

HOME BUTCHERING HELPS BRING DOWN LIVING COST

**Meat Well Cured at Home
Superior in Flavor to Commercial Products**

(Special Information Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture)

With the first hard frost and the fast shortening days comes home-butcher time. Many a city man or woman, who spent his early days on a farm, remembers vividly the epicurean joys that were his when butchering time came round. After months of salt-pork diet, followed in the fall by a superfluity of chicken served in every conceivable style, the fresh pork was welcomed as gratefully as the rain which follows drought. It is to be regretted that the home curing of meat has fallen somewhat into disuse; however, since the war a movement has been started to revive this practice, for the cheapest meat a farmer can use is the product of his own farm. This is also true of the suburbanite who has enough ground to enable him to keep one or two hogs and to fatten them on kitchen and truck-garden waste.

A Flavor All Its Own

Home-cured meat when well cured is superior to the packing house products. It has a home flavor which the commercial firms do not give, and it can be produced for much less than the cost of purchased meat. The home curing of meats, too, has proved so successful that the number of people who are butchering at home is on the increase.

The first essential in curing is to make sure the pork is thoroughly cooled, the Bureau of Animal Industry of the United States Department of Agriculture states. Meats should never be frozen, either prior to or during the period of curing. The proper time to begin curing is when the meat is cooled and still fresh. Twenty-four to thirty-six hours after killing is the opportune time.

A clean, hardwood, molasses or sirup barrel is a suitable vessel in which to cure pork. The barrel should be clean and tight so as to prevent leakage. A large stone or metal jar is the best container in which to cure pork, but the initial cost is high. If a barrel is used repeatedly for curing pork it is necessary to scald it out thoroughly before fresh pork is packed into it.

Salt, sugar or molasses, and salt-peter are the principal preservatives used in curing pork. The use of other preservatives is prohibited in curing pork subject to Federal meat inspection.

Much diversity of opinion exists as to the merits of the two ways of curing—brining and dry curing. Dry-cured meat is handled only once, while brine-cured meat must be handled several times. The brine keeps away insects and vermin. If directions are followed closely and pure water is used in making the brine, it will not spoil and should keep for a reasonable length of time. If the brine becomes "ropy" it should be poured off and boiled or a new brine should be made. A cool cellar is the most desirable place for both brine and dry curing. When meat is cured during warm weather the dry method of curing is far safer than the brine method.

It is advisable to rub with fine salt the surface of the meat and allow it to drain, flesh side down, for 6 to 12 hours before being put in the cure. This applies to both brine and dry curing.

The following directions are given for brine and dry cured pork.
Brine-cured pork: For each 100 pounds of meat 8 pounds of salt, 2½ pounds of sugar or sirup, 2 ounces of saltpeter, 4½ gallons of water. In warm weather 9 or 10 pounds of salt are preferable. Allow four days cure for each pound in a ham or shoulder and three days for bacon and small pieces. For example, a 15-pound ham will take 60 days, a piece of bacon weighing 10 pounds, 30 days.

The brine should be made the day before it is used, so that it will be cool. All the ingredients are poured into the water and boiled until thoroughly mixed. Place hams on the bottom of the container, shoulders next, bacon sides and smaller cuts on top. Pour in the brine and be sure it covers the meat thoroughly. In five days pour off the brine and change the meat, placing the top meat on the bottom and the bottom meat on top, then pour back the brine. Repeat this operation again on the tenth and eighteenth days.

Dry-cured pork requires more work than brine-cured, though it is sometimes less expensive. Danger from rats and other vermin is less in the case of brine-cured pork. Both methods of curing are very successful if care is taken to see that each operation is executed correctly. Following is the method of dry curing: For each 100 pounds of meat use 7 pounds of salt, 2½ pounds of sugar, 2 ounces saltpeter, 2 ounces each of red and black pepper. Mix all ingredients thoroughly then rub all of the quantity of this mixture over the meat and pack it away in a box or on a table until cured. Allow one day and a half cure for each pound the pieces of meat average.

Time and Material for Smoking

Green hickory or maple wood is the best fuel for smoking. Hardwood is preferable to softwood. Resinous woods should never be used as they give an objectionable flavor to the meat. Corncocks may be used,

but they deposit carbon on the meat giving it a dirty appearance. Meat should be removed from the brine when it is cured and not allowed to remain in the brine overtime. When the meat is removed from the brine it should be soaked for about half an hour in water. If meat has remained in the brine longer than the allotted time, soak each piece half an hour and three minutes extra for each day overtime. The meat should then be washed in lukewarm water, strung, and hung in the smokehouse. Do not hang the meat so that the pieces touch. The space between the meat is necessary to insure good circulation of smoke around the meat. Allow the meat to hang in the smokehouse for 24 hours before beginning to smoke. A slow fire should

be started, so that the meat will warm up gradually. Do not get the house too hot. The fire can be kept going continuously until the smoking is complete, holding the temperature as evenly as possible at or near 120 F. Thirty-six to forty-eight hours is the time required to smoke a lot of meat, but if the meat is intended to be kept for some time, slower and longer smoking is desirable. During warm weather it is better to start the fire every other day rather than heat up the meat too much. In the winter, however, if the fire is not kept going the meat may cool and the smoke will not penetrate properly. As soon as the meat is thoroughly smoked, open the doors and ventilator, so that the meat can

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Summary of Assessment Roll

Summary of assessment Roll of Harney county, State of Oregon for the year 1919 as finally equalized by the county Board of Equalization.

Classification of Property	Number	Value
Acres of all lands	1,310,819.35	
Acres of tillable land	817,568.35	\$8,114,272
Acres of non-tillable land	493,251	1,196,486
Improvements on Patented or deeded land		279,850
Town and City lots		180,312
Improvements on Town and City lots		287,840
Stationary Engines and manufacturing machinery etc.		12,925
Merchandise and Stock in Trade		171,880
Farming implements, wagons, carriages etc.		38,425
Money		300
Notes and Accounts		148,000
Horses	10,655	200,490
Cattle	50,995	1,582,850
Sheep	51,974	307,844
Swine	358	3,580
Total value of property as finally equalized by the county Board of Equalization		\$12,444,954

This statement does not include the assessment of public utilities or transient live stock, which are assessed by the state tax commission.

I thought it might be of interest to the tax payers to know a few facts in regard to the case of Eastern Oregon Live Stock Co Plaintiff vs Board of Equalization Defendants.

The Eastern Oregon Live Stock Co. appealed to the circuit court over the Board of Equalization's decision on the companies assessment for the year 1918.

The lands in controversy are mainly the reclaimed swamp lands and the lands known as the big sage brush fields all in the Blitzen valley.

These lands at present are undeveloped but are lands with water rights and are capable of producing large and valuable crops if properly handled.

Most of these lands are assessed at twenty five dollars per acre on the 1918 and 1919 assessment rolls, which I consider a reasonable assessment, taking into consideration the value of a water right and the character of the soil. The Company petitioned the board of equalization for a reduction in valuation of the lands stated above, for the 1918 assessment. The Company asked to have these lands reduced to ten and fifteen dollars, per acre. Judge Levens voted for reduction and Mr. Dalton and myself voted against reduction. Then the company appealed to the circuit court. The case began Oct. 28 before Mr. Walker as referee, taking testimony.

The company represented by their attorneys McCulloch and Duncan offered their evidence. Mr. James J. Donegan tax agent for the Eastern Oregon Live Stock Co. Mr. Page the Company engineer and H. J. Hansen of Burns were witnesses for the plaintiffs.

Mr. Allen Biggs acting as attorney for the county.

The case was continued until December the 10 at which time the county will present its side of the evidence.

I think this is the first case of this kind that has been tried in the circuit court of Harney county. I consider it a very important case as it effects a large area of land of this county.

It seems to me the scheme is entirely wrong to allow any individual or corporation to own such a large body of rich irrigated lands, allowing it to remain undeveloped, and then expect to have such land assessed on a grazing basis.

Such lands in my opinion with a good character of soil and with water rights whether improved or unimproved should be assessed at the same value, but under our present laws on taxation an assessment of that nature would not hold in court, so in making the assessment on the lands connected with this suit we allowed a difference of fifteen dollars per acre, between this land and first class meadow land.

It has always been my opinion that an assessor in making his assessments should not try to get as close to the actual cash value of improved lands as he should on unimproved land, because in so doing he would discourage and penalize a taxpayer for improving his land, which development indirectly benefits the whole community.

I would appreciate it if the taxpayers of the county would keep in touch with this case and we would be glad to receive any suggestions which any resident of the county might have to offer in connection with it.

J. L. CALDWELL
County Assessor

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