CLAIMS AND DEFINITIONS

Commonly Used Claims and Definitions for Meats

Natural

The USDA's definition is only "minimally processed". The term is commonly used on products raised without antibiotics in the feed or hormone implants.

Organic

Certified organic meats require certified organic feed, certain humane treatment of the animals, and the processing must be done at a certified facility. Antibiotics and artificial growth hormones are not allowed.

Grass-fed/pasture raised

Use of these terms varies widely. The USDA defines "grass-fed" as: "grass and/or forage shall be the feed source consumed for the lifetime of the ruminant animal, with the exception of milk consumed prior to weaning. The diet shall be derived solely from forage and animals cannot be fed grain or grain by-products and must have continuous access to pasture during the growing season." Despite this definition, use of the term may include animals which are fed some grain. In an effort to differentiate from grain-fed products, the term is sometimes prefaced by 100% or "strictly".

Humane/Free range

The definition also varies widely. Some programs offer their own definition as "certified". Generally, these terms imply that the animals have access to the outdoors and are less confined than conventional commercial production.

Certified

Subject to specific protocols and third party inspections. For example, "certified organic" or "certified humane".

Dry-aged

Beef which is stored in a temperature and humidity controlled environment for 20 or more days. The aging enhances the flavor and tenderness of the beef. Typically only the loin is dry aged.

**Learn about Weights and Pricing**

Farmers may discuss three different weights with consumers: Live weight, hot carcass weight (HCW) (also called hanging weight), and Final weight (also called retail weight and take home weight).

Live Weight

The weight of the entire, living animal.

HCW

The weight taken immediately after slaughter, but before final trim. With beef for example, HCW is approximately 60% of live weight.

Final Weight

The "take home" weight after trim and cutting into useable portions. With beef for example, final weight is 65% of HCW.

There are many factors which can influence the live weight to carcass weight and carcass weight to final weight of meat. Some of these factors include:

**Breed of animal:** Some breeds have been selected to yield meat while others have been selected for other purposes, such as milk production, and will yield less meat than meat breeds.  
  
**Age of animal, Starting weight and degree of finish of animal:** Excess fat can be gained from age and a high degree of finish, but is not saved for consumption, thus lowering overall yields.  
  
**Bone-in versus boneless cuts:** Boneless cuts mean a higher degree of trimming and the weight of the bones is thrown away.  
  
**Organ meats and bones selected:** Keeping marrow bones, soup bones, and organ meats adds to the total weight that you get to bring home and enjoy.  
  
**Aging time and additional processing:** A carcass that “hangs” and ages in the cooler loses water weight. In addition, further processing such as smoking of hams and bacon and the % of fat that you choose in ground product will also have a small impact on yield.

That said here are some “ballpark” yields to expect on the various species:

**Beef**  
Assume a live weight of ≈1,200 lbs. Using the common dressing percentage of 62% we see a yield of: Hot Carcass Weight ≈744 lbs. Then, using the common yield of 65% from hot carcass to retail we see a yield of: ≈484 lbs. of “take home” cuts. Expect a lower yield if choosing mainly boneless cuts.  
  
**Pork**  
Assume a live weight of ≈250 lbs. Using the common dressing percentage of 72% we see a yield of: Hot Carcass Weight ≈180 lbs. Then, using the common yield of 68% from hot carcass to retail we see a yield of: ≈122 lbs. of “take home” cuts. Expect a lower yield if choosing mainly boneless cuts.  
  
**Lamb**  
Assume a live weight of ≈130 lbs. Using the common dressing percentage of 52% we see a yield of: Hot Carcass Weight ≈68 lbs. Then, using the common yield of 72% from hot carcass to retail we see a yield of: ≈49 lbs. of “take home” cuts. Most lamb cuts are bone-in.

USDA AND NYS REGULATIONS

USDA and NYS Regulations for meat sales

USDA Inspected Facility

Processed livestock (beef, pork, sheep, goat) meat can be sold to the public.

NYS 5A

Can kill & process livestock (not to be sold). So, if you buy a live animal from a farmer, it can processed for your consumption. Also can process farm-raised game (bison, venison) and poultry for legal resale.

NYS 20C

Can process (butcher) & sell livestock which were killed at USDA inspected facility. Sales are essentially limited to retail (farm to consumer), not wholesale.

NYS 20C

Can slaughter and sell poultry, fowl, and rabbits they raise (Limited to 1,000 birds/year). (Whole bird only, no cuts).

## COMMON CATTLE BREEDS

Consumers may wish to be aware of the various breeds of livestock that are raised by local producers. Some of the more widely available breeds are listed below. For information on these breeds, visit to the [Oklahoma State University Department of Animal Science](http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/cattle/) which maintains comprehensive descriptions of livestock breeds.

#### Beef

* Angus (Red & Black)
* Hereford
* Limousin
* Charolais
* Simmental
* Highland
* Galloway (Belted & Solid)
* Shorthorn

#### Dairy

* Holstein
* Jersey
* Ayrshire
* Brown Swiss
* Guernsey
* Milking Shorthorn

## TYPES OF LIVESTOCK FEEDS

#### Hay

Dried grasses and legumes stored for feed.

#### Haylage

Hay which is stored "wet" and fermented. Can be stored in upright silos, bunker silos, or on ground level tube silos (white plastic). Ensiled hay.

#### Baleage

Large wrapped bales of hay stored "wet" and fermented. Ensiled hay.

#### Silage, corn silage

The entire corn plant chopped and stored "wet", fermented. Ensiled corn plants.

#### Shelled corn

Dry whole kernel corn.

#### Cracked corn

Dry, whole kernel corn which is ground into smaller pieces.