

PASTURE RAISED MEAT
The FARM TO CONSUMER Process
FaerieRoadFarm.com

Often the farmer has a mobile butcher (“kill-guy”) come to their farm to slaughter the animals. This causes the least stress on the animal as they do not have to be loaded into a vehicle, transported or stay in an unfamiliar place before slaughter. Here at FRF we have been working with Nate’s Custom Slaughter for the past three years. We love Nate! He is efficient and compassionate.

Once slaughtered and dressed the carcass is lifted into a refrigerated truck and brought to the butcher shop for cut & wrap. In some places this is also a per pound charge, but here in Southern Oregon we pay a flat fee no matter the size of the lamb. The consumer pays the farmer a per pound amount for the animal at hanging weight. The customer then picks up directly from the butcher and pays the cut and wrap and slaughter at pick up.

In some circumstances the farmer may also put their animals into a truck and drive them to a processing plant where the animals are slaughtered cut and wrapped all in one place. If the meat is to be USDA processed this is a requirement.

Once the carcass goes to the butcher they hang it to air dry and cure for 3-10 days...usually the low end of that range for lamb and the high end for beef. Then they cut and wrap according to customer instructions. In the past we have just offered standard cuts where everyone gets the same thing. In the future we may offer a custom cut for an increased fee to do the work of communicating your wishes to the butcher shop.

At Faerie Road Farm, because our customer base is 80% in California, we take deposits for the slaughter, cut & wrap (lamb), or we sell a “share” based on a per pound cost including the slaughter, cut & wrap (beef) . We pick up the finished meat and drive it to you. Thus far we have not officially charged any delivery fee, but relied on your generous optional gas donation at delivery and this has been sufficient. Southern Oregon customers till pay a deposit, but are able to pick up their finished lamb directly from the butcher.

Glossary

Live Weight ~ This is the weight of the animal before slaughter. Some farmers sell based on live weight. This cost is usually about half the cost of selling based on hanging weight.

Hanging weight, also called *carcass weight* ~ This is the weight of the animal at slaughter before it goes to the butcher for cut & wrap. Most farmers sell their animals based on hanging weight, which is about 50-55% of the live weight.

Finished Weight ~ Finished weight is the weight of all the cuts combined once cut, wrapped and frozen. Because of air drying and some waste during the cut & wrap process, the finished weight is generally 5-10% less than the hanging weight.

USDA ~ To officially sell meat to the public it must be processed in a USDA certified plant. This raises the cost a few cents per pound and there are only a few available in each state as the cost to become certified is substantial. To get around the need to go through a USDA plant the farmer sells the live animal to the customer and technically should not touch the meat once it has been slaughtered.

It is legal to slaughter animals for personal consumption on your own farm, but not for sale to the public. For us to slaughter and butcher ourselves and give to the customer would only be legal if the customer came to the farm and participated in the process with their own animal.

Dress ~ This refers to skinning and removing the organs (edible) and offal (inedible).

Cut & Wrap ~ This is the process of breaking down the carcass into cuts and packaging or wrapping it. Some larger plants offer a vacuum sealed product for more money, smaller butchers often only have a plastic sheet and butcher paper around the meat. Either should be sufficient to keep the meat in good shape in the freezer until consumed. However the recommended shelf life for fresh frozen meat is 1 year from cut & wrap.

We hope this has answered some of your questions on the process.