

## **About us**

We run a small cow/calf operation. What this means is we own the cows who produce the calves. We then neuter the male calves and raise them as steers to become the custom beef we offer for sale. This way, we KNOW these calves; how they are raised, when they are weaned, what they are fed, that they are NOT exposed to chemicals, that they are artificial hormone free, and other aspects of their health history/regime. This way you KNOW what you are eating.

## **Our beef, your choice**

### **Pasture-raised**

“100% Pasture-raised” or “grass-fed” beef are raised on a grass-based diet throughout their whole life. High in healthy omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin-rich, and nutrient dense, this beef tends to be leaner than grain finished beef.

### **Pasture-raised, Grain-finished (the default)**

Grain-finished cattle, like grass-fed cattle, spend the majority of their lives eating grass in pastures. When beef is grain-finished, the last 70 to 90 days prior to butcher, the steer is also fed a balanced diet of calorie-rich grain along with hay and pasture. Grain finished beef is more extensively marbled (and therefore also more tender) than strictly grass-fed beef.

## **The Finished Product**

The question we are asked most commonly is how much will  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{2}$  beef cost me? This is a question that does not have an exact, black and white answer as there are variables that are not known in advance of the actual butchering of the specific steer. We CAN give customers an estimate of the total based on previous years' steers, but the total can vary by as much as a couple hundred dollars. So, on to the GRAY explanation:

Our current price on the purchase of a beef steer is \$3.50 per pound based on “hanging weight”. This is payment for the BEEF only and does not include the butchering costs that you will pay directly to the butcher (more about this below).

OK, what does hanging weight mean?

Hanging weight is the carcass weight of the steer, after being killed, skinned, and the head, organs, and lower legs removed.

Mathmatically, this looks like:

Approximate Live Weight – 1,000 - 1,250 lbs

Hanging wt is approximately 56% of live wt, so 560 - 700 lbs

Split Into 2 halves, each “Side” is 280 - 350 lb

Average Take Home is 68% of hanging wt so 190 - 240 lbs (per side) of packaged beef in your freezer.

However, the amount of finished, packaged beef you will receive depends on some choices you make working with the butcher, like, how you want it cut, whether you want soup bones, organs, beef fat, etc. But the average take home yield is between 65 and 70% of hanging weight.

So, the customer pays us for the beef at the time of butcher, then pays the butcher directly for the butchering and packaging of that beef. It is not until we are given a hanging weight by the butcher that we can give you an exact price for your amount of beef.



## Custom Butchering

As said above, you will work directly with our butcher on how you want your beef cut and packaged.

Note: The  $\frac{1}{4}$  beef IS  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a side (called a split quarter), not a forequarter or hindquarter (yes, some people sell it that way). So, you will get cuts from both front and rear of the “side of beef”.

Working with the custom butcher, you can select size of ground beef packs, size of roasts, thickness and number of steaks per package, etc. Other choices are:

- Stew Meat – 1 lb., 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. or 2 lb. packages? – How many? (there can be a extra charge if, like us, you request more stew meat and less ground – we like 50:50)
- Soup Bones – How many?

- Ground Beef, what size packages?– Note: If no additional cuts go into hamburger you typically get about 25% of the hanging weight in hamburger.

This is why you pay the butcher directly for your custom order. People want different things and the amount of work can vary from order to order. (Previous butchering charges for halves have been around \$260 as a ballpark)

We use Gore's Custom Meats in Steven City VA. You can download their cut sheet at [2020-Beef-Cut-Sheet-FINAL.pdf \(goresmeats.com\)](#) They are professionals and can help guide you in your choices.

The customer is responsible for picking up their order at Gores unless prior arrangements are made with us. Their normal hanging time to age the carcass is 14 days, so we can give you a pickup date estimate when you order your beef as we have butcher dates booked up to 2 years in advance. You must pickup your order from Gore's within 7 days of the cut date. It will be frozen so bring coolers or boxes to pack it into.

So, the math, again..... (all figures are approximate!)

Beef cost: 280 lbs hanging weight x \$3.50 lb = \$980.

Plus butchering costs = \$260

Total cost to customer = \$1240

Packaged weight at 68% = 190 lbs. finished product

So net cost per lb. is AROUND \$6.40 per lb. for high quality beef, aged for 14 days, custom cut to your order, vacuum sealed (except ground beef and soup bones), and flash frozen.

So that is the GRAY of it as there is not really a black and white answer.