Bittersweet Farm

Meat: The Process!

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Our Mission

• The percentage of livestock operations selling product directly to consumers or retailers is much smaller than that for other agricultural products years by USDA’s National Agricultural.

• Since the demand for locally sourced products has increased in recent years we embarked in a semester long adventure at Bittersweet Farm to see just how this process has evolved.
Our Focus

• We focused particularly on the production process of slaughtering chickens and pigs, which gave us a new sense of where we all get our meat from.

• We studied commercial livestock operations and compared them with our experiences at Bittersweet Farm—a local certified organic operation.
A Heads Up

• Please keep in mind that this process may be disturbing to some. We will show images that detail what we have learned studying the slaughtering process.

• This is a way of life for many small farmers as a source of sustenance and income. We all eat meat so we think it’s important to know where it all comes from.
The Local Process

- The process doesn’t start on the chopping block but instead in the fields.

- Grains, fruits, and grasses are what make meat so part of our duties on the farm were feeding and watering the animals.
Defining Local

- Definitions of “local” vary by regions, companies, consumers, and marketing channels.
- Congress believes local is any meat < 400mi.
- However in St. Lawrence County, local can be just a short drive away
- The consumer interest in how meat is produced, how animals are raised and slaughtered, and the particular diet fed to livestock has attracted a great deal of attention.
The Slaughtering Process

- Slaughter methods have not changed for thousands of years.
- Hundreds of millions of chickens, ducks, turkeys, lambs, goats, cattle and pigs are killed each year on family and subsistence farms.
These are the steps to proper cutting a chickens head off.

First you start off by picking out the right chicken. A good chicken is considered to be one in good health (walking normally, and not possessing any abnormalities on the body)
Chickens.

Next, you must properly place the chickens neck between the two nails on the stomp.

Then you must stretch out the nick of the chicken appropriately to the size of the wooden block. This is done for an effective chop of the chickens neck so that it is a clean cut.
• After setting up the chicken’s neck between the nails you must then hold the chicken correctly, pulling back the wings of the chicken so they don’t flop in your face while chopping it’s head off. The correct way to hold the chicken is by pulling the tip of their wings down to their feet stretching the chicken out to be similar to a straight line.
Chickens…

- When the chicken’s head is chopped off you must leave it alone for a couple minutes so that the nerves can die out.

- Afterward, the chicken is ready to be scolded.
Chickens....

- Scolding is the process of using boiling hot water to help remove feathers or hair more easily.

- Next comes the plucking wheel, where you strip the carcass of all its feathers.
Chickens.....!

- Next comes the removal of entrails followed by the washing and soaking of the carcass and/or familiar image we see in stores.
- Lastly, we cut the chickens into particular pieces for sale.
Pigs

- This process is similar to the chicken process.

- The first step is choosing a desired pig and then sever the jugular vein with a knife. The blood drains from the body, causing death through exsanguinations.
The second process is scolding them just like the chickens in boiling water so then we could remove the hair by scraping the carcass.

The scolding/hair removal is a long process that is done instead of skinning the pig—it all depends on how you want to cook the pig.
The next process is removing the entrails from the carcass by making precision cuts to ensure low meat loss and a less messy job.

Lastly, we wash/scrub the carcass entirely to remove all unwanted blood and membranes and the pig is ready to be stored in a cool place for sale.
Commercial Livestock

- Livestock- animals kept or raised for use or pleasure; farm animals kept for use and profit.

- Local farmers hold proportionate livestock due to the amount of land that they own, money, and what their farm specifically produce.

- Commercial livestock is own by corporations and industries holding great amount of land. These industries use the entire land for the production of one specific animal breeding them, and getting them ready to be sent to the slaughter houses.
The processing of animals starts at the beginning of their lives until the are butchered. How the animal is raised, fed, and given specific foods are all entailed in the processing. When the animal meets a specific age, and weight they are shipped to slaughter houses by conventional means.

The animals are traveled from the farms to the slaughter houses by trains, trucks, or if it’s a close farm they will be herded.
There are many characteristics between small farms and commercial farms that are similar, however it is the differences that make commercial slaughtering unique. Animals are butchered in their mass numbers in slaughterhouses. Meat industries use machines and people for quick efficient butchering.
Ethics of Butchering
• USDA.gov


• Slaughter and Processing Options and Issues for Locally Sourced Meat. USDA.