

## **Meat And Poultry Inspection**

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Meat and poultry are an important part of the American diet and as such, consumers need helpful information to assist in the handling and enjoyment of these popular protein sources. Let's take a look at how these food products are inspected for wholesomeness and assurance of truthful labeling.

### **What are the functions of Arizona State Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI)?**

State meat inspection personnel monitor general plant and equipment sanitation, processing sanitation, good manufacturing practices during production, ante mortem and post mortem inspection at slaughter, multi- ingredient formulation, the use of approved labeling, and laboratory sampling programs.

### **How are these duties carried out?**

Each day a plant operates, an MPI program employee makes a least one unannounced visit to review production activity. If discrepancies are found, they are documented and then discussed with plant management to determine what corrective actions will be taken to ensure that no unwholesome or mislabeled product leaves the plant. In slaughter plants, an MPI Inspector observes each animal presented for slaughter, both alive and at various stages during the carcass dressing procedure.

Unfit and/or unwholesome carcasses and parts are removed from the human food chain and de-characterized for inedible purposes.

### **If the MPI Program regulates the wholesale segment of the food industry, who looks after the restaurants and retail meat sales in Arizona?**

In Arizona each County Health Department has jurisdiction over the regulation of restaurants and retail meat sales. This is true whether in a small local store or a large "wholesale club".

### **Is meat and poultry inspection the same as meat grading for quality?**

NO. Inspection is directly responsible for wholesomeness and proper labeling. Meat grading applies a quality rating to the meat such as; prime; choice; standard, etc.

### **Does the label information really benefit me as a consumer?**

YES. Regulations require that all items displayed on labels of meat and poultry products must be true and not misleading. The major label features are: The product name, stating the type of meat or poultry component used; A list of ingredients, in descending order of predominance

The net weight of contents

The name and address of the manufacturer or distributor

A safe handling statement telling safeguards to take to protect public health in the handling of the product at the consumers home

A statement telling whether to keep the product frozen or refrigerated until time for cooking

All manufactured products must display the mark of meat inspection

### **Who pays the cost of Arizona Meat and Poultry Inspection?**

MPI is a program within the Arizona Department of Agriculture. As such, it is totally funded by tax dollars. This assures that the program is free to regulate the industry.

**How should meat and poultry products be handled at home?**

Keep uncooked products under refrigeration as much as possible. If you are not going to cook and eat the product the same day as purchased, it is generally advisable to freeze it until use. Cooked, left over, meats and poultry should be refrigerated within 2 hours after cooking. If it is necessary to keep cooked meats and poultry without refrigeration longer than 2 hours maintain their temperature at or above 140 degrees Fahrenheit.

**Where can I get more information about meat or poultry products?**

Call (602) 542-6398