

Pork can be safely microwaved

NEWARK, Del. — Owners of microwave ovens can now safely cook pork roasts, chops, ribs and other pork cuts in their ovens, thanks to new microwave cooking procedures developed at Iowa State University and Gerling Laboratories in Modesto, Calif.,

under the auspices of the National Pork Producers Council and National Livestock and Meat Board

According to University of Delaware extension home economist Sally Foulke, the key is to cook the pork in a closed con-

tainer, such as a loosely sealed cooking bag or covered microwave-safe container, to produce a vaporous atmosphere. Research has shown that by using these methods, pork cooked to an internal temperature of 170°F is safe and palatable.

Previous research showed that without such special handling, meat cooks to uneven doneness in a microwave oven, leading to the possibility that *Trichinella spiralis*, the cause of trichinosis, might survive if present in fresh pork. The new cooking procedure ensures that pork will be safe to eat.

Here is the recommended

method for cooking boneless pork roasts in a microwave oven.

- Select evenly-shaped boneless roasts weighing approximately three to three and a half pounds and having a diameter of no more than four inches (or five inches for a boned Boston roast).

- Place the roast in a 10x16-inch oven cooking bag, then in a microwave-safe baking dish or on a microwave-wave rack with sides.

- Sprinkle the roast evenly with dried herbs or a package (24 grams) of pork gravy or brown gravy mix.

- Close the bag loosely, insert a piece of drinking straw into the opening and fasten with string or a half-inch strip cut from the open end of the bag.

- Allow 22 minutes per pound.
- Cook at MEDIUM LOW or 30 percent power (approximately 200 watts).

- Invert or turn the roast half-way through the cooking period, rotate the dish a half turn, and continue cooking.

- Remove from the oven, tightly cover the roast (in the bag) with foil and allow it to stand 10 minutes before serving.

These directions come from a new booklet, "Microwave Cooking with Pork," published by the meat board as part of its coordinated pork program with the National Pork Producers Council. The booklet also contains instructions for cooking fresh pork rib roasts, country style ribs, spareribs, pork chops, pork shoulder cubes and ground pork in a microwave oven

Delaware residents can obtain copies of the booklet by calling or writing extension home economist Sally Foulke, University of Delaware Substation, R.D. 2, Box 48, Georgetown, DE 19947 (302-856-5250).

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In fact, according to Maryetta Dorricott, a Delaware County extension home economist, the U.S. General Accounting Office warns consumers that some manufacturers are less than scrupulous in advertising their products. Several agencies are working to tighten consumer protection measures, but the buyer is still the one who must be responsible for getting the right product to do the job. Here are a few problem areas — be extra careful when you read the energy efficiency claims for these:

- Vent dampers: some manufacturers claim a savings of up to 24 percent on fuel consumption and savings of up to 30 percent on home heating costs. In fact, tests by the National Bureau of Standards show an average of only 8 percent savings. In addition, advertisements do not usually cite conditions necessary for effective use, such as the fact that vent dampers do not help if installed on furnaces located in unheated areas.
- Siding: Claims of 15 to 40