

Questions to consider, when purchasing custom orders beef.

Q: What does the term *custom order* or *freezer beef* mean?

A: Custom order or freezer beef usually refers to large quantities of beef ordered cut and/or packaged in specific meal portion sizes, to be stored in the consumer's deep freeze for future use.

Q: What choices do I have when ordering a specific amount of beef?

A: What you need to understand are the terms used to describe the various options. A *half unit* refers to all the cuts from one half of the carcass when cut from front to back. A *quarter unit* refers to either a front or a rear quarter of the carcass. The *front quarter* includes the rib cuts i.e. prime rib roast, or steak, while the *rear quarter* includes the loin area which includes t-bone steaks and sirloin roasts and steaks. Regardless of which quarter you purchase you will receive some cuts of lesser value like blade steaks and roasts, and some trim which you can use as stew beef or have ground into hamburger.

Another option is a *split side*. With this option you get half the cuts from all areas of one side of the carcass providing a greater variety of cuts.

Some producers offer the option of *boxed beef*. Boxes are assembled to include several roasts, steaks and packages of hamburger. They are sold by the weight (50 or 100lb boxes) or the cost (\$50.00 or \$100.00/box).

Standard *half units* will weigh approximately 240 lbs; Standard *quarter units* will weigh approximately 120lbs; Standard *eighth units* will weigh approximately 60 lbs. Note: Each *quarter unit* makes up 3 approximately 40 lb boxes and requires 3.5 cubic feet of freezer space.

Q: How is the beef packaged and what will it cost me for packaging?

A: Most custom orders arrive with meal portions individually pre-wrapped while others don't. Make sure you specify whether you want your beef pre-wrapped, to avoid being unprepared. Also check if the cost of packaging is included in the price you were quoted; or if it is extra.

Q: What is the standard size of packaged beef?

A: Standard packaging includes steaks, cut one inch thick, weighing approximately 12 oz., roasts weighing approximately 2-3 lb, and hamburger packaged 1 lb/tray.

Q: How much should I order?

A: Individuals: 1/8 Unit, Families with light beef consumption or couples: 1/4 Unit, Families with heavier beef consumption: 1/2 Unit

Q: The meat I received weighs less than the amount I paid for. Why?

A: When you purchase a side of beef, you are charged the dressed weight of that side of carcass in the cooler. As the meat is cut into meal portions, some bone and fat is discarded making up the difference in weight.