

# PRODUCT

WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN?

# DATING

All of those dates on food products – sell by, use by, best if used by – are not an indicator of food safety. So what do they mean?

- **SELL-BY DATE** – This date tells the store how long to display the product for sale. You should buy the product before this date.
- **BEST IF USED BY/BEFORE DATE** – This date is recommended for best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.
- **USE-BY DATE** – This date is the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. The date has been determined by the maker of the product.
- **CLOSED/CODED DATES** – These dates are packing numbers for use by the manufacturer.

## DECIPHERING THE DATES

Product dates don't necessarily mean the product is unsafe to consume.

To learn more about dates on products, visit [fsis.usda.gov](https://fsis.usda.gov).

For more information on food waste prevention, visit [scdhec.gov/dwfsc](https://scdhec.gov/dwfsc).



# 7 TIPS FOR REDUCING FOOD WASTE AT HOME

- 1 Plan ahead.** Create a meal plan based on items you already have at home.
- 2 Shop smart.** Make a list of items you still need and stick to it.
- 3 Understand the labels.** "Sell by," "use by" and "best by" are not expiration dates. Take a smell test to see if items are still good to eat.
- 4 Prep right.** Prep and portion food when you get home from the store.
- 5 Only cook what you'll eat.** Plan accordingly for your family or guests unless you love leftovers.
- 6 Be creative.** Use leftover meals to make new meals.
- 7 Store correctly.** Your fridge should be 40°F and your freezer should be 0°F. Make sure to put the older items up front so they get used first.

**LOVE YOUR  
FOOD!**

**DON'T WASTE  
FOOD SC**



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