

## VERMONT QUALITY MEATS

11/30/99

### QUALITY GUIDELINES (Tentative)

Our cooperative offers the highest quality meats we can produce, raised as naturally as possible. Final evaluation of the meat is done at the time of slaughter. If the meat is deemed unworthy of VQM standards, it will be rejected with slaughter cost charged to the producer.

#### LAMBS:

Hothouse lambs are VQM's main product. Here are general guidelines on these:

Weight: 45-60 lbs. live should dress 23-30 lbs.

Condition: well muscled, no backbone protruding.

Management and Feed: Mother's milk, creep feed with free choice grain and high quality hay. Lambs must be raised in barns and/or paddocks, NOT on pasture. A dry environment with adequate space is a key aspect of good management. Medications should be kept to a bare minimum and producers should refrain from using chemical herbicides and chemical fertilizers on pastures. Bovatec and Rumensin are acceptable at this time as feed additives to prevent coccidiosis.

Age: Lambs should be under six months of age.

Best Breeds: Today's accepted meat breeds include Cheviot, Dorset, Hampshire, Montadale, N.C. Cheviot, Oxford, Shropshire, Southdown, Suffolk, Texel, Tunis. These make the best hothouse lambs.

Dual-purpose breeds include: Columbia, Corriedale, East Friesan, Finnsheep, Panama, Polypay and Targhee. When crossed with meat breeds, these can selectively produce acceptable hothouse lambs.

Wool sheep breeds, hair sheep, and minor breeds are not likely to produce the type of lambs our market is looking for. For example: Rambouillet, Romney, Romanov, Jacob, Clun Forest, Karakul, Shetland, Navajo-Churro, Cotswold.

We are selling some older (6 - 10 months), larger lambs for a lower price. All bets are off as to what and where they eat - but we want to keep quality up on these and grain helps. These are the \$3.00 - 3.50 per pound lambs I'm selling right now.

## GOATS:

Goats have similar guidelines to those outlined for hothouse lambs although chef's expectations of goat kids (not as tender as lambs) give us more leeway regarding pasturing.

Weight: 40-60lbs live weight

Condition: a nicely filled out goat kid is desirable

Management and Feed: should adhere to the same guidelines as stated for lambs

Age: a kid over 6 months is less desirable

Best Breeds: meat and dairy breeds are acceptable. Whatever the breed, kids should be well filled out. Boers and Boer crosses are desirable. Angora and pigmy goat are not desirable.

Goat kids are not expected to be barn-raised, like hothouse lambs. Pale color and tenderness are desirable but not critical since goats are usually marinated and cooked differently.

## VEAL CALVES:

Our veal customers are looking for relatively pale meat.

Weight: 350-500 pounds live weight

Condition: well filled out over the back and hind legs.

Management and Feed: free choice milk. Veal milk replacer (non-medicated) is *not* desirable but can be used (no more than 25% of total milk fed). Hay should be available. No grain is needed. Loose housing only. Large interior pen is acceptable but an outdoor pen with shelter is best. It is not acceptable to tie, pasture or stanchion free-range veal calves. Calves need not be castrated.

Age: 4-4 1/2 months

Breed: Holsteins grow best and are therefore preferred. We discourage any other breeds including all meat breeds.