



MEDIA RELEASE

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MARKET DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

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CONTACT: Wendy Lofton, Marketing Specialist
615-837-5309
Wendy.Lofton@TN.gov

LOCAL FARMS CAN BEEF UP THE QUALITY FOR HOLIDAY MEALS

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - If the Thanksgiving table belongs to the noble turkey, then surely the all the winter holidays belong to beef. From beef brisket to Beef Wellington, beef is a traditional favorite main course throughout December.

There's Beef Burgundy; steak au poivre; classic pot roast; shepherd's pie; prime rib; beef tenderloin; and beef stroganoff. These dishes are among the most anticipated of the year. Interestingly, beef dishes are often not difficult to prepare; instead, it's finding that finest cut of meat that usually poses the biggest problems for the holiday chef.

Fortunately, as more farmers seek to sell products directly to the public, top quality beef has become much easier to find. Farmers employ all sorts of feeding and management techniques with their livestock. You can choose animals raised and fed the way you wish: grain-fed or grass-fed, raised without hormones or antibiotics or even the breed of the animal. Once at the processors, beef can aged to personal tastes, then cut to the thickness you prefer. The meat is then wrapped for freezing and ready to pick up.

The savings and the quality of farm direct meats are undeniable. Do a little research the next time you shop for groceries: note the prices and cuts of beef. That 99 cents hamburger is typically only 73 percent lean meat. Hamburger straight from a processor or farmer is ground chuck or round, which is 80 percent lean meat, period. The really big savings comes when you consider the better cuts of meat. The grade of meat available in most retail outlets is typically only "select" grade, when "prime" grade is the best possible quality, followed by "choice".

Prices for store brand ribeyes are usually select. Higher-end ribeyes which are brand named or certified to be a particular breed are higher priced and will still be only choice grade. Additionally, many seasoned or packaged meats have a water solution injected into the meat, which adds weight and therefore cost to the price per pound.

For a whole farm-direct beef – which could easily be 500 lbs of meat – a typical price per pound will be about \$2-3. Every cut, every pound costs the same, whether it's prime rib or ground chuck. Keep in mind that retail beef is not aged, which is vital to

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ELLINGTON AGRICULTURAL CENTER
BOX 40627, NASHVILLE, TN 37204
PickTNProducts.org

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developing tenderness and flavor. Meat purchased straight from the farm, however can be watched carefully in the processor's cooler and aged to perfection.

A whole beef can feed a family of four to six people for about a year, but it is not necessary to buy a whole animal. Friends, family or neighbors can share the meat, or simply purchase a portion of the carcass from the producer or processor. Check with USDA inspected meat processors about buying only a portion, or particular cuts of meat. Think you can't afford to buy the freezer necessary for that much meat? Research shows that the cost of an adequate freezer for a beef is covered in the first three years after purchase with savings made possible by buying directly from a local farm.

Finding the finest beef anywhere for your holiday table this year could be as easy as opening your freezer. Just about every type of meat, from beef and lamb to goat and pork, from poultry to rabbit and even emu, is available from a Tennessee farm or processor. Find local beef and other farm fresh meats at www.picktnproducts.org - and start planning those holiday dinners!

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Standing Rib Roast

Yield: 6 servings

1 (6 pound) prime rib roast, ribs removed and tied on the end of the roast
3 garlic cloves, slices
2 teaspoons dried thyme
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1 teaspoon black pepper

One hour before roasting, bring the roast to room temperature.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Make slits in the meat with the tip of a paring knife. Insert the garlic slices into each slit. Place the roast in a roasting pan on a roasting rack. Sprinkle evenly with the thyme, salt and pepper. Insert a meat thermometer into the thickest part of the meat.

Roast 15 minutes per pound and check the meat after 1 hour. For very rare meat, the thermometer should read 130 degrees. For medium-rare, roast to 140 degrees. For well-done meat, leave in the oven until the thermometer registers 160 degrees.

Transfer to a cutting board and let it rest for 10 minutes. Cut the strings that hold the ribs on the roast and set the ribs aside. Carve into slices and serve.