

# 7 Common Questions about Buying Beef Directly From the Farmer in Halves, Quarters or Bundles

## 1. What would I get?

Meat from a typical  $\frac{1}{2}$  beef (from a 1,000 - 1,200 lb. live animal) consists of approximately:

- **14 T-bone steaks** (3/4" thick)
- **14 rib steaks** (3/4")
- **8 sirloin steaks** (3/4")
- **8 round steaks** (3/4")
- **2 sirloin tip roasts** (3 lbs)
- **6 chuck roasts** (4 lbs)
- **4 arm roasts** (3 lbs)
- **2 rump roasts** (3 lbs)
- **8 packages of stew beef** (1 lb)
- **4 packages of short ribs** (1.5 lbs)
- **4 packages of soup bones** (1.5 lbs)
- **80-100 lbs ground beef**
- Variety meats, if desired, such as heart, liver, tongue, and oxtail

For a  $\frac{1}{4}$  divide the above by 2.

Below is an example of a 12<sup>th</sup> of beef bundle, complete with cooking instructions. This bundle is about 35 lbs.

### Example of a 12<sup>th</sup> beef bundle:

- **2 New York strips.** Ideal on the grill.
- **2 rib eyes.** Ideal on the grill.
- **2 boneless sirloin.** Ideal on the grill.
- **18 lbs ground beef.** Whatever your favorite way to fix ground beef, this will taste better. You will taste the fresh air and sunshine of the Lake Champlain Islands with every bite.
- **3 beef roasts.** Place the frozen roast in the crock-pot with a little water and seasonings and you will have a perfect roast for supper. Cut up any leftovers and combine with BBQ sauce for great sandwiches.
- **2 lbs stir fry.** Just thaw and its ready to make your favorite dish
- **2 lbs kabob.** Perfectly marinated, skewer with your favorite vegetables for Kabobs or use in stews soups or stroganoff

## **2. How will I store it all?**

As a general guide, 50 pounds of meat will fit in about 2.25 ft<sup>3</sup> of cooler/freezer space. The empty freezer compartment of an average-sized home refrigerator will usually hold one eighth of a beef (roughly 50-60 lbs). Quantities larger than this will require a stand-alone freezer or another refrigerator-freezer. A stand-alone freezer will usually store meat better because it has the capability to store meat at a colder temperature. Frozen beef will keep a very high quality for up to 12 months, after which quality will begin to slowly degrade. Meat will remain safe to eat indefinitely if kept frozen.

## **3. We don't eat that much meat.**

Eating beef 2 times per week it will take a family of 4 approx 1 year to eat a half beef, or 6 months to eat a quarter (a half beef provides 100-130 meals of beef and there are 50-65 meals from a quarter).

## **4. It's a big expense.**

Grass-fed beef is a high-quality, highly nutritious product. It tastes better than mass-produced beef and is better for you.

“Cowpool” with another family to buy a quarter or a bundle.

After the costs of processing (butchering and packaging), hauling livestock and meat, hay for the Winter, and expenses associated with buying, building and maintaining capital infrastructure (barns, frost-free water lines, tractors, trailers, hay production/handling/storage equipment, manure handling equipment, taxes, insurance, etc.), the farmer nets about \$400 per animal, or only \$1 per pound of product sold.

## **5. What if I don't like it?**

We guarantee 100% satisfaction within 2 month from the date of purchase, and will replace or refund for the amount returned.

## **6. It's more convenient to buy at the store.**

The “MOST” convenient source of meat is your own freezer!

## **7. Isn't fresh meat better?**

Freezing is nature's best preservative for meat products, and meat that is vacuum-packed and frozen at the optimal freshness will taste just as fresh as fresh meat cuts. People have a bad experience with frozen meat if the meat is not properly frozen or old before it was frozen.

There are 2 simple ways to thaw meat: 1) Take meat out of the freezer and place in a refrigerator at least 24 hours in advance or 2) place vacuum-packed meats in cool water and it will thaw very fast (paper wrapped meats can thaw in water in a leak-proof plastic bag). Change the water every 30 minutes so that it continues to thaw. Small packages may thaw in an hour or less; a 3-4 lbs. roast may take 2-3 hours.

Adapted from "Marketing Beef for Small Scale Producers," Arion Thiboumery and Mike Lorenz, Iowa State University Extension (2009)