



## Processing Minced Meat Guideline

**Minced meat** is simply meat that has been passed through a mincing machine to break it down into smaller pieces.

For retail sale of minced meat from a butcher shop, the meat must be fit for human consumption and meet the wholesomeness criteria as specified by the Australian and Victorian Standards. Further meat processing facilities have slightly different arrangements and should contact PrimeSafe for further information.

Wholesomeness criteria for all meat and meat products for human consumption include:

- Not likely to cause food borne disease or intoxication when properly stored, handled and prepared for their intended use;
- Does not contain residues in excess of established limits;
- Free from obvious contamination;
- Free of defects that are generally recognised as objectionable to consumers;
- Produced and transported under adequate hygiene and temperature controls;
- Does not contain additives other than those permitted under the Food Standards Code;
- Has not been irradiated contrary to the Food Standards Code; and
- Has not been treated with a substance contrary to a law of the Commonwealth or law of the State or Territory in which the treatment took place.

Minced meat is not the same as mechanically separated meat (MSM) where a paste is created by forcing meat through a series of sieves under very high pressure. Inputs to MSM include bone, bone marrow, skin, nerves, blood vessels and scraps of meat that had remained on the bone after deboning. The final meat product has bone fragments separated during processing.

Minced meat may only contain meat, either meat flesh or other carcass parts as defined by the Food Standards Code. Its composition may vary depending on the meat used for mincing. If a fat claim is made, then the fat content of the minced meat must be declared as g/100g. It may not contain preservative.

### Processing

Sometimes soft cartilage and bone, such as poultry frames, may be used for minced meat to provide texture to products or for use as pet food (i.e. pet mince or pet loaf).

As bone and cartilage is defined as offal, when they are included in minced meat, their presence must be declared and the following steps should be used:

- Fine mince plate (5mm or smaller) to ensure bone fragments are no greater than 7mm;
- Processed at the end of the day to prevent contamination of other products;
- All mincing equipment must be thoroughly dismantled and cleaned prior to processing bone free products;
- Must be labelled as containing small bone fragments. If used for pet food, then it must state that its fit for human consumption but may be suitable for pet meat;
- The food safety program must include the procedures and a risk assessment for including bone included in a minced meat product.

## References

- Victorian Standard for the Hygienic Production of Meat at Retail Premises (March 2006);
- Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption (AS4696: 2007);
- Australian Standard for the Construction of Premises and Hygienic Production of Poultry Meat for Human Consumption (AS4465: 2005)
- Foreign Material Manual, United States Department of Agriculture (2013)

