

Meat Messenger

North Dakota State Meat Inspection Program

North Dakota Department of Agriculture

February 2003

Plant Finds New Opportunities Under State Inspection



Jeff Wretling and his father Wally skin an elk at Garrison Custom Meats.

Garrison Custom Meats is one of the newest plants to utilize the state meat inspection program, and owners, Jeff and Madonna Wretling, have plenty of good things to say about state inspection.

“I am very pleased with what the state program has been able to offer our business,” says Jeff Wretling. “We have seen an increase in retail sales, custom numbers, and our processing dollars since becoming an official establishment.”

Garrison Custom Meats has slaughtered more than 70 animals under state inspection to date – the majority being for producers marketing their own products.

“We’ve slaughtered and processed animals for producers who have then sold the meat products to other sources,” Wretling explains. “It has provided them an opportunity to market their products in a manner that was previously not available.”

The Wretlings have operated Garrison Custom Meats since May 1999 and became classified as an official state establishment in March 2002.

“My custom numbers weren’t increasing, and I needed to expand my business,” Wretling said. “I realized that becoming a state inspected plant might just be what I needed to stay in business.”

Since becoming state inspected, Wretling says even his custom numbers have increased. “I’ve had a few customers say that they really appreciate the fact that we are now under inspection. They like having an inspector at the plant on a more regular basis.”

Wretling adds that since becoming state inspected, he is now more aware of different practices that have helped his slaughter and processing procedures.

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“I have changed a few procedures within the past year and that has helped me produce a higher quality product, which has helped my business.” In the future Jeff says he would also like to expand the wholesaling of some of his sausage products through different stores in the area.

“The state program has been very accommodating, and the staff has been easy to work with,” says Jeff. “I really appreciate the inspector’s flexibility in scheduling inspection days. That helps things at the plant operate more smoothly.”

Garrison Custom Meats, located just west of Garrison, is an official slaughter/processing establishment that also offers custom slaughter and processing, retail sales and deer processing service to many producers throughout the region. The business employs three full-time and two part-time employees and produces about 20 different fresh and smoked products.

For more information on becoming State inspected, please contact Jordan or Dr. Grondahl at 800-242-7535.

New, Updated Beef Value Cuts Guideline Now Available from NCBA

by Dan Murphy on 1/23/03 for www.meatingplace.com

The R&D Ranch team at the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association is now offering an in-depth Beef Value Cuts Guide, including an instruction manual, brochure, a training video and a comprehensive CD-ROM and multi-tab three-ring binder, according to a news release.

The guide provides a complete turnkey program with several tools designed to make it easy for processors, manufacturers, retailers and foodservice operators to understand and implement these beef “value cuts” developed by NCBA-funded researchers.

As the demand for steak continues to increase, the beef industry has recognized the need to supply the latest Beef Value Cuts innovations and information. The Guide includes such information as recipes, menu suggestions, cutting and preparation techniques, research, and cost and profit data.

“The purpose of the Beef Value Cuts training and education materials is to show all industry professionals that Beef Value Cuts can be created with minimal additional work, and can prove to be more profitable than traditional uses for the chuck and round,” said Betty Hogan, director of new product marketing for the NCBA. “With the help of these tools, these new steaks can be cut efficiently and quickly, and can deliver some terrific profit potential opportunities.”

Beef Value Cuts are single-muscle cuts that offer consumers easy preparation, greater consistency and more lean beef product options, as well as greater profit potential for the beef industry. Using information from the beef industry’s Muscle Profiling study, the innovative Beef Value Cuts were developed by the NCBA’s new product development and culinary center teams.

To order copies of Beef Value Cuts materials, contact the NCBA Customer Service Department at 800-368-3138 .

Meat Program Helps Minnesota Farmers

Meat Industry Insights News Service, January 4, 2003

Melrose, MN - Jim and Helen Poepping have been raising hogs and selling pork products for more than 20 years, relying on heavy word-of-mouth to lure customers down the long gravel road that leads to their farm. But their good reputation and the quality of their sausages, spare ribs and bacon wasn't always enough for people to forego the convenience of their local grocer and drive 30 or 40 miles to the Poepping farm. "The gravel road was a drawback for some people," Jim Poepping joked. "If you don't get repeat customers, you don't have a business."

The Poeppings solved their location problem three years ago by joining a startup state meat inspection program. The program lets small and medium-sized farmers get their meat approved and onto the shelves of grocery stores — an opportunity previously only available to larger, USDA-inspected plants. Now products from the family's label, Pep's Porks, can be found in about a dozen stores throughout Stearns County. Jim Poepping says his hog farm is processing twice as much meat as before — 1,200 hogs a year — and profit has grown by nearly 30%. "It's expanded our business, but it's also made it a little more convenient for our customers to get ahold of our product," Poepping said. "The time was just right to do it."

When the state program kicked off in January 1999, only one meat processor signed up, putting out about 100 pounds of meat a month. Today, there are 67 processors statewide, churning out nearly 9 million pounds, or \$40 million in product, a year. That's less than 5% of all the meat processed in Minnesota each year. But, for farmers like the Poeppings, a little is a lot. "They chew off as big a bite as they can handle," said Willis Wesley, a state supervisory inspector, as he inspected a slaughtered hog recently at the Poepping farm. Wesley, who worked for the USDA for 30 years, says the program is good for smaller operations because of flexible scheduling of slaughter days and more daily interaction.

Advertisements

Business for Sale:

Established sausage and meat market for sale in Bismarck, ND. Due to retirement, owner is looking for interested person(s) to buy well running business including equipment and inventory. Please contact Otto at 701-222-1747 for more information.

Equipment for Sale:

Cas Label Printer- Model LP-1000, 4 years old
Label Machine and Scale- Jay Model 1130 and NCL Electric Scale
Call Larry at Edgeley Meat Plant. 800-235-6328

Two 3 horsepower, 3 phase electric motors. Older models, good working order, were used on belt driven compressors. Call 701-439-2924.

Equipment Wanted:

One Stainless steel table, no bigger than 3 feet wide and 6 feet long. Call 701-439-2924 if you are willing to sell a table of these dimensions or smaller.

Wanted:

Full-time meat manager or meat cutter with smokehouse experience. Call Adolph or Kirk at Ashley Super Valu, (701) 288-3410.

Ag Products Utilization Provides Granting Opportunities

The mission of the Agricultural Products Utilization Commission (APUC) is to create wealth and jobs through the development of new and expanded uses of North Dakota's agricultural products. This is accomplished through the administration of a grant program.

A maximum of **15 qualifying applicants** present funding proposals for the following categories on a quarterly basis: basic and applied research grants; marketing and utilization grants; farm diversification grants; and an agricultural prototype development grant program.

The deadlines for submitting applications are: January 1, April 1, July 1 and October 1. The commission typically holds its meetings within one month following the deadline. An agenda is forwarded to applicants shortly after the submission of the proposal.

For more information or to request a copy of their most recent annual report, contact John Schneider at (701) 328-5350 or Inez Ryberg at (701) 328-5318.

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