



Food Safety & Nutrition

Door-To-Door Meat Sales



Sandra Brown

Food Safety and Nutrition Faculty

Most of us purchase our meat and poultry from retail stores. Some of us however purchase meat and poultry from dealers who knock on their door. Are you pleased with door-to-door meat and poultry sales?

Most consumers are most happy with the product purchased from door-to-door sales if they have done their homework. Consumers must know important information about the dealer and the company before making a decision they might later regret.

The USDA Meat and poultry Hotline helps potential buyers do their homework.

Before buying meat and poultry in quantity from a door-to-door dealer review these buying tips.

- **Check the dealer.** Ask for information about the company and the dealer. Take the time to read it before buying.
- **Ask for a brochure.** Reputable companies will have a published price list that includes the address and phone number of the company. Along with the price list they may offer recipes and nutrition information using their products.
- **Check for grading information on the product.** Companies can choose to have the meat and poultry that they sell graded by USDA. This is the only mark of identity you have for knowing the quality familiar to you. Some companies may label products with a company's private quality label. If a product is labeled with term such as "restaurant quality," ask which USDA grade is comparable.
- **Understand the cuts.** Know which cut of meat or poultry you are buying when making a purchase decision. Check the label for proper identification of the cut you are purchasing. For example, you don't want to pay top dollar for tenderloin and receive a cheaper cut such as a shoulder roast.
- **Inspect the package for the establishment number and where the meat or poultry was inspected.** USDA and state inspected products are required to give information about the product on the label. On raw products the species, the cut, the net weight, the ingredients statement and the safe handling statement are required. No ingredient may be added to fresh meat or poultry unless the ingredient is listed on the label. Some companies may offer less tender cuts, or lower grades for lower prices because the product has been tenderized with a marinade or flavoring agent. Beware of any dealer who wants you to purchase bulk quantities of meat and poultry that are not properly labeled. Always ask the dealer to leave the box or labeling information if individual products are not labeled.
- **Ask to see a retail permit.** Remember, that salespersons are required to have a state license or permit to sell products door-to-door.

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- **Check to be sure that the product has been carried in a refrigerated vehicle.** Never buy a meat or poultry product that has been carried in an unrefrigerated truck or car trunk.
 - **If you change your mind.** The Federal Trade Commission cooling-Off-Rule gives you three days to cancel purchases that are made in your home or at a location that is not the permanent place of business or local address of the seller. The Cooling-Off-Rule does not cover sales of \$25 or under. Under the rule, the salesperson must orally inform you of your cancellation rights at the time of sale. You also must be given two copies of a cancellation form and a copy of your contract or receipt.
 - **If you have a complaint about the company.** Try to resolve your dispute with the seller first. Make sure you act quickly. Send a letter of complaint. A letter is important because it puts your complaint on record and lets the company know you are serious about pursuing the dispute. In general, beware of claims that are too good to be true. They usually are.

In today's rapid pace world, shopping at home can be both convenient and timesaving. For many senior citizens, stay-at-home parents and shut-ins, it may be the only convenient way to shop. Following a few precautionary steps and doing some homework can make the shopping at home experience a good one.

For more information or food safety question contact WSU Extension at 360-397-6060.
