This newsletter is mailed to anyone who is interested in learning about and helping with direct and local meat marketing opportunities.

This Project is a joint effort of several groups, farmers, UK, KY Dept of Ag, KY State U., Partners for Family Farms and others.

It is supported by UK, the Ky Dept of Ag and the USDA.

More info?

Kenny Burdine
UK - Ag. Econ.
Lexington, KY
40546-0276
(859) 257-7257
e-mail:kymeat@ca.uky.edu

Beef Cattle Outlook
A recent report from Missouri University indicates that beef demand is strong. October retail prices were the second highest ever. However, according to Glenn Grimes and Ron Plain, cattlemen aren’t seeing much benefit from these high retail prices.

Wide margins to wholesalers and distributors have left the farmer’s share of the retail beef dollar quite small. At the same time, packers are struggling too. The farm to wholesale spread is 11% smaller than a year ago.

Naturally Case Ready
PM Holdings, has announced the introduction of its TastySlim beef product line. The line is intended to offer “natural” meat products to retailers in the Southeast.

PM uses a Pure Review program which monitors production practices and tests for pesticide, steroid, and antibiotic residues in meat. The process attempts to detect growth hormone levels that are above that which would be expected to occur naturally. (This article appeared on The Meatingplace.com Daily News at www.meatingplace.com/dailynews). The Meating Place is another great site to get information on the meat and poultry industry. Membership is free for anyone interested. To join, visit the site listed above.

Defrosting Meat
Those of you who are selling frozen meat have been asked questions about proper defrosting. These questions are important because education of customers could prevent sickness associated with improper handling. The USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service makes recommendations on how meat products should be handled.

The best way to thaw meat is in the refrigerator. After defrosting, the meat can be kept in the refrigerator 3 to 5 days before cooking it. Ground meats should usually be eaten within a couple days. Items that are defrosted in the refrigerator can be re-frozen if they are not cooked within the recommended time.

Meat can also be defrosted in the cold water. If thawing in cold water, plan to change the water every thirty minutes. It will usually take 2-3 hours for the meat to thaw.

Finally, meat can be defrosted in the microwave. If this method is used, the meat should be prepared immediately after thawing. Meat that has been defrosted in either the microwave or in cold water should not be re-frozen.

Customer Surveys
We need to survey the customers of those of you who are selling meat. It is difficult to sell the idea to food service outlets if we don’t have consumer data to show them.

Names and addresses can be sent by phone, mail, or e-mail. There is no cost to you, we just need more responses. Thanks to those of you who have sent information, and I am sorry to keep writing about this.
**Farmer Directory**
As part of the Direct / Local Meat Marketing Project, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and Partners for family farms are putting together a direct marketing directory. The directory will include contact information for any farmer in Kentucky involved in direct marketing.

If you would like to be included in the directory, contact Maria Rutter at the Kentucky Department of Agriculture by December 15th. Her number is (502) 564-5665, ext. 274.

---

**Business Planning Workshop**
On Tuesday February 20, 2001, there will be a business planning workshop at the University of Kentucky. During this time we would like to meet with producers / marketers in small groups or on an individual basis. Times will probably run from early afternoon into the evening so that everyone gets the opportunity to work on their plans. If you are interested in working on a business plan in an individualized workshop atmosphere, call Kenny Burdine at (859) 257-7257 and we can work out a schedule to fit everyone in. We will look forward to seeing you there.

---

**Meat Price Report (per cwt.)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beef Current</th>
<th>Yr. Ago</th>
<th>Pork Current</th>
<th>Yr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sght. Steer</td>
<td>$72</td>
<td>$71</td>
<td>Sght. Hog</td>
<td>$37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whsl. Carcass</td>
<td>$119</td>
<td>$117</td>
<td>Whsl. Carcass</td>
<td>$57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whsl. Ground 90%</td>
<td>$105</td>
<td>$92</td>
<td>Whsl. Ham</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whsl. Chuck</td>
<td>$91</td>
<td>$78</td>
<td>Whsl. Loin</td>
<td>$79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. Retail</td>
<td>$279</td>
<td>$265</td>
<td>Avg. Retail</td>
<td>$262</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Livestock Marketing Information Center