



NEWS RELEASE

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DID I GET ALL MY MEAT?

The COVID pandemic has created a significant increase in consumer interest and demand to purchase meat from local sources all around the country. The increase in demand has also led some consumers (many first time clients) to doubt they are receiving the correct amount of meat when their livestock is processed. This doubt many times comes from a lack of understanding the process of custom harvest.

Those of us familiar with raising livestock for meat understand that there are many parts of the animal that will not end up on a dinner plate. Some examples include the hide, which becomes leather, many of the bones and organs, some of the fat, etc. which go to rendering companies to be processed into an extensive array of products. Animals vary from one to the next, in size and amount of muscling, just like people, and that will influence the actual retail cut yield from any given animal. In addition, preferences on how the consumer has the animal processed, for example boneless vs bone in cuts, will also influence how many pounds are taken home.

To answer the question of how much meat should I expect to take home, UW-Madison Division of Extension Livestock Program educators have authored three factsheets regarding how much meat an animal should be expected to yield when sent to a custom processing facility. The factsheets focus on three individual species' (beef, pork, and lamb) dressing percentage and the carcass fabrication process as well as water loss and packaging decisions and how they impact the amount of take home product. Farmers selling direct to consumers are welcome to use the fact sheets with their customers.

The factsheets can be found online at the UW-Madison Division of Extension website
<https://livestock.extension.wisc.edu/article-topic/meat/>

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