Direct marketing your own beef, what to expect!

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Before you sell anything

• Only Inspected products can be sold!
• Two types:
  – Federal (all 50 states)
  – State (only within state)
• No exception!
• Custom
  – "Not of Sale"

How do you view your meat processor?

How do I choose a processor?
• In Kentucky, must be USDA Inspected
• All areas need to be inspected
• When you walk into the door:
  – What does foyer look like
  – What does it smell like
  – Does someone talk to you immediately
  – What do the cuts in the meat case look like
  – How soon can I get my animals processed

The Meat Processor Language
• Dressing Percentage – amount of the live weight that goes into the cooler
  – Mud, feces, horns, wool, gut fill, muscling, fat, etc
• Shrink – within the first 24 hours a carcass can lose 2 to 5% (dehydration)
• Cutting loss – what is goes into the bone barrel; fat, bone, abscesses, etc
The Meat Processor Language

- **Yield** – amount of the carcass that you will take home (we’ll talk about this in a second)
- **Quality** – marbling, tenderness, juiciness, color; more marbling the better!
- **Aging** – longer the carcass hangs the more tender it gets
  - Beef, optimum 14 to 21 days
  - Wet vs Dry

The Meat Processor Language

- **How old is your beef cattle?**
  - 30 Month Rule
  - BSE concerns
- **Don’t lie!!**
- **Removal of SRM** (Specified Risk Materials)
- **New rendering regulations**

Under 30 months

30 months

Over 30 months

The Meat Processor Language

- **What do you want?**
  - How do want the carcass fabricated
  - How many roasts, steaks, etc
  - Some have a check list
  - Other its totally open
  - This is as much your responsibility as his!
- **How do you want it packaged?**
  - How many steaks per package
  - Butcher paper, over-wrapped or vacuum packaged

The Meat Processor Language

- **You have a 1,200 lb beef animal**
- **Dressing Percentage**
  - 60 – 62% Grain fed
  - 56 – 58% Forage
  - Finished
- **Things that lower DP:**
  - Mud
  - Horns
  - Gut fill

Let’s examine what’s happening

That $%*@!*$ is cheating me!!
Let's examine what's happening

• 1200lb beef animal
  – Boneless steaks and roasts, 1/8" trim, 90/10 ground beef
    • 425lb in the freezer
  – Bone-in steaks and roasts, ¼" trim, 80/20 ground beef
    • 500lb in the freezer

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Let's examine what's happening

• 1200lb Holstein
  – Boneless steaks and roasts, 1/8" trim, 90/10 ground beef
    • 390lb in the freezer
• Very fat 1200lb beef
  – Boneless steaks and roasts, 1/8" trim, 90/10 ground beef
    • 340lb in the freezer

Ground Beef

• How do you want your Ground Beef
• Based on Lean to Fat ratio
  – 80/20 = 80% lean, 20% fat
  – 70/30 = 70% lean, 30% fat
• Cannot exceed 30% fat

Percentage of Boneless, Closely Trimmed Retail Cuts from the Round, Loin, Rib, and Chuck; does not include Ground Beef

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<th>% Retail Cuts</th>
<th>Yield Grade</th>
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Factors that affect all this

• All are estimates
• Other things that can affect cutting yields
  – Skill of cutters
  – Aging
    • Surface dehydration has to be trimmed
  – Abscesses, bruises, etc
  – 30 month rule

Peddling your wares...

• Now that you have everything prepared:
  – How do I sell this stuff?
• Ask yourself these questions:
  – What are my goals?
  – Who is my target audience?
  – Where am I going to sell?
  – How am I going to differentiate myself?
  – What do I do with the stuff that does not sell?
Where do I sell to?

- Home
  - Call the local Health Department
- Farmer’s Markets
  - Go to only reputable markets
  - Cooler that can maintain 40°F or less
- Restaurants
  - Boxed meats
  - It has to look like commercial boxed meats

How do I differentiate myself?

- Local
  - Kentucky Proud
- Organic
  - 3 year process, extensive record keeping
- Grass-fed
  - 90% of life
- Natural
  - No growth promotants or antibiotics
- High Quality
  - Let’s talk about feeding

Marbling

- You’ve got to feed ‘em and feed ‘em good
- High concentrate, corn based diet
- More calories than they can burn
- Fat stored as Marbling
- 125+ days
- More than a coffee can

Challenges

- Liability Insurance
- Wild Onion/ Garlic
- Price
  - Can you meet supply demands
  - I can sell all the middle meats, but not the end cuts or ground beef
    - Bundles
    - Processed Meats