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Posted by Anonymous on Fri, 2017-09-29 15:32

Storage of offal: Is it acceptable to store offal, such as plucks, hearts, kidneys, etc., in a freezer for long periods (months) for future use? If so, and the freezer is located in a prep room (i.e. not accessible by students and used only for science purposes) is there any requirement to have this locked?

Authored 2017-03-06

Voting:



Average: 5 (1 vote)

Year Level:

8
9
10

Senior Secondary

Laboratory Technicians:

Laboratory Technicians

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Storage of offal

Submitted by sat on 29 September 2017

Updated 07 January 2023

Yes, it is acceptable to store offal such as plucks, hearts, kidneys, etc., in the freezer for long periods (months) for future use, however over time there will be a loss of quality.¹ Generally, meat intended for human consumption is recommended to be stored for 2-6 months.² As offal for dissection purposes is not for human consumption, it can be stored for longer and we recommend only storing for up to 12 months to maintain the quality of the items.

The freezer can be located in a preparation room and it is good practice to ensure that the preparation room is not accessible by students. There is no requirement to have the freezer locked, but it is recommended that appropriate signage is placed on the freezer **“No foodstuffs for human consumption to be stored in this freezer”** to avoid contamination of food for human consumption.³

It is also recommended that signage, such as **“Do not turn off power”** should be placed near the powerpoint (GPO) to prevent accidental shutting off of the power. Cleaners, relevant staff and contractors should be aware that the GPO should never be turned off. In the case of power outage, relevant contact details should be available to arrange alternate storage to avoid the loss of frozen materials.

Other considerations:

- Prior to storage, the offal should be
 - good quality i.e., fresh and passed relevant health inspections.
 - wrapped individually or in class sets to enable easy defrosting.
 - wrapped with air-tight packaging to avoid freezer burn.
- The freezer should:
 - operate at -18°C. This temperature can be monitored by using an external freezer thermometer available from electronics stores, kitchen and department stores.
 - be suitably located to enable ventilation and avoid being located in hot places.
 - be stocked to allow frozen air to effectively penetrate all stock and stock should be rotated to ensure that older items are used first.
 - be defrosted regularly to prevent ice build-up. Ensure there is an alternate freezer to relocate the offal prior to defrosting.

References and further reading:

¹ Food Safety Information Council website, (accessed 2023, January 7), '*Fridge and freezer food safety*', retrieved from <https://www.foodsafety.asn.au/topic/fridge-freezer-foodsafety/>

² Lifestacker AU website, (2017, August 4), '*Here's how long 70 different foods last in your freezer*', retrieved from <https://www.lifehacker.com.au/2017/08/this-infographic-shows-how-long-frozen-foods-can-last-in-your-freezer/>

³ Standards Australia. (2021), *AS/NZS 2243.1.2021 Safety in Laboratories, Part 1: Planning and Operational Aspects*, Sydney, Australia.

CSIRO website, (2021, May 20), '*Handling food in the home*', retrieved from <https://www.csiro.au/en/research/health-medical/nutrition/Food-handling>

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