HANDLING POULTRY SAFELY

- Raw poultry is associated with bacteria that can cause foodborne illness.
- Make sure to wash hands thoroughly before and after handling.
- Cleaning and sanitize surfaces after contact with raw foods. Use separate utensils and cutting boards for raw and ready-to-eat or cooked foods.
- For food safety, all poultry products should be cooked to an internal temperature of 165°F.

TRANSPORTING RAW POULTRY

- Bring a secondary container or place cases of meat in an area of your vehicle that can be easily cleaned and sanitized in case of leaks. Alternatively, lay down a towel or blanket that can be washed.
- Bring a cooler and ice packs if traveling a long distance to purchase to keep poultry products at or below 41°F.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after handling boxes.

STORING POULTRY

- Harmful bacteria grow fastest between 41°F and 135°F. Minimizing time in this range reduces growth of these harmful bacteria.
- Raw poultry can be stored in the refrigerator at 41°F or below, and will maintain quality for about 7 days.
- Cooked poultry stored at 41°F or below should be consumed within seven days for safety.
- Frozen food can be safely stored indefinitely, but quality will eventually decline.
- For best quality, use frozen poultry within the following time frames:
  - Pieces 9 months
  - Whole 12 months
  - Cooked 4 - 6 months

FREEZING TIPS

- Freeze poultry as soon as possible.
- Always work with clean hands, preparation areas, equipment and utensils.
- Quality can be extended by storing at 0°F or lower and packaging for frozen storage.
- Choose containers or wraps appropriate for freezing: freezer foil, wrap or bags, plastic freezing containers.
- To prep for freezing:
  - Ideally wrap first in a layer of plastic wrap or freezer paper, then a layer of foil, then store in a freezer bag or plastic container.
  - Multiple layers will help maintain quality and prevent freezer burn.
  - Wrap tightly, pressing out as much air as possible.
- Consider freezing poultry in portions so that you only need to defrost what is immediately needed.
- Clean and sanitize equipment and surfaces after breaking down and packaging poultry.