Power outage food safety

Source: Sandra Bastin, extension professor

When Kentucky is slammed with winter weather, you may lose power for a period of time. Once the power returns, you may question whether your feed is still safe to eat.

Generally, frozen food in a full refrigerator freezer or chest freezer will keep for about two days if the power goes out and you do not open the door. It is important to note if the freezer is only half full, the food will only keep for one day without power. Refrigerated food will keep about four to six hours with no power. Opening the refrigerator or freezer doors lessens the time the food will safely keep.

Once the power returns, frozen food that has ice crystals or feels refrigerator-cold can be refrozen, but it may lose its nutrient content, color, texture and flavor. Cook food that is completely thawed but cold within 24 hours. Discard food with a strange odor or color or food that is thawed and has risen above room temperature for two hours or more.

Never taste questionable food. If you have doubts about whether it is safe to eat, it is better to throw it out than risk a food-borne illness.

More information on food safety is available at the (COUNTY NAME) office of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.

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