7c74-2b9f-4484-bb16-fd8f9820012d/Labeling\\_Requirements\\_Guide.pdf?MOD=AJPERES](https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/f4af7c74-2b9f-4484-bb16-fd8f9820012d/Labeling_Requirements_Guide.pdf?MOD=AJPERES)

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