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FEATURE SCRIPT – USDA Online Advice for a Safe Turkey Dinner

INTRO: The U.S. Department of Agriculture has a virtual food safety representative to give consumers online advice, just in time for holiday turkey preparation. USDA's Pat O'Leary has more.

Pat O'Leary, USDA (voice-over): As the holidays approach consumers are seeking advice from the U.S. Department of Agriculture on how to safely prepare turkey and other holiday meats. This important information comes from USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, and is easy to get from FSIS' virtual representative, Ask Karen.

Bob Tuverson, USDA Food Safety and Inspection

Service: Let me show you how easy it is to ask a Thanksgiving food safety question at [AskKaren.gov](#). For example, let's type in "stuffing a turkey" to find an answer. OK? And there it is. We learn all about the safest ways to prepare stuffing to prevent foodborne illness and keep your family safe.

(Hotline Food Safety Specialist: Good afternoon, Meat and Poultry Hotline.)

O'Leary (voice-over): In addition to online advice, the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline takes consumer calls at 1-888-MPHOTLINE.

Caller: What's the safest way to thaw a turkey?

Tuverson (to caller): OK, the best way to thaw a frozen turkey is in the refrigerator, but once it's thawed it should be cooked within 2 days.

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Caller: And how can I tell when my turkey is safe to eat?

Tuverson: You should use a food thermometer to make sure your turkey is cooked to a safe internal temperature. The thermometer should read 165° Fahrenheit in the innermost part of the thigh, the wing, and the thickest part of the breast.

Caller: Well, thank you very much.

Tuverson: Alright and thank you for calling.

If you've got a food safety question, visit AskKaren.gov or call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHOTLINE. The hotline is open on Thanksgiving Day from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Eastern, in addition to the usual hours, Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern, with pre-recorded messages 24/7. In Beltsville, Maryland, for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, I'm Pat O'Leary.

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