

True & Essential Meats

“Helping Farmers Feed People”

PURCHASING LOCKER BEEF & PORK

Making informed decisions when it comes to purchasing locker proteins

INTRODUCTION

For the past few decades, most people have purchased beef and pork at grocery stores, yet only a few short decades ago, purchasing “locker beef and pork” by the whole, half or quarter carcasses was a standard way to provide for a family’s protein needs. With the growth of the local food movement, T&E Meats is seeing a re-emergence of interest in locker beef and pork because it is acquired from a trusted, high quality source; less expensive than buying retail; conveniently kept in the freezer; and cut to the customers’ specific needs and tastes.



The interest in locker beef and pork is certainly growing, yet many of our customers don’t have the basic knowledge required to have a positive experience when purchasing meat from a local farmer, so T&E Meats is providing this guide, which is full of useful tips and illustrations to help our customers communicate desires and preferences to both your farmer and to T&E.

This guide provides a decision-making tool, using a grass-fed beef carcass weighing 543 pounds and a pastured hog carcass weighing 216 pounds, to illustrate the concept of yields. However, as with many aspects of agriculture, it is difficult to be exactly precise. So, above all, don’t hesitate to ask your farmer and T&E questions! We will be able to give you guidance based on the real-life experience we have had with animals.

WEIGHT AND PRICING

Farmers can sell animals to you in a variety of ways, and there is no one “right way.” Some farmers prefer to sell based upon live weight, which is how much an animal weighs when it is still walking around in the pasture. Many sell based upon what is called the “carcass weight” or “rail weight,” which is the weight of the carcass when it is on the butcher’s rail system, after the animal has been bled, skinned, and eviscerated. A few farmers may give you a flat fee for an animal. Always be sure to ask if that price includes processing costs. Some producers include both processing and the price of the animal in their fee structure. Other farmers charge you only for the animal and ask you to pay T&E Meats directly for processing your order. You need to understand pricing to avoid unpleasant surprises!

PRICING EXAMPLE

The following example is based on the pricing of a farmer who brings his animals to T&E Meats, and sells by the half. Keep in mind that meat prices change frequently, along with the butcher's and farmer's input costs. Costs are typically set by local auction prices.

The farmer sells his beef for \$2.99/lb based upon carcass weight, and his customer pays T&E Meats directly for processing. Keeping with the previously-mentioned carcass weight of 543 (half of which is 271.5 pounds), you can see how the total price is calculated below.

- The customer pays the farmer **\$811.70** (271.5 lbs x \$2.99)
- T&E Meats charges a \$50.00 per beef kill fee and \$0.65 per carcass pound to process the meat, so for **half** of the animal, the customer pays the butcher a kill fee of \$25.00 and \$176.15 for processing (271.5 lbs x \$0.65), for a total of **\$201.15** (\$25.00 + \$176.15)
- So, the ultimate cost for the customer to put the half beef into the freezer is **\$1012.94** (\$811.79 + \$201.15)

CUTTING AND PACKING OPTIONS

One of the many advantages of purchasing locker beef or pork is that the customer can make decisions about how to have the meat cut and packed. This is an excellent opportunity to get a package tailored to your family's needs, but there are a few things to keep in mind about your choices as you are filling out a cut form or talking to T&E about processing your meat:

CARCASS WEIGHT IS NOT TAKE-HOME WEIGHT

When an animal is cut, there is some loss you have to accept. T&E Meats will cut your carcass into table-ready cuts and discard any inedible gristle, fat, and bones. Yield weight will be impacted based on your decisions regarding cuts. Bone-in choices will result in a higher yield weight, while boneless choices will result fewer pounds taken home. Choosing to take your organ meats and bones can increase your take-home pounds.

SOME CUTS AFFECT OTHERS

Several cuts are mutually exclusive. One of the most common questions our T&E customers ask is this: "Why can't I get both T-bone and Porterhouse steaks, as well as filet and NY Strip steaks?" As this picture illustrates, all of these cuts come from the same muscles; it's just a different way to cut them. A similar situation with buying pork is that you cannot get both pork chops and boneless loin from the same side. When you submit your cutting instructions, make sure to ask T&E to explain how one cutting decision can affect another, so you'll be sure to get the cuts you want.



SIZE OF CUTS EFFECTS NUMBER OF CUTS

Requesting heavier roasts or thicker steaks will reduce the number of pieces you get back and vice-versa.

PACKAGING AND FREEZER LIFE

Some butchers wrap your cuts in freezer paper and some use vacuum packaging. At T&E Meats, we offer both options, but virtually all of our customers choose vacuum-wrapped product because it lasts longer in the freezer and is easier to visually identify.

EXTRA FEES AND OPTIONS

Most processors charge extra fees for some value-added products that take extra labor and inputs, such as making hamburger patties, sausage, jerky, bacon, curing or dividing the animal into quarters. Be sure to ask T&E what options are available and what associated fees apply.

CUTS VS. GROUND

The following examples show a full complement of cuts. When you go over your cutting instructions with T&E Meats, you have the option to forgo taking certain cuts and, instead, having the meat put into ground product. Obviously this will increase the poundage of ground beef and sausage and affect the percentage of the yield to account for bone and fat loss.

ONE QUARTER BEEF (SPLIT-SIDE)



One Quarter Beef from a 543 pound beef carcass = a 137.75 pound share

Pictured above are the cuts you can expect from a 1/4 beef (split-side). [Note: A split-side is a beef side cut to order, then split evenly between two parties, so that both parties get a full complement of cuts from both front and hind quarters.] Steaks are cut 1.25" thick and roasts are cut 2-3 pounds. In this instance you would take home 90.1 pounds of meat; 104 pounds if you take organ meats and bones. Percentages are of take home weight without bones and organs. (See Table 1.)

TABLE 1: Yield of cuts from a split-side of grass-fed beef - Total Yield = 104 Pounds

CUTS	PIECES	POUNDS	%
Chuck Roast	4	12.90	14.3%
Arm Roast	2	6.08	6.8%
Brisket	1	1.50	1.7%
Stew Beef		1.45	1.6%
Shank Cuts	6	6.16	6.8%
Skirt Steak	1	0.50	0.6%
Ribeye	4	3.38	3.8%
Short Ribs	6	5.48	6.1%
Spare Ribs	1	0.92	1.0%
Filet	5	1.46	1.6%
N.Y. Strip	5	3.51	3.9%
Top Sirloin	2	3.66	4.1%
Flank Steak	1	0.52	0.6%

CUTS	PIECES	POUNDS	%
London Broil	2	2.45	2.7%
Top Round	1	1.91	2.1%
Bottom Round (cube steak)	10	3.06	3.4%
Eye of Round	1	1.50	1.7%
Sirloin Tip	1	2.63	2.9%
Ground Beef		31	34.4%
Bones		4.38	
Heart	1	1.7	
Liver		5.26	
Tongue	1	0.86	
Kidney	1	0.45	
OxTail	4	1.28	

ONE HALF BEEF



One half beef from a 543 pound beef carcass = a 271.5 pound share

Pictured above are the cuts you can expect from a 1/2 beef. Steaks are cut 1.25" thick and roasts are cut 2-3 pounds. In this instance you would take home 178.51 pounds of meat; 206 pounds if you take organ meats and bones. (See Table 2.) Percentages are of take home weight without bones and organs.

TABLE 2: Yield of cuts from one half grass-fed beef -Total Yield = 206.05 Pounds

CUTS	PIECES	POUNDS	%
Chuck Roast	9	25.09	14.1%
Arm Roast	4	11.59	6.5%
Brisket	2	3.08	1.7%
Stew Beef		3	1.7%
Shank Cuts	11	10.78	6.0%
Skirt Steak	1	0.99	0.6%
Ribeye	8	7.03	3.9%
Short Ribs	12	11.05	6.2%
Spare Ribs	1	2.26	1.3%
Filet	10	2.77	1.6%
N.Y. Strip	10	6.96	3.9%
Top Sirloin	5	7.25	4.1%
Flank Steak	1	1.30	0.7%

CUTS	PIECES	POUNDS	%
London Broil	3	5.51	3.1%
Top Round	2	4.19	2.3%
Cube Steak	18	5.36	3.0%
Eye of Round	2	3.20	1.8%
Sirloin Tip	2	5.10	2.9%
Ground Beef		62	34.7%
Bones		9.95	
Heart	1	3.29	
Liver		8.89	
Tongue	1	2.24	
Kidney	1	0.91	
OxTail	9	2.26	

ONE HALF HOG



**One half hog from a 215 pound hog carcass:
TOTAL YIELD = a 107.5 pound share.**

Pictured above are the cuts you can expect from a half hog. Chops are cut 1" thick and roasts are cut 2-3 pounds. In this instance you would take home 63.1 pounds of meat; 77.5 pounds if you take organ meats and pork fat (to render your own lard). (See Table 3.)

TABLE 3: Yield of cuts from one half hog - Total Yield = 77.5 Pounds

CUTS	PIECES	POUNDS	%
Picnic Roast	2	6.74	8.7%
Boston Butt (Bone-In)	2	7.2	9.29%
Pork Chops	27	18.21	23.50%
Spare Ribs	2	2.53	3.26%
Side Meat Whole	1	5.22	6.74%
Fresh Ham: Ground for Sausage			
Heart	1	1.29	1.66%
Liver	1	2.52	3.25%
Fat		7.20	9.29%
Kidney Fat		3.37	4.35%
Sausage		23.21	29.95%