

# The Real Meaning Behind Food Dates!



"USDA estimates that 30 percent of the food supply is lost or wasted at the retail and consumer levels. One source of food waste arises from consumers or retailers throwing away wholesome food because of confusion about the meaning of dates displayed on the label. If the date passes during home storage, a product should still be safe and wholesome if handled properly until the time spoilage is evident. Spoiled foods will develop an off odor, flavor or texture due to naturally occurring spoilage bacteria. If a food has developed such spoilage characteristics, it should not be eaten." (FSIS,USDA)

## Best if Used By/Before Date

The date indicates when a product will be of best flavor or quality. It is NOT a purchase or safety date.

A **Sell By Date** tells the store how long to display the product for sale for inventory management. It is NOT a safety date.

The **Use By Date** is the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. It is NOT a safety date, except when used on infant formula.

A **Freeze By Date** indicates when a product should be frozen to maintain peak quality. It is NOT a purchase or safety date.