

Retail Display of Poultry from Opened Gas Flushed Packs

Background

- It is a legal requirement that a 'use-by' date is included on the label of all packaged poultry and also that the 'use-by' date is displayed next to loose poultry.
- When poultry meat is removed from modified atmosphere conditions of gas-flushed bulk-packs, the 'use-by' date of the bulk-pack is invalidated.
- Therefore, retailers must apply a new shorter 'use-by' date to loose or re-wrapped poultry once removed from gas flushed packs.

How can the retailer comply?

Does the label on the gas-flushed poultry pack provide instructions on the safe storage and shelf-life of poultry once the pack is opened?

If yes:

follow the on-pack instructions regarding storage temperature of unopened gas flushed poultry packs and also the instructions on storage temperature, handling and application of 'use-by' dates to poultry once gas-flushed packs are opened for retail sale.

If no:

- follow the on-pack instructions regarding storage temperature of unopened gas flushed poultry packs and then follow the best practice advice outlined below:

or

- follow the on-pack instructions regarding storage temperature of unopened gas flushed poultry packs and then apply appropriate 'use-by' dates to gas-flushed packed poultry that is opened, as determined through validation studies.

Microbiological validation studies must be conducted by an accredited laboratory. In doing these validation studies, consumer storage times should be validated at 8°C. Studies should examine multiple time points during retail storage using at least three samples at each time point during the storage period.

Best practice advice

- Gas-flushed packs of poultry may only be opened for retail sale, either loose or re-wrapped, up to and including seven days after the kill date or date of production indicated on the label of the pack.
- Poultry from opened gas-flushed packs should be stored at $\leq 5^{\circ}\text{C}$ and sold with a two day 'use-by' date from date of pack opening.
- Consumers should be advised to refrigerate poultry at $\leq 5^{\circ}\text{C}$ and consume it before the end of the 'use-by' date.