



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
EXTENSION

So.... You Want to Buy Meat Directly From a Farmer?

A 101 EXTENSION FACT-SHEET ON BUYING MEAT LOCALLY

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IS IT LEGAL TO BUY MEAT DIRECTLY FROM A FARMER?

- All meat, sold by the cut, must be inspected by the USDA or State (Georgia Department of Agriculture).
- Individuals can buy an animal “on the hoof” and have it processed for personal use as Custom Exempt, by a Georgia Department of Agriculture licensed facility. Typically, in this case, the purchaser is responsible for the cost of processing the animal.
- An animal can be owned/shared by more than one person.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PROCESSING?

- Goats and lambs are generally ready for harvest between 5-8 months of age depending on body condition and breed.
- Hogs are generally finished and ready for harvest at around 6 months.
- Cattle finish at 1000-1400 pounds which can take 18-22 months.
- Grass or grain finished beef, lamb, and goats are all raised on grass and most are supplemented with grain during the final or “finishing” portion of their lives.
- Grain-finished animals produce more marbling, while 100% grass finished animals often tend to have a more yellowed colored fat, caused by carotenoids from green forage.
- The choice between grass or grain-finished is personal preference.
- Before processing, let your processor know your preferences, such as....
 - Keeping variety meats
 - Thickness of steaks
 - Weight of roasts
 - Packaging quantities

Be sure to contact your local Extension office or the Georgia Department of Agriculture for updated regulation information.

DID THE BUTCHER STEAL MY MEAT?

- Carcasses are broken down into primal cuts, and then broken down further, into sub primal & retail cuts.
- Remember that a fattier carcass yields less meat.
- Heavier muscled animals yield more meat.
- Other factors that affect the amount of meat you receive from your animal include bone-in cuts that yield more weight than boneless cuts, how much fat is discarded, and aging time. This all affects the amount of meat you receive after processing.
- There are many different options for how carcasses can be cut or processed. Be sure to educate yourself on these options. Remember, that buying a 500-pound steer does not mean that you will receive 500 pounds of ribeye steak.
- Typically, when processing an animal, you are charged by pounds of Hot Carcass Weight (HCW). Remember that number is of the total hanging weight; including lean, fat, and bone directly after harvest. Some of that weight will be discarded as undesirable trim, fat, and bone.
- Aging processes for meat adds a tenderizing and palatable effect on the meat. However, there is shrink related to water loss. Carcasses are typically aged for 7-14 days. (Consult with your processor on ideal aging time for your carcass)
- Dressing percentages are as follows:
 - Hogs ~70% live weight
 - Cattle ~60% live weight
 - Sheep/Goats ~50% live weight

STORAGE & OTHER THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Frozen meat can last for up to a year.
- Remember you must have adequate freezer space for meat storage. Rule of thumb is 1 cubic foot of freezer space for every 35-40 pounds of packaged meat.
- Options for packaging include shrink-wrapping, butcher paper, and clear film. Processors may ask your preference.
- Edible by-products can include the tongue, liver, heart, sweetbreads, etc.
- Communicate with your processor of choice on payment and pickup.

For more information regarding purchasing and processing meat locally, please contact your local county Extension Office.

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Below are example cut sheets. Keep in mind that each processor's cut sheet is unique.

Example Beef Cuts Sheet

Example Pork Cut Sheet

Please circle one of the following: Whole OR Half OR Quarter Customer Name: _____
 Pounds: Roast _____ Thick/Steak _____ Address: _____ Phone: _____

Please circle one of the following: Whole OR Half OR Grind | Customer Name: _____
 Address: _____ Phone: _____
 HCW: _____

Plant Purposes: _____ **HCW:** _____
Total pounds of Boxed Product: _____ Age of Animal: _____
Grind- _____ <30 months OR >30months
Cuts- _____

Circle one of the following choices for each primal:

Picnic: Whole or Half or Grind |

Boston Butt: Whole or Half or Grind or Steak

Loin: Bone-In or Boneless
 Roast or Chops
 Lbs/Rst _____ or Thickness of Chops _____"

Ham: Whole or Half or Grind

Trim: Ground Pork or Sausage (Mild or Hot)

Special Instructions:

Chuck: Shoulder (boneless) - Roast OR Steak OR Grind
 Chuck (boneless) - Roast OR Steak OR Grind
 Stew- _____ lbs.
 Brisket- Whole OR Flat OR Grind
Rib: Boneless: Roast OR Steak
 Short Steak Yes OR Grind
Loin: T-bone OR NY Strip/Tenderloin
 Sirloin Steak-Boneless
 Flank Steak Yes OR Grind

Round: Inside- London Broil OR Top Round Steak OR Cube Steak OR Grind
 Eye- Roast OR Eye Steak OR Cube Steak OR Grind
 Flat- Roast OR Bottom Steak OR Cube Steak OR Grind
 Tip- Roast OR Tip Steak OR Cube Steak OR Grind

Ground Beef (2lb packs) - Regular (~80/20) OR Lean (~85/15)

Special Instructions: _____

Thank you to the University of Georgia Meat Science & Technology Center for providing these examples.

Various (circle items wanted): Tongue Liver Heart Or-Tails