FOOD SAFETY
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The festive activities at our home, family dinners and get-togethers, are generally centered around a table full of foods, meats, fruits and vegetables. However, these cheerful get-togethers can quickly turn to misery if those festive foods make you or your friends ill. Food safety may become more important as we try and eat all those left-overs, some may be sitting out on a counter top waiting for us.

Food safety is a number one priority of all meat and poultry farmers/ranchers. The U.S.A. Food supply is one of the, if not the safest in the world today. However, the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that some 76 million people get sick from foodborne illness each year. Becareful that we do not become one of these statistics. These left-overs make good soups and what-knows-what casseroles as these foods are recooked.

Employee's working on America's farms/ranches are often required to complete training in steps that are needed to ensure all meat and poultry are safe. Examples are, the beef business's Beef Quality Assurance, Pork's Pork Quality Assurance, along with other commodity programs, plus training for farmers/ranchers. An audit and several third party verification programs make sure these training programs are being used and provides american families the assurance of the care taken by farmers/ranchers to improve food safety. Also, the harvest facilities and food manufactures use programs to ensure food safety.

While many steps are taken to ensure the meats you purchase at local grocery stores, meat markets and other food suppliers is safe and wholesome, the first line of defense -- an important step -- is making sure those meats are handled properly and cooked to the correct temperature.

That responsibility resides with everyone preparing food for these family dinners and get-togethers that take place in many homes all across the U.S.A., including ours. The four basic safety measures -- clean, separate, cook and chill -- can go a long ways to ensure the food served to family and friends is safe.

Cooking meats to a safe temperature ( see article "Is It Done Yet ?") is the best method to ensure food safety. When foods reach a safe minimum internal temperature, bacteria are destroyed. Make sure to use a good oven, grill or heat proof meat thermometer.

For other articles of interest
1- [Handling Beef Safety](http://weebly-file/1/8/9/9/18991133/handling_beef_safely.docx)
2-[How To Store Beef](http://weebly-file/1/8/9/9/18991133/how_to_store_beef_safely.docx)
3- [Is It Done Yet ?](http://weebly-file/1/8/9/9/18991133/is.docx)
4- [Beef Quality Assurance](http://weebly-file/1/8/9/9/18991133/beef_quality_assurance_0215_comments.doc)
5-[Beef A Nutritional Powerhouse](http://weebly-file/1/8/9/9/18991133/the_power_of_ten_129_thoughts.doc)
6- [Antibiotics Again](http://weebly-file/1/8/9/9/18991133/antibiotics_again_thoughts.docx)
7- For several recipes check out Mom's Kitchen Table