

## Extension Tip of the Week

### Shop the specials; meat market specials that is!

Plan your menus around sale items, especially more expensive purchases, such as meat. Buy several packages of meat when it is on sale and freeze it. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service says, "It is safe to freeze meat or poultry in its supermarket wrapping but this type of wrap is permeable to air. Unless you will be using the food in a month or two, over wrap these packages as you would any food for long-term storage using airtight heavy duty foil, freezer plastic wrap or freezer paper, or place the package inside a freezer plastic bag."

While raw ground meat maintains optimum quality in the freezer for 3 to 4 months, larger pieces of meat like steaks or chops will maintain optimum quality for 4 to 12 months. Be sure the freezer is operating at 0° F. And remember that the safest way to thaw meat is in the refrigerator on a plate on the bottom shelf so it doesn't drip on other foods. **Savings example:** Buying meat on sale may save as much as \$2.00 a meal.