

# Meat Messenger

## North Dakota State Meat Inspection Program

North Dakota Department of Agriculture

May 2003

### State Inspection Benefits Butcher Block

“I really liked the idea of being able to sell out of more locations than just our current store,” explains Ron Mahoney, co-owner and manager of The Butcher Block about his plant’s decision to go under State Inspection. “We wanted to expand our market, and this was an opportunity to do that.”

The Butcher Block is located in Oakes, ND, and has been operated by Mahoney since 1986. The plant employs three full and three part-time employees and produces about 40 different products under inspection. The plant also does custom slaughter, deer processing, and sells a variety of items out of their retail case.



The Butcher Block has been an official slaughter/processing plant since March 2002. Since then, the plant has been selling their products in six locations throughout the southeastern part of the state and has slaughtered beef, bison, swine, and goats under inspection. “Being under state inspection has made us a better plant,” says Mahoney. “We are more conscious of some of the everyday things that we do in our plant and our customers like to see that.”

Mahoney says in the future he would like to establish a more regular delivery route of stores and restaurants. In addition, he says they would like to produce sausage products for a private label so these individuals could market their products themselves throughout the state. Expanding the market on his poultry products is also an area where Mahoney sees potential since the addition of the poultry program in the state.

### Legislative Update

The state meat inspection program was created by the 1999 legislature to allow more opportunities for small livestock producers and meat processors. By providing state agency authority (versus federal) for meat processing, a system was created that allows meat processors and livestock producers to have better accessibility to information, accountability at the state level and a better means for processing alternative or non-traditional livestock. Currently, the state program is only authorized to inspect cattle, swine, sheep, goats and equines

This session the legislature passed Senate Bill 2220, enacting a poultry program in North Dakota. SB 2220 provides for the additional authority of inspecting poultry and poultry products, allowing existing official establishments to expand their product line and for the development of official state poultry slaughter and/or processing establishments. The state meat inspection program currently regulates approximately ninety five custom exempt plants and ten official establishments. Official establishments slaughter and process under inspection and may wholesale their products throughout the state. It will take at least six to eight months (for the development of administrative rules and to obtain approval from the federal government) until plants can utilize the state poultry inspection service.

## Grill It Safely

*University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, May 2002*

To help you enjoy your summer, here are some checkpoints for safe grilling the next time you fire up the grill.

**Shopping** - When shopping, choose meat and poultry last, and don't put them in the trunk. The temperature there is too hot and bacteria will grow rapidly. Don't let meat set out for longer than one hour during warm weather. If meat sets out too long, bacteria can produce toxins that can cause illness and stay active even during cooking. Refrigerate meat and poultry immediately upon arriving home. Purchase ground meat or poultry no more than a day or two before you plan to grill it. Otherwise, freeze it. Grill larger cuts of meat, such as steaks, within 4 days of purchase or freeze it.

**Preparation** - Completely thaw meat and poultry in the refrigerator or just prior to cooking in a microwave. Frozen foods do not grill evenly and may be unsafe. Never defrost on the counter—bacteria will begin to grow. It takes about 24 hours to thaw 5 pounds of meat in the refrigerator. Clean up juice spills immediately so a raw product does not get on a cooked product. Juice spills should be cleaned with a paper towel. If using a dishcloth to wipe up raw meat or poultry juices, wash it in hot soapy water before using it again. Marinate meat and poultry in the refrigerator. Sauce can be brushed on these foods while cooking, but never use the same sauce after cooking that has touched the raw product.

Make ground beef patties about ½-inch thick by 4 inches in diameter (4 ounces or 4 patties per pound). This helps assure they cook thoroughly and evenly. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) advises patties this size will take 11 to 13 minutes to cook to a safe temperature of 160 degrees F.

**Transporting** - Transport meat and poultry to a picnic site in a cooler kept cold with ice or frozen gel packs. Pack food and cooler immediately before leaving home. Avoid frequently opening the cooler. Pack beverages in one cooler and perishables in another. Keep cooler in an air-conditioned vehicle for transporting and then keep in the shade or shelter at the picnic site. Remove at one time only the amount of food that will fit on the grill. Be sure to keep raw meat and poultry wrapped separately from cooked foods, or foods meant to be eaten raw such as fruits and vegetables.

**Grilling** - Cooking is key to meat and poultry safety. If needed, scrape the grill before grilling. Heat the grill to kill microorganisms before placing meat or poultry on it. Cook ground beef patties until brown in the middle and juices are clearish with no pink in them when you cut into the meat (160 degrees F). A hamburger can be brown in the middle and still be undercooked. The most accurate way to determine doneness is with an instant-read thermometer.

While the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends ground meats should be heated to 160 degrees F to kill microorganisms, the temperature for a steak can be 145 degrees F for "medium rare." A "medium" steak is cooked to 160 degrees F and a "well done" steak is cooked to 170 degrees F. Use a tongs or spatula to turn steaks rather than a fork which punctures the meat and introduces surface bacteria into the interior of the meat.

Whole poultry should be cooked to 180 degrees F in the thigh. Breast meat should be cooked to 170 degrees F. When poultry is done cooking, juices will run clear with no pink when you cut into the meat. If you're preparing steaks, ground meat and/or poultry at the same time, use a different knife, utensil or thermometer to check for doneness. For example, don't use the same thermometer to test steaks you used for hamburgers. Remember to wash thermometers in hot soapy water and hot rinse water before and after use.

Adding sauces or spices to meat may make it look brown before it is done. Brush or sprinkle sauces/spices on the surface of cooked burgers. Cook meat and poultry completely at the picnic site. Partial cooking of foods ahead of time allows bacteria to survive and multiply to the point that subsequent cooking may not destroy them. Use a separate clean tongs or spatula for removing meat or poultry from the grill and place on a clean plate to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked meat.

Discard any food left out for more than two hours or one hour if the temperature is above 90 degrees F. **When in doubt, throw it out!**

## Grilling Guidelines

Beef Cut	Thickness/Weight	Total Cooking Time Over Medium Coals (medium rare to medium doneness)
<b>Rib-eye Steak</b>	3/4 inch	6 to 8 minutes
	1 inch	11 to 14 minutes
	1-1/2 inches	17 to 22 minutes (grill covered)
<b>Rib Steak, small end</b>	3/4 inch	6 to 8 minutes
	1 inch	9 to 12 minutes
	1-1/2 inches	22 to 27 minutes (grill covered)
<b>Porterhouse/T-Bone Steak</b>	3/4 inch	10 to 12 minutes
	1 inch	14 to 16 minutes
	1-1/2 inches	20 to 24 minutes (grill covered)
<b>Top Loin Steak, boneless</b>	3/4 inch	10 to 12 minutes
	1 inch	15 to 18 minutes
<b>Tenderloin Steak</b>	1 inch	13 to 15 minutes
	1-1/2 inches	14 to 16 minutes (grill covered)
<b>Top Sirloin Steak, boneless</b>	3/4 inch	13 to 16 minutes
	1 inch	17 to 21 minutes
	1-1/2 inches	22 to 26 minutes (grill covered)
	2 inches	28 to 33 minutes (grill covered)
<b>Flank Steak (marinate)</b>	1-1/2 to 2 lb	17 to 21 minutes
<b>Top Round Steak (marinate)</b> Recommend cooking to medium rare (145°F) doneness only.	3/4 inch	8 to 9 minutes
	1 inch	16 to 18 minutes
	1-1/2 inches	25 to 28 minutes (grill covered)
<b>Chuck Shoulder Steak, boneless (marinate)</b>	3/4 inch	14 to 17 minutes
	1 inch	16 to 20 minutes
<b>Chuck Top Blade Steak, boneless</b>	1 inch	18 to 22 minutes
<b>Ground Beef Patties</b> USDA/FSIS recommends cooking ground beef patties to medium (160°F) doneness or until centers are no longer pink.	4 oz patties	11 to 13 minutes
	1/2 x 4 inches (1/4 lb)	
	6 oz patties	13 to 15 minutes
	3/4 x 4 inches (1/4-1/2 lb)	

All cook times are based on beef removed directly from refrigerator.

## 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 at 800-235-6328.

### **Help Wanted:**

Full-time assistant manager/meat cutter to work in State inspected slaughter/processing facility. Please call 701-682-5246 for more information. Hettwer's Meat Locker, Munich, ND.

## **Meat Messenger**

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