Recent meat shortages have resulted in an increase of first-time custom slaughter customers. There are significant differences in finished product weight based off multiple factors. The following information will give customers an idea of what they can expect when picking up their custom processed meat.

All Cattle Are Not Created Equally!

The first difference that people may notice is simply size or weight. This may be due to age, ration (pasture, grain fed, combination etc.) breed and genetics. The live weight percentage of boneless and lean cuts will not be the same with a 600lb calf vs. a 1,200lb steer. Animals may be lighter muscled or heavier muscled in relation to the frame (skeleton).

Aging

Aging is an important step in providing the best product and customer experience. The most common method is to hang (dry age) all beef carcasses for a minimum of 14 days before processing. This allows for a significant increase of tenderness along with an overall better eating experience. This comes with a cost in terms of moisture loss (shrink). A carcass can lose on average 5-7% of the total weight from aging; which may not sound like much but it relates to 30-40lbs on a 600lb carcass. Aging 14 days results in a 710lb carcass ready to cut (6% shrink). Depending on how fat the animal was and the percentage of bone-in and boneless cuts, a customer can expect to yield 50-65% of the 710lb aged carcass or 355–460lbs of finished product.

A 600lb calf should result in a roughly 330lb carcass (≈55% dressing percentage). Aging 14 days results in a 307lb carcass ready to cut (7% shrink).

Since younger cattle will likely not have as much fat as an older animal, one can expect a higher moisture loss and increased trimming. Depending on the percentage of bone-in and boneless cuts, one can expect to yield 45-60% of the aged carcass or 140 – 185lbs of finished product. This is often a result of less muscle in relation to the skeleton.

Common Cuts

Depending on desired cut or thickness, a customer can expect the following grilling steaks from one steer or calf:

- 20-26 Ribeye Steaks
- 22-28 T-Bone/Porterhouse Steaks
- 6-8 Filets
- 10-14 Sirloin Steaks

The remainder of the carcass is often divided into roasts, steaks, stew meat, and ground beef.

Summary

As stated above, several factors can influence yield, quality and eating experience of meat from a custom slaughtered animal. Knowing these variables can help processors and customers develop a good working relationship.

* The goal of OSU’s Cowboy Meats is to provide our customers with a safe and wholesome product while producing the best quality products from your livestock. If you have any questions or wish to schedule an appointment, please call (405)744-MEAT.
The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

WE ARE OKLAHOMA

The Cooperative Extension Service is the largest, most successful informal educational organization in the world. It is a nationwide system funded and guided by a partnership of federal, state, and local governments that delivers information to help people help themselves through the land-grant university system.

Extension carries out programs in the broad categories of agriculture, natural resources and environment; family and consumer sciences; 4-H and other youth; and community resource development. Extension staff members live and work among the people they serve to help stimulate and educate Americans to plan ahead and cope with their problems.

Some characteristics of the Cooperative Extension system are:

• The federal, state, and local governments cooperatively share in its financial support and program direction.

• It is administered by the land-grant university as designated by the state legislature through an Extension director.

• Extension programs are nonpolitical, objective, and research-based information.

• It provides practical, problem-oriented education for people of all ages. It is designated to take the knowledge of the university to those persons who do not or cannot participate in the formal classroom instruction of the university.

• It utilizes research from university, government, and other sources to help people make their own decisions.

• More than a million volunteers help multiply the impact of the Extension professional staff.

• It dispenses no funds to the public.

• It is not a regulatory agency, but it does inform people of regulations and of their options in meeting them.

• Local programs are developed and carried out in full recognition of national problems and goals.

• The Extension staff educates people through personal contacts, meetings, demonstrations, and the mass media.

• Extension has the built-in flexibility to adjust its programs and subject matter to meet new needs. Activities shift from year to year as citizen groups and Extension workers close to the problems advise changes.