



**Australian Chicken Meat
Federation (ACMF) Inc**

MEDIA RELEASE

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TOO MANY AUSSIE BBQ'S CUT CORNERS WITH FOOD SAFETY

ACMF Supporting Food Safety Information Council Food Safety Week

10-16 November 2008

Australians might regard themselves as the world's greatest backyard chefs, yet research released today by the Australian Chicken Meat Federation (ACMF) reveals that a surprising 60 per cent of people report witnessing unsafe food hygiene practices at barbecues they attend.

The two biggest food safety concerns identified by the research are unsafe cooking times and the re-using of plates that have held raw chicken meat.

Some 1100 people nationally were surveyed and the outcomes put a fork through the myth that we're safety-savvy when it comes to cranking up the backyard barbie.

"Chicken is among the leanest, most nutritious and easily-cooked meats on a barbecue, but it's important to handle and cook it appropriately," said ACMF executive director Andreas Dubs.

"The survey shows that a third of people barbecuing chicken take it off the barbeque because it's browned (16 percent) or they think it's been on long enough (15 percent), without actually checking if it is properly cooked. One-in-ten resorts to the taste test."

"This type of behaviour suggests there is a lack of understanding of why certain food safety practices need be followed, resulting in actual behaviour falling far short of good practice".

Despite basic awareness of food safety rules, the survey shows people are still cutting corners with food safety, with those surveyed reporting incidences of:

- cooked chicken meat being placed on the same plate used for raw meat (35 percent);
- the same tea towel being used to wipe plates after handling raw chicken and wiping hands on the same tea towel (15 per cent) or;
- their host 'double dipping' with tongs used to handle chicken meat also employed to serve salad (14 per cent). The risk of bacterial spread from raw meat, tea towels, utensils and undercooked meat is a real food safety risk.

“Consumers need to be encouraged to routinely adopt simple food safety practices. The best way to check your chicken is to pierce it and see if the juices run clear. It is encouraging to see that 53 percent of backyard barbecue cooks are adopting the proper way to decide if chicken is cooked. However, the survey does show that these healthy practices are not as widespread as they should be”, comments Dr Dubs.

Chicken’s popularity as a barbecue staple is ever strong with almost half (46 per cent) saying it was always or almost always on the menu.

Food Safety Tips

Store and prepare your chicken carefully:

- Never store fresh chicken at room temperature for more than two hours (uncooked chicken meat should be stored in a refrigerator at a maximum temperature of 5°C)
- Avoid thawing chicken at the barbeque site and keep separate to minimise contamination with other foods
- When planning to put chicken on the barbeque, consider par-cooking the chicken first (especially if marinades consist of honey) to avoid chicken being uncooked

Raw meat juices can contain bacteria, so when handling meat keep this in mind to prevent bacteria spreading:

- Keep raw chicken away from other foods in the fridge, when transporting AND during preparation, so chicken juices do not contact other food that will be eaten raw, such as fruits or vegetables
- Keep utensils used on raw chicken meat – such as chopping boards, knives, tea towels – away from cooked chicken and from other foods that will be eaten raw

As bacteria are destroyed easily by normal cooking:

- Cook chicken thoroughly, until it is no longer pink inside and when you pierce the deepest part of the meat the juices run clear

**Broadcast quality audio news grabs of Brigid Treloar, Food Consultant now available at www.mediagame.com.au
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For more information visit www.chicken.org.au or to arrange an interview with Andreas Dubs please call;

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Reference: Research conducted by Galaxy Research (October 2008) from a national sample of 1,100 respondents aged 16 years and over.