

How to buy healthy, sustainable, local beef

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Created 12/11/2010 - 11:43

There is a lot of evidence that grocery store meat may be poorly raised with chemicals and hormones injected and poorly slaughtered. Also the meat is hung only for a short period of time, which does not produce the high quality you get at a famous steakhouse.

Knowing the source of your food at one level is difficult, and we get along find without knowing. So why bother?

Three reasons:

- Your personal and family's health
- Reduction of your environmental footprint
- The world your grandkids will live in

Recently I began thinking about raising kids and what values I want to instill in them. In 100 years, there will be all new people on the planet. I may have to make a change consciously, however for my kids, they will be born into the change and for them it will be natural and expected.

Let's talk beef.

How much do I need? There are two questions: 1) what does my family eat and 2) what would they be willing to eat.

What I eat is probably only a pound a week. My wife doesn't eat beef, so it's just me for now. I'll team up with neighbours or friends and get the appropriate amount to eat.

What I'd be willing to eat is probably about 1.5 pounds a week tops. So that works out to about 78 pounds in a year. And there may be times I want friends over, so in order to be generous, let's look for 100 pounds of meat.

A side of beef is about 300-350 pounds. So I'll need to split the remaining 200-250 pounds with others.

What kind of beef do I want? A quick search on the internet showed me that there are several organic farmers within driving distance, and only one that has the values I am interested in and sells beef. They sell organic grass-fed beef. The farmer in the Toronto area is [Beretta Organic Farms](#) [1].

How much freezer space do I need? 35 pounds of meat is one cubic foot of freezer space. Therefore I need about 3 cubic feet, which doesn't seem like a ton. (No pun intended)

The Plan

My plan is to:

- buy a steak from the farmer and taste it to ensure I like the meat
- go meet the farmer and discuss the options
- get people together and place an order

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Published on Jay B Hancock.com (<http://jaybhancock.com>)

- pick up and store the meat
- eat it over the next year

I'll report on my progress. In the meantime, please let me know if you have advice or stories to share.

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Links:

[1] <http://www.berettaorganics.com/>