

Guide to Buying Meat in Bulk Directly From Farms and Ranches

Provided to you by



How Much Should I Buy?

If you have storage space and the funds to purchase upfront, buying meat in bulk can be a worthwhile way to buy from a farmer or rancher you trust. But, it does require a little planning. First, think about how much meat your household likely consumes in one year using our simple guide.

HOW MUCH MEAT DO YOU EAT?

weekly { $\frac{\text{Number of meat eaters} \times \text{average portion size} \times \text{meals per week}}{\text{your weekly consumption}}$ }







yearly { $\frac{\text{Weekly consumption} \times 52 \text{ (weeks in a year)}}{\text{your yearly consumption}}$ }

Which Share Is Right For Me?

Then, think about the species (beef, pork or lamb, etc.) that you consume the most of, and how much of your yearly meat consumption you'd like to try purchasing in bulk.

Ask your farmer or rancher what share sizes are available—you can always try a smaller share at first and see if it works with the way you and your family cook. Remember that buying in bulk means you'll get a variety of cuts from each animal. You may not be used to cooking with some of these cuts. We'll get into that more in the next section.

BULK BUYING BASICS: YIELDS FOR BEEF, PORK AND LAMB

SPECIES SHARE	 WHOLE BEEF	 1/2 BEEF	 1/4 BEEF	 WHOLE HOG	 1/2 HOG	 WHOLE LAMB
Live weight	900-1300 lbs			230-325 lbs		100-150 lbs
Hanging (carcass) weight	550-800 lbs	275-400 lbs	140-200 lbs	165-230 lbs	82-115 lbs	50-75 lbs
Edible meat yield	300-500 lbs	150-250 lbs	75-125 lbs	110-150 lbs	55-75 lbs	40-65 lbs

*These numbers will vary depending on production practices and breeds.



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

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What Will I Get?

The exact cuts you'll receive in a farm-direct bulk buy will depend on your farmer or rancher, your butcher, and what you request. Check out our graphic for a general idea.

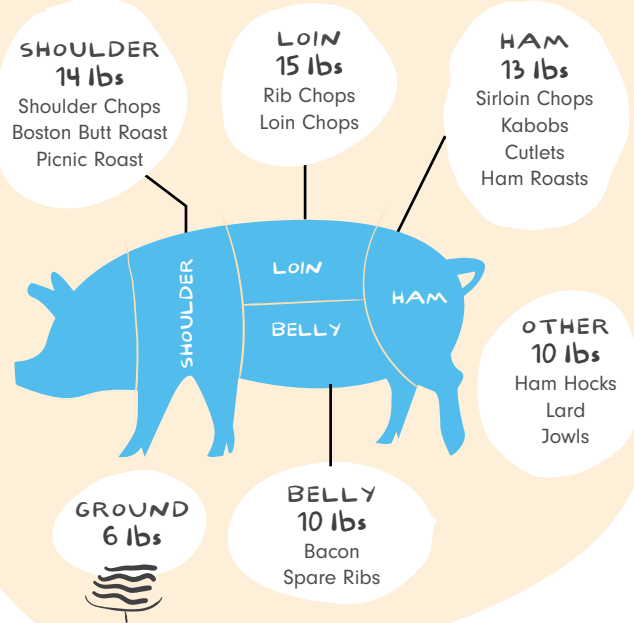
How will this work, and what will it cost me?

When buying meat in bulk, you're buying a "share" of a live animal. You will pay two parties: the **farmer or rancher** and the **butcher**.

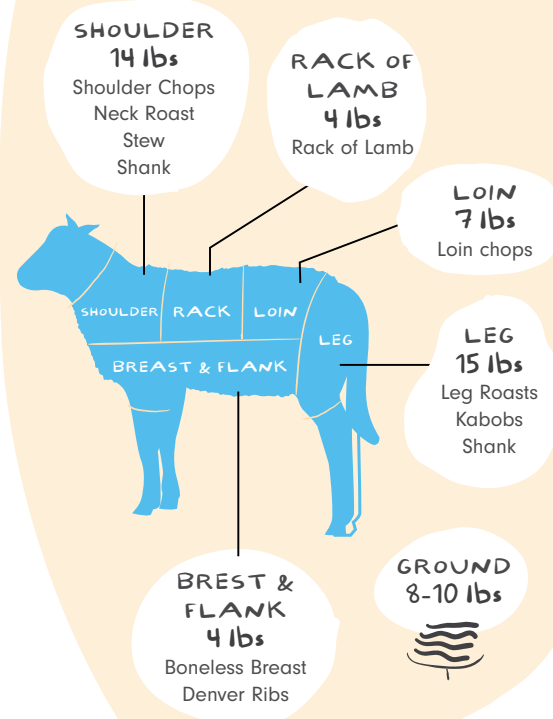
The **farmer or rancher** will charge you based on the weight of the animal after slaughter (aka "hanging" or "carcass" weight), which includes bones and fat that will be trimmed away later.

The **butcher** will charge you a "slaughter fee" and a "cut-and-wrap" fee. You'll fill out a "cut sheet," which tells the butcher which cuts you prefer, like steaks, roasts, bone-in or boneless, ground, etc. The more specific your requests, the higher the fee.

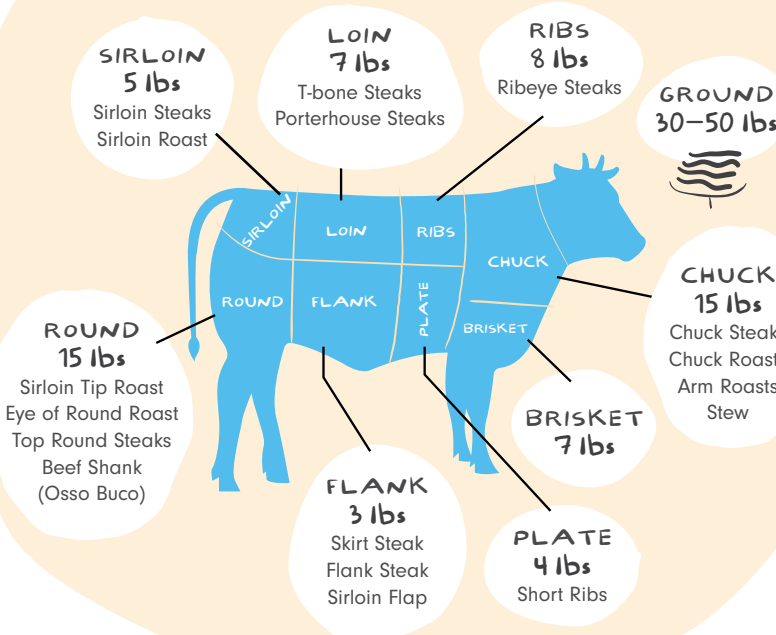
APPROXIMATE MEAT YIELD FROM 1/2 OF A HOG

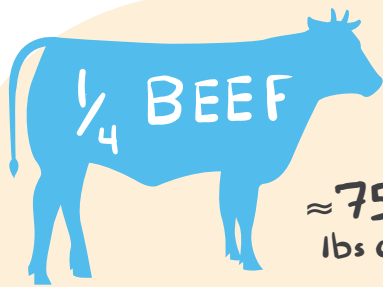


APPROXIMATE MEAT YIELD FROM A WHOLE LAMB

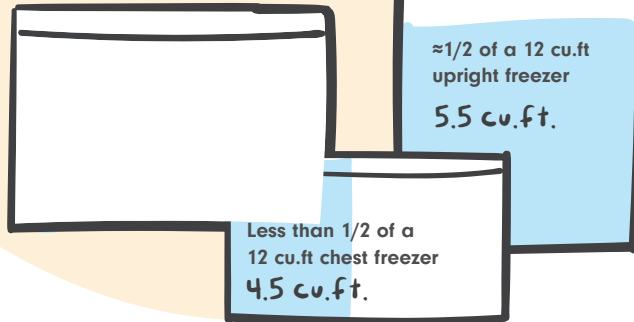


APPROXIMATE MEAT YIELD FROM 1/4 BEEF





≈75–125
lbs of meat

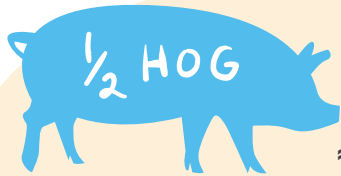


Where Do I Store All This Meat?

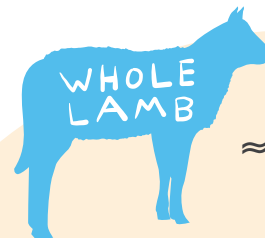
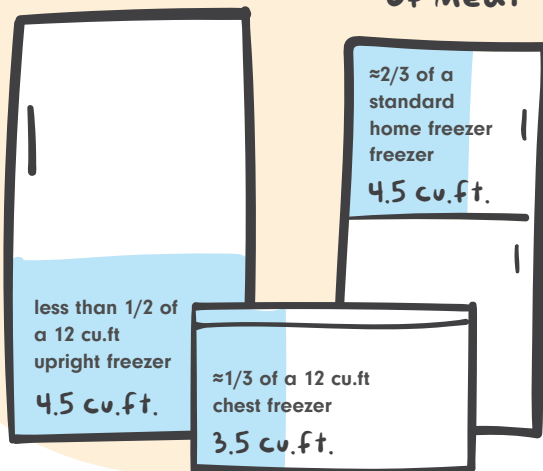
For some shares, you'll be able to store the meat in a regular-sized freezer in your home fridge. For larger shares, you might want to purchase another freezer. These freezers can often be purchased used, for a fair price, if you're on the lookout.

How Do I Cook All This?

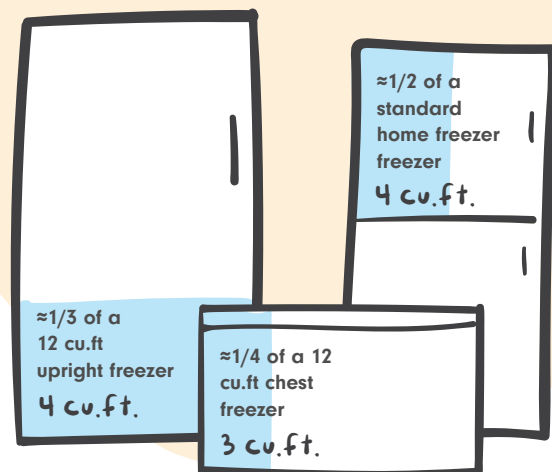
Great question! Check out the Cook It section on the Good Meat Breakdown website for plenty of tips: www.goodmeatbreakdown.org



≈55–75 lbs
of meat



≈40–65 lbs
of meat



WSDA's Regional Markets Meat & Poultry Assistance Program works to strengthen regional meat supply chains by providing support to small farms, ranches and meat processors in Washington. agr.wa.gov/farmfoodbiz

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