

# A BUTCHER'S WIFE'S PERSPECTIVE

## TIDBITS TO MAKE HUNTING SEASON INTERESTING AND COMICAL

BY A.K. MOSS

In 30 years of processing meat in a remote town, meat gets processed for human consumption.

It is not done the way grandpa did it anymore. Nowadays the rules and regulations are more than what a small business can take, preparing quality products for customers and the community by the health and safety standards for anything from the typical beef, sheep, hogs, goats and buffalo to processing llamas, even an ostrich.

But nothing can prepare that little meat shop for hunting season. I wanted to have a little fun and share a couple tidbits of information that make hunting season interesting and sometimes comical. So with humor in mind this is a butcher's wife's perspective.

Skin and gut the animal that you have harvested as soon as you can. The gut may begin to leak and seep into the carcass, and also the hide holds the heat in. Placing an unskinned carcass on the top of the car does not cool the meat out, no matter how fast you drive.

Rolling the carcass of your trophy in ash, pepper, dirt or pine needles does not deter flies or bees. All it does is make them sneeze and maybe give the carnivorous eater a bodily cleanse.

Before you take the shot, consider where you are at. If you have to pack the animal uphill both ways in the snow barefoot, in 100-degree weather, I would strongly consider not taking the shot and attempting to look elsewhere for your winter food.

Be sure to place ice or frozen packs in your cooler when placing warm meat inside. Just because the cooler says "COOLER" on the outside does not mean that it will cool down your warm meat without some sort of cold product put inside the container.

Hanging meat in a tree for five days because the evenings are in the 40s or below does not mean that the 90-degree days are going to keep the meat fresh. The drastic fluctuation of temperature will spoil the outside of the carcass that is brought in. Remember, first come, first served, so if there are 40 carcasses ahead of yours, you will be waiting a while to receive a substantially less amount of product.

Consider the size of the game animal you brought in, in comparison to the expectation of meat you will get back. A 60-pound buck will get you about 30 pounds of meat boned out, but that depends on where the shot was taken and what kind of cuts you will receive. If your first shot was in the butt, the second in the back and the third shot you finally hit the shoulder, you might be smarter and cheaper processing your own meat and just bring the trim in for grind and wrap.

People don't have to convince the meat shop employees how clean the meat is. I guarantee they will find out when they lay it on the table, by their own observation. Just a note, what is clean for some people may not be considered clean to others.

If you decide to hang your animal in your garage for two weeks before you bring it to the meat shop, you might be surprised that it will be hanging another week before the meat cutters can get to it. Most shops process on first-come, first-served basis.

Deer and elk do not age like beef; they age like goat or sheep. If you want to hang your animal out in the constantly changing temperature for a week, your meat shop cannot be responsible for the extra trim they have to take off. Please get it in a constant-temperature cooler. This will help the processors get you the quality that you desire. They cannot paint a rock yellow and make it gold.

There are a thousand more things that some folks probably need to know about meat shops and game season. These are just a few. But with this little bit of a butcher's wife's perspective, know with the valued customers that come into a meat shop, there are always some with a good sense of humor and tall tales to tell. Good sportsmanship and courteous hunting will make sure that we will be able to share this with future generations. Be safe and hit where you aim. As a special bonus, I added two of my favorite recipes for your cook book if you do not already have them.

With that said, I have heard that stew is the latest fad in a low-calorie diet. The recipe is easy to follow. I will share two of my favorite recipes that I have used for the last five years. Guaranteed to help anyone lose weight.

The first recipe is tag stew. First bring two cups of water to boil, add unused tag and simmer for two hours. Serve with stale bread.

The second recipe is antler stew. First and foremost to add color and flavor, use the colorful words you said when you watched your shot go through the horns of the trophy you were shooting at. Add a piece of antler, and boil long and hard. This recipe is a little hard to digest and may cause lack of sleep.

Alternate throughout the year between these two stews for true color and humor and memories for future generations.

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## LITTLE THINGS

A POEM BY A.K. MOSS

Have you ever looked down upon a bird in flight,  
And viewed the world by his sight?  
Did it make you feel small in the order of things,  
Or make you wish that you had wings?  
Heard bulls bugle in the autumn change,  
That echoes across the mountain range?  
Have you took a deep breath of frosted air,  
Tasted the dew that waited there?  
Have you heard a coyote yip from the rocks above,  
Either missing his mate or cursing love?

Have you sat around the fire as the sun sets low,  
Watched the flames and embers glow?  
The flames like the dark like a silent dance,  
That lulls you into a hypnotic trance.  
Or seen a full harvest moon shine so bright,  
as it sets the day and dawns the night?  
Or been too tired to wake or to awake to sleep,  
Sorted through your pack again,  
what to leave and what to keep.  
Have you laughed with a friend till tears  
blurred your sight,  
Over silly things done, that makes that story just right?

Do you remember a hunt that your dad  
helped you through,  
Stalking and tracking and him there with you?  
Or maybe a mentor or friend at your side,  
That kept you in check when time had to bide.  
For all who appreciate these little things,  
And emotion that those memories bring,  
There is a kindred spirit within all of us lay  
To be shared and nurtured in a special way.  
If they mean a lot in all that you done,  
Take a kid hunting and share them with one.  
And those memories will last their whole life through.  
Think for a moment, who gave memories to you?