

GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIED CUTS OF POULTRY

I. PURPOSE

This directive provides guidance concerning the manner of cut for specific labeling of cut-up poultry parts, and adds specificity and clarity to the regulation cited below.

II. RESERVED

III. RESERVED

IV. REFERENCES

Sections 381.170(b), Meat and Poultry Inspection Regulations.

V. RESERVED

VI. POLICY

Section 381.170(b) provides standards which specify the requirements for certain cuts of poultry.

VII. PROCEDURES

The following are procedures to clarify and assure compliance with the provisions of the regulations regarding cut-up poultry parts. These procedures are to be used in conjunction with section 381.170(b) of the poultry regulations.

A. Proper cut of thighs, drumsticks and wings. Thighs, drumsticks, and wings should be separated from other parts with clean cuts through connecting joints. These parts may still be considered properly cut if the medullary cavity (marrow) of the bone shaft is not exposed. If the part is improperly cut, both ends shall be labeled portions of drumstick, thigh, or wing, unless the parts are acceptable for, and identified with, an official USDA Grade Mark. For example, if the bone of a part is cut short (i.e., medullary cavity exposed), but all of the meat yield associated with that part is not materially affected, then the part may qualify for a grade other than "A" grade.

B. Patella (kneebone). The patella (kneebone) may be included on either the drumstick or thigh.

C. Skin and Fat. Skin or fat not ordinarily associated with a part may not be included unless stated on the label.

D. Thighs. The regulation states that thighs may include pelvic meat but shall not include the pelvic bones. Thighs may also include abdominal

meat (flank meat) but shall not include rib bones.

E. Legs. The regulation states that legs may include pelvic meat but shall not include the pelvic bones. Legs may also include abdominal meat (flank meat) but shall not include rib bones.

F. Halves. The regulation states that a poultry carcass is cut so as to produce approximately equal right and left sides. The cut must be made so that portions of the backbone remain on both halves, and the cut may be no more than 1/4 inch from the sternum (breastbone).

G. Leg quarter. The regulation states that a leg quarter consists of a poultry thigh and drumstick with approximately 1/2 of the associated back portion attached. A leg quarter may also include attached abdominal fat and up to two ribs.

H. Leg quarters with back portion. This is a leg quarter with a complete or entire rear back portion attached. In order for this part to be properly labeled, the back portion must have all associated meat and skin. If the meat and skin are missing, this cut should be labeled as leg quarter with stripped back portion.

1. Breasts. Abdominal muscle (flank meat) shall not be included except for occasional small pieces. Skin or fat from other parts may not be included. The end of the humerus may be included on the breast if the medullary cavity (marrow) of the bone shaft is not exposed. If the medullary cavity is exposed, then a portion of wing bone is attached and this cut must be labeled as breast with portion of wing bone.

J. Breast with ribs. Abdominal muscle (flank meat) remaining on the breast shall not extend beyond the midline of the internal side of the sternum (breastbone) when folded inward from its natural attachment to the breast. If this abdominal muscle has been partially cut at its natural attachment to the breast, then the cut edge is to be approximated before folding. Skin or fat from other parts is not allowed. The end of the humerus may be included on the breast if the medullary cavity (marrow) of the bone shaft is not exposed. If the medullary cavity of the humerus is exposed, then a portion of wing bone is attached and this cut must be labeled as breast with ribs with portion of wing bone.

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