

MOUNTAIN BEEF FAQ

Mark and Amy Ramsden
68340 Warnock Rd., Lostine, OR 97857
OR: (541) 569-2450 | WA: (509) 595-7080
www.mountain-beef.com | email: ramsdentranch@eoni.com

Traditionally, all beef was grass fed. But in the United States today what is commercially available is almost all feedlot beef. The reason? Feedlot beef can be raised faster, and so is more profitable. Seventy-five years ago, steers were 4 or 5 years old at slaughter. Today, they are 14-16 months old. You can't take a grass-fed beef calf from birth weight of 80 pounds to 1,200 pounds in a little more than a year on grass. These animals are designed to forage. Feedlot beef are fed grain, primarily corn, in order to make them as fat as possible as fast as possible in commercial feedlots.

Grass fed beef has been found to contain fewer calories and to be lower in both overall fat and artery-clogging saturated fat than grain fed beef and is higher in protein.

Below are answers to common questions, including pricing and our sustainable ranch.

How big is your ranch?

Our winter ground, where our cattle graze the steep hillsides from late November until the end of May, is about 13,000 acres. The elevation is 1,200 to 4,500 feet. Our summer grazing ground is on 35,000 acres in the mountains adjoining the winter pastures.

Is your meat federally inspected?

No. But the family run butcher shop we use is USDA- approved.

Is it legal to sell beef without a federal inspection?

Yes. If we were to sell retail, we would have to go through a USDA plant. But we actually sell the animal on the hoof (live). Selling an animal on the hoof exempts you from having to get USDA inspection. For example, if a person buys a quarter of a steer then we would find a co-buyer for the other three-quarters of the animal.

Do you sell this way to avoid inspection?

No. We do not sell this way to avoid inspection, but to insure quality of our product. We sell this way to avoid going retail, i.e.: to sell through a common grocery store. USDA inspected meat has to be slaughtered and packed at a federally inspected facility, causing undue stress on the cattle just before slaughter. Selling live animals lets us slaughter at home under conditions our cattle are accustomed to.

How do you price your beef?

To sell from the ranch and not be federally inspected we must sell a live animal. Pricing is determined by the per-pound price we have set for that year, multiplied by the weight of the animal. In 2007 the price per pound was \$3.10 cut and wrapped. The weight is taken once the steer is slaughtered and hanging (hanging weight). The hanging weight is multiplied by the set price per pound. This type of pricing is most common years ago.

Isn't grass-fed beef gamey tasting?

This is a claim some people have made for this beef. Call it what you like, we simply call it *flavor* -- and we are proud of the way our beef tastes! Most people have become so used to beef with no flavor, that when they finally try Mountain beef, they're surprised. It is like the difference between an apple just picked from the tree in your yard and one that's been in cold storage for a year; or garden fresh vegetables versus vegetables from the store; and coffee brewed from fresh-ground coffee beans as opposed to ground coffee from a can.

Could you sell us a little bit at a time? We have limited freezer space and it is a lot of money to spend at one time.

Because we sell beef on the hoof, as explained above, we have to sell our meat in bulk quantities. Our cattle are **only** grass fed and typically graze on the range all season, meaning the only time of year our cattle put on needed weight for butchering is during the summer months. And even that is dependent on weather conditions. We then can only butcher once a year, in the early fall. Remember this not retail meat. Our Mountain beef is only grass grazed and never sees a feedlot or gets fattened in any other way.

You mention in your brochure that you don't use synthetic chemicals. Is this organic beef?

Yes. We do not certify our beef, but it is as organic as it gets. Our corriente cattle -- a breed developed in Spain -- graze on an open range alongside elk and deer. Their preference of diet is more like that of browsers, such as deer or elk, than other breeds of cattle. A typical corriente weighs around 700 pounds versus a beef cow that will go from 900-1,400 pounds or more. Our smaller cattle seem well adapted to the rugged canyons and mountains that make up our winter and summer pastures.

This is the real bottom line of our ranch ideals:

Our goals are to provide wholesome, healthful meat and to promote a pastoral grazing system that will inherently advance the management of our natural resources, thus becoming a **sustainable** ranch and home where our children can grow. Ultimately we strive to benefit the land, community and our own family through thoughtful and caring stewardship.