

Thank you for your purchase of freezer beef from Old Homeplace Farm. As you already know, we raise our cattle strictly on pasture, using mob grazing to provide them with a fresh “salad bar” each day. You can be assured that your beef is the product of sunshine and raindrops.

We feel that this 100% pasture-based diet results in healthier cattle. A growing body of research suggests that this diet is not only better for the animal, however, but also results in meat that is a healthier alternative to conventionally produced grain-fed beef. For instance, meat from grass-fed animals has been demonstrated to have lower levels of saturated fats, higher levels of omega-3 fatty acids, and higher levels of vitamins A and E. More information concerning these (and other) benefits of grass-fed meat can be found at www.eatwild.com.

Since grass fed beef is often a little leaner than grain-finished beef, you might have to slightly alter your normal cooking methods to best capitalize on this quality. You can find many books and internet sites that specialize in “grass-fed recipes”, but all you really need to do is observe a few general rules.

- First things first: thaw your meat slowly if at all possible. Moving your beef from the freezer to the refrigerator one day before cooking is best, although in a pinch we’ll thaw our meat in cold water. Avoid thawing in the microwave if at all possible. The puddle of juices that “leak” out while being defrosted in the microwave is essentially your tenderness. Also, resist the urge to start cooking your meat when it is only partially thawed (or frozen).
- We usually hit steaks a few times with a meat mallet or rolling pin just prior to cooking. It’s probably not necessary, but we’ve had good luck so far, so we’ll probably continue.
- The rule of thumb for retaining tenderness of any cut during preparation is low heat and slow cooking. Since grass-fed animals aren’t packed full of extraneous fat cells, their meat will dry out faster if exposed to excessive cooking temperatures. Put another way, at any given cooking temperature grass-fed meat tends to get done sooner than grain-fed meat.
- Don’t overcook. We get the best results for both flavor and tenderness when we cook our beef medium-rare to medium.
- Crock pots are great inventions that really bring out the best in roasts. If you don’t own one, this is one purchase that we would really recommend. They represent the pinnacle of the “low and slow” rule.
- You can accentuate the strengths of different cuts by using the most appropriate cooking method. Some cuts – most roasts, stew meat, and round steak – do best with “wet” cooking methods (braised in a covered pan with an adequate amount of liquid). Other cuts (especially ribeye steaks, sirloin steaks, T-bone steaks, New York strip, and filet mignon) can shine with either wet or dry cooking methods.
- Allow steaks and roasts to “rest” for 8 to 10 minutes after removing them from the heat. We usually just set them aside on a heated plate. This allows the muscle fibers to relax, resulting in more tender meat.

Our family hopes that you enjoy your beef as much as we have enjoyed providing it for you. If you ever have any question or comments, or would simply like to come by the farm for a visit, don’t hesitate to give us a call.

The Bowlings
Old Homeplace Farm