

**Q: Do I have to take care of a carcass before I bring it to the processor?**

**A:** Yes! The processor can only work with what you give him. Prompt field dressing (gutting and skinning) and proper handling before delivery are necessary if you want to make the most of the meat on the animal. Because the processor is required to operate in a safe and sanitary manner, the processor may reject a carcass if it has not been properly handled.

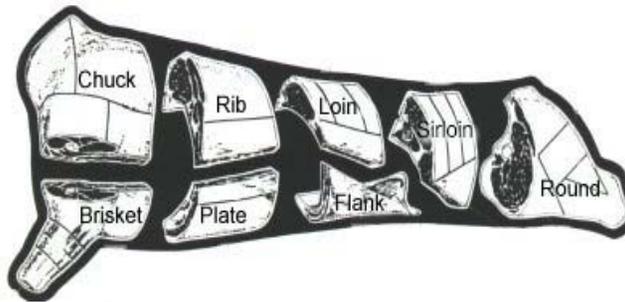
**Q: Doesn't the USDA inspect meat and the processing facilities?**

**A:** Yes. The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS-USDA) is responsible for inspecting live animals, meat carcasses and meat products and facilities in all cases where the meat is being sold. The Colorado Department of Agriculture has an agreement with the USDA where the Colorado Department of Agriculture inspects the custom exempt plants and shares the information with the USDA.



## Know Your Meat

Beef is usually divided into eight cuts-termed **primal cuts**-that are then subdivided into specific cuts. Because it is cut from the shoulder area and is moderately lean, **chuck** is not the most tender cut. Moving across the back and toward the tail, the **rib** (which includes the rib eye steak), the **loin** (tenderloin, T-Bone ), and the **sirloin** (top sirloin) are the most tender portions. The **round**, or hind leg, is the leanest and is, therefore, one of the least moist and tender cuts. Moving along the underside, the **brisket**, the **plate** (skirt steak), and the **flank** are less tender and are best suited to dishes that are grilled quickly or to recipes that call for a long simmering process.



## Division Mission

The Division of Inspection & Consumer Services (ICS) is committed to promoting an honest, equitable marketplace and to encouraging integrity in Agriculture and Industry.

## For More Information:

Colo. Dept. Agriculture  
Custom Meat Processor Program  
2331 W 31st. Ave  
Denver, CO 80211  
Phone: (303) 867-9208  
Fax: (303) 480-9236  
Email: [meat@ag.state.co.us](mailto:meat@ag.state.co.us)

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# Questions & Answers Regarding the Colorado Custom Meat Processor Law



Division of  
Inspection &  
Consumer Services

[www.colorado.gov/ag/ics](http://www.colorado.gov/ag/ics)

**T**he hunter who brings his animal to a processor wants to be confident that the service he is paying for is conducted in a safe and sanitary manner. The rancher who pays for the custom processing of one of his animals expects the same. Colorado Department of Agriculture inspectors routinely visit such processors to ensure that they are operating in compliance with the Colorado Custom Processing of Meat Animals Act.

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**Q: How is the Colorado Meat Law enforced?**

**A:** Facilities engaged in custom livestock or wild game meat processing are required to be licensed with the Colorado Department of Agriculture. CDA employees inspect facilities for proper construction, safe & sanitary processing methods, and labeling. Custom processing is defined as processing of another person's animal for consumption only by that person or his household.

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**Q: Are there requirements for how a processing facility must be constructed?**

**A:** Yes. The receiving, and holding areas need to be constructed so that the animals can be handled without being hurt. The processing, refrigeration, freezing and storage areas of a meat processing facility must all be constructed so that the processing can be done in a safe and sanitary manner. For example, walls in all areas of the facility must be constructed of materials that are easily cleaned and sanitized, processing room and

cooler floors must be capable of being readily cleaned and properly drained.

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**Q: What is meant by “safe and sanitary”?**

**A:** All equipment used for processing must be cleaned and sanitized regularly. The temperatures of the processing room, refrigerator and freezer must all be appropriate. Employees must use good hygiene. Vermin and pests must be properly controlled. Wild game must be segregated from domestic animals. Pork must be segregated from other meat. Waste must be properly denatured and disposed of. Custom processed meat and wild game meat must be labeled “NOT FOR SALE.”

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**Q: How much meat will I get from an animal I bring to a processor?**

**A:** The take home yield of meat from an animal is approximately 40% of the live weight. The actual yield depends on the breed, age and condition of the animal. For example, a 1000# steer will yield about a 600# carcass, from which about 400# of cut, wrapped meat is obtained. If in optimum condition, the yield of boneless meat from a wild game animal (animal minus head, hide, viscera, and legs) will be about 30%-40% of the live weight.

**Meat processed by a custom processor may only be consumed by the owner of the animal or his household. The meat may not be sold to anyone. In order for meat to be sold, it must be slaughtered and processed under USDA inspection.**

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**Q: Why did I only get 150# of meat from my 600# elk?**

**A:** To know the expected yield of meat, you need to know how much the animal weighs when live. The typical 1.5 year old elk is 350-450# live weight. A deer is typically 125-150#. An antelope often weighs about 100# live. Some processors may have a scale to weigh your animal carcass when you check it in.

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**Q: I am not sure if I received all the meat cut from the animal I had processed, can the Department help?**

**A:** Unfortunately, the Department cannot help with this type of problem. The Meat Law has requirements only for the sanitary operation of the processing plant.

