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Welsh Government

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PUBLICATION

Marketing for sale of previously frozen seasonal poultry products: guidance for Trading Standards Officers

Turkeys, whole and crowns, geese and ducks may be temporarily sold as 'defrosted'.

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The current Avian Influenza outbreak is having a significant impact on many poultry farmers and keepers in Wales.

The Welsh Government has agreed that, notwithstanding retained EU Regulations 1308/2013 and 543/2008, turkeys, whole and crowns, geese and ducks may be temporarily sold as ‘defrosted’.

The effect of such a proposal means producers and processors have the option of slaughtering their birds early to reduce the risk of AI infection between now and the normal slaughtering time. Birds could then be frozen, stored and defrosted later for sale in time for Christmas.

The Welsh Government has agreed this position on the basis;

- This approach will apply to whole birds or crown of turkey, duck, goose, capons, as well as stuffed whole and crown of turkey, goose and duck and 2-3-bird roasts (the “products”). **(No other poultry products, such as chicken or processed products, are included.)**
- Birds slaughtered early can be frozen then defrosted for sale to consumers between the dates of 28 November and 31 December 2022 only. **Affected product should not be sold beyond this date and a ‘use by’ date of 31 December, at the latest, will ensure this.**
- The products must be labelled in compliance with food labelling regulations (in particular, retained EU Regulation 1169/2011 (FIC) Annex VI as regards the inclusion of the designation “defrosted”). **Additionally, the “defrosted” designation must be prominent on the front of pack in the principal field of vision.**
- There must, where appropriate, be in-store signage and online information for consumers. The information required to be given to consumers, including storage and use guidance, must, as always, reflect best industry practice.

The government view is that the provision on which flexibility is sought does not in itself present any increased food safety risks to consumers, provided that, in

accordance with food law:

- industry freezes and thaws the product under suitable conditions;
- these conditions are monitored;
- there are measures in place to ensure that any product sold as chilled has been thoroughly defrosted;
- the shelf life for any defrosted product is appropriate.

The decision to allow temporary flexibility is not a change in the law.

Traders wanting to make use of this easement should consult with their Trading Standards Officer or Primary Authority in making these changes to their operations.

Trading Standards Officers are requested to apply a proportionate and risk-based approach in the current circumstances

This policy position has been agreed for Wales. Defra has confirmed and communicated they are also adopting this position for England. The Scottish Government are considering with a view to communicating their decision shortly. It will not be available for affected products sold in NI due to the NI Protocol.

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