



# BEEF SAFETY HANDBOOK

# Safety-Related Technologies

People at every step of the beef production chain – from pasture to plate – are dedicated to providing Americans with food they can choose with confidence. Here’s a snapshot of what happens along the way to ensure the safest food possible:

## RANCHER



**“Raising cattle is our livelihood, and we take pride in caring for our animals, ensuring they always have room to roam and grow, access to clean water, nutritious feed and humane treatment.”**

Safe food begins with the principles of good cattle care and management, as outlined by the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program. More than 90 percent of U.S. beef is raised under the BQA program, assuring the highest standards of animal welfare.

Cattle farmers and ranchers fund scientific research through The Beef Checkoff program, which has invested more than \$27 million in food safety research since 1993.

This research has validated safety technologies implemented throughout the production chain and is developing new on-farm technologies like feed supplements and vaccines that fight *E. coli* long before it can enter the food supply.



Funded by  
The Beef Checkoff

## PACKER/PROCESSOR



**“My company provides wholesome beef for people here and abroad. We use careful processing techniques and a variety of safety steps to ensure we produce the safest beef possible. That’s our promise to your family and ours.”**

Most safety steps in the beef chain take place at processing.

Every federally-inspected plant operates under a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan to identify potential safety hazards and eliminate them before they occur.

Federally-inspected plants operate under continuous government inspection by Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) personnel.

Each plant implements a customized safety system to eliminate pathogens, including:

- Proven procedures and techniques, as well as specialized employee training at every processing step
- Steam vacuums, steam pasteurization, hot water washes, and/or cleaning solutions to remove bacteria
- Scientifically-validated testing and sampling procedures to detect the presence of harmful bacteria
- Strict cleaning procedures for employees, equipment and tools
- Cold chain management procedures to ensure beef is chilled rapidly and kept cold during storage and transportation to customers
- Computerized tracking and lotting systems so that every product can be traced throughout the distribution process

## RESTAURANT



**“Food safety is our promise to our customers, and we train our employees to make sure they know how to store and prepare food in the safest manner possible.”**

By law, every establishment must have a designated employee present at all times who is trained in food safety.

Restaurants also are subject to a variety of federal, state and local regulations to ensure food safety, and government health authorities and inspectors are there to ensure these steps are followed.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) publishes the Food Code, which outlines the necessary safety steps for food preparation, including:

- Proper temperatures for storing, cooking and holding food
- Proper design of kitchens and facilities
- Proper sanitation procedures

## RETAIL



**“I talk with customers every day, and I help them with everything from recipes to tips on the proper temperatures for safe cooking. For beef, it’s 160 F for ground beef and 145 F for roasts and steaks.”**

Beef sold at retail must be properly stored and packaged to protect safety.

Retailers also manage their inventories to ensure product is sold quickly and to remove expired products from the shelves.

Stores that grind or fabricate their own products must also follow the same principles that processors do in order to ensure the safest food possible.