

Beef Buying Checklist

9 questions to ask when you buy a quarter, half or whole beef from a farmer

A question for you...

1. What quantity of beef does my family need? Quarter? Half? Whole?

WHY ASK? When buying beef in bulk, you need to decide how much beef your family eats and how much freezer space you need to store it. Here's an easy formula if you need help figuring it out.

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{My family usually eats } \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \text{ meals a week with 1 pound of beef} \\ \times \\ 52 \text{ weeks a year} \\ \hline \end{array}$$

My family eats pounds of beef per year.

Clover Meadows Beef Tip: First-time Clover Meadows Beef customers often order a quarter and then adjust their future order as needed. USDA studies indicate that on average people eat 55 pounds of beef a year.

Questions to ask the farmer...

2. What's the typical "take-home weight" for a quarter, half and/or whole beef?

WHY ASK? The take-home weight is the amount of beef you will actually put in your freezer. Every cow is different and every farmer butchers cows at different weights, which means the quantity of beef you receive can vary greatly. When you're ready to order, compare the typical take-home weight with the pounds of beef you eat per year as a family (question 1). Then, order the quantity of beef that best matches the two numbers.

Clover Meadows Beef Tip: At Clover Meadows Beef, we guarantee a take-home weight of at least 110 pounds for a quarter, 220 pounds for a half and 440 pounds for a whole. Our customers usually get more beef than that, but we only list the minimums so that we're under-promising and over-delivering to you!

3. How much will I pay per pound of beef?

WHY ASK? You want to know what a great deal you're getting!

Clover Meadows Beef Tip: You will need to calculate the price per pound on your own if the farmer prices the animal, slaughter fees, and processing fees separately. Alternatively, some farmers, like Clover Meadows Beef, have a comprehensive price with no additional fees, so the cost per pound is straightforward.

4. What am I responsible for if I purchase beef from you? Additional fees? Delivery?

WHY ASK? Some farmers include everything in one price and deliver the beef to you. Other farmers ask you to pay separately for beef processing fees and you must pick up the beef from the processor.

Clover Meadows Beef Tip: Every farmer sells beef in bulk slightly differently, and there's not a right or wrong answer to this question. At Clover Meadows Beef, our price is all-inclusive with no additional fees and we deliver the beef to your door for free (within 75 miles of St. Louis).



5. How will the beef be packaged?

WHY ASK? This answer will help you know the beef's shelf-life. Beef purchased in bulk is usually either paper wrapped or vacuum sealed. Vacuum sealed ensures freshness and has a longer shelf life (approx. 12 months). Paper wrapped uses butcher paper and has a shorter shelf life.

Clover Meadows Beef Tip: We prefer vacuum sealed to extend shelf life, but both are good options.

7. Are your cows born and raised on your farm?

WHY ASK? Just like an automobile, a cow could have one owner or multiple owners. Only the farmer knows how a cow has been raised, treated and fed.

Clover Meadows Beef Tip: We recommend purchasing a cow from a farmer that has raised the calf from birth. This is called a cow-calf operation. This is especially important if you want 100% grass fed and grass finished beef since the farmer will know what the cow has been given to eat since birth.

8. Are your cows grass fed *and* grass finished, or grass fed *and* grain finished?

WHY ASK? This may shock you but “grass fed” is only a marketing term, and all cows eat grass at some point in their life. That means that technically all cows are “grass fed.”

Clover Meadows Beef Tip: If you want beef that is purely grass fed, purchase a cow that is grass fed and grass finished. There are pros and cons to both grass finished and grain finished beef. Grain finished beef has more marbling and is the taste that most people know from a Prime or Choice steak at a steakhouse. Grass fed beef is leaner and has a more natural flavor. Clover Meadows Beef offers both types of beef.

9. Where will the beef be processed?

WHY ASK? Meat inspection is required in the U.S., and can be done by a state or federal USDA inspector.

Clover Meadows Beef Tip: Both federal USDA inspectors and state inspectors use very stringent criteria to ensure the health and safety of beef. If you decide to have your beef processed at a state-inspected facility, the beef should not cross state lines. Clover Meadows Beef is inspected and processed at a USDA approved facility because we sell beef in Missouri and Illinois, and we sell our beef jerky throughout the U.S.

Do you have more questions? Let us know!

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