



Food Safety Inspection Requirements for BEEF, PORK, LAMB, and GOAT Served in Schools:

1. Meat must be harvested (slaughtered) under USDA inspection, including USDA-inspected Mobile Slaughter Facilities.

AND

2. Meat must be processed (fabricated into primal cuts, individual cuts, ground meat, sausage, etc.) at a USDA-inspected facility.

Meat harvested, processed, and packaged under USDA inspection will bear a USDA stamp of inspection. The following are the most common stamps:



OR

In some cases, meat may be processed at a facility that meets requirements of the Retail Exemption to the Federal Meat Inspection Act and holds an active retail food establishment permit from their county department of health (or local health jurisdiction) that allows them to butcher meat. This meat must have been harvested under USDA inspection.

Meat processed under the Retail Exemption will not bear the mark of USDA inspection. To ensure compliance with food safety regulations, the buyer should request a copy of the seller's county health department license and confirm with the seller that meat is slaughtered under USDA inspection.

When working directly with farms, it helps to be familiar with the regulations they must abide by. To learn more, download the [Selling Beef, Pork, Lamb, Goat and Other Meat](#)¹ fact sheet from the WSDA Handbook for Small and Direct Marketing Farms (also known as the "green book").

If you have questions about these regulations or about purchasing species other than beef, pork, lamb, or goat, contact farmtoschool@agr.wa.gov.

Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Regional Markets Program created this document to help school districts purchase local meat in raw forms from farmers and ranchers in Washington State.

This sheet includes:

- Food safety inspection requirements for meat and poultry.
- Questions to ask when purchasing from small farmers and ranchers.
- Additional resources for procuring and preparing local meat in school meals.

If you have additional questions, email WSDA Farm to School at farmtoschool@agr.wa.gov.



Food Safety Inspection Requirements for POULTRY Served in Schools:

Poultry must be harvested and processed under USDA inspection OR under a WSDA license for Food Processing of Poultry, which is allowed under the 20,000-bird producer/grower exemption to the Federal Poultry Products Inspection Act.



- Poultry harvested, processed, and packaged under USDA inspection will bear the USDA stamp of inspection, most commonly appearing like this:
- Poultry harvested, processed, and packaged under a WSDA license for Food Processing of Poultry will not bear the USDA stamp of inspection. To ensure compliance with food safety regulations, the buyer should request a copy of the seller's WSDA Food Processor license.

Note: A WSDA "Special Poultry Permit" is not sufficient; it does not allow sales off of the farm.

When working with small and direct marketing farms, be familiar with the regulations they must abide by. For more details, download the [Selling Poultry](#)² fact sheet from the WSDA Handbook for Small and Direct Marketing Farms (also known as the "green book").

If you have questions about these regulations contact farmtoschool@agr.wa.gov.

Questions to Ask When Purchasing Directly from a Small Farm or Ranch

The meat from your local farmer or rancher may differ in appearance, packaging, fat content, and other specifications from what you typically receive from a large distributor. So you know what to expect, below are some questions you may want to ask when requesting a quote from your local farmer or rancher.

- *What is the approximate fat content of the ground meat?*
- *What size are the packages? How much is in a case?*
- *What size or thickness are the patties, links, chunks, etc.?*
- *What fillers or other ingredients, if any, are used?*
- *Will the product be delivered fresh or frozen?*
- *Can you deliver X amount, every X weeks?*
- *Is the product grass-fed? Can you describe how animals are fed on your farm? Are they raised on pasture? What else are they fed besides grass, e.g. hay, grain, apples?*
- *Are you able to meet the specifications for fat content, portion or unit size, case size and packaging, delivery, etc.?*
- *Who do you work with for USDA-inspected harvest? Do you also process your meat in a USDA-inspected facility? If so, where?*
- *If you operate under the Retail Exemption from USDA inspection, can you provide your current permit to operate a retail food establishment from your local health department?*
- *If you operate under the WSDA Poultry Processor License, can you provide your current license?*
- *Can you provide proof of product liability insurance?*

¹https://cms.agr.wa.gov/WSDAKentico/Documents/DO/RM/RM/27_SellingBeefPorkLambGoatAndOtherMeat.pdf

²https://cms.agr.wa.gov/WSDAKentico/Documents/DO/RM/RM/46_SellingPoultry.pdf

Once you are familiar with characteristics of local meat products, you can include those specifications when requesting quotes from local farms and ranches. See the link below under *Procurement Tips and Templates* for examples.

Budgeting for Local Meat

Local meat can be higher-priced. School districts find creative ways to incorporate local meat into students' meals, within budget. For example, you might serve local meat during special events or meals, such as an annual BBQ, Taste Washington Day, or monthly or quarterly local food days.

A strategy to offset the costs of local ground meat is to blend your local ground meat with other ingredients, such as lentils or mushrooms, to create a nutritious and affordable hamburger patty, meat ball, etc.

Remember to promote local meat when you offer it! Post signs with the ranch name, invite the rancher to your school, or send home information and recipes to families.



Local Beef Stew from Chimacum School District

Additional Resources for School Buyers

Finding Farms: Visit [WA Food and Farm Finder-USDA Inspected](https://eatlocalfirst.org/wholesale/?_food_safety=usda)³ for a list of USDA-inspected meat vendors. NOTE: This list is not verified by WSDA. As businesses and their practices can change, you are responsible for knowing the food safety regulations and verifying that vendors are compliant with rules and your own district requirements.

Procurement Tips and Templates: The [Local Meat in Schools | Food and Nutrition Service fact sheet](#)² gives examples, tips, and information for putting local meat on school menus. Please note that Washington does not have a state-based Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI).

The WSDA Farm to School Toolkit [webpage on Procurement of Local Meat, Poultry, and Seafood](#)⁵ contains links to sample forms for procurement specifications, informal bids, and requests for pricing.

Cooking with Raw Meat: Visit the [Healthy School Recipes blog](#)⁶ by Chef Samantha Cowens-Gasbarro for tips on cooking with raw beef, including yield and crediting comparison for raw beef and beef crumbles. Explore the blog for other great recipe ideas and scratch cooking tips.

³https://eatlocalfirst.org/wholesale/?_food_safety=usda

⁴<https://www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/local-meat-schools>

⁵<https://agr.wa.gov/farmtoschool> > For Districts: School Nutrition and Local Food > Procurement and Geographic Preference > Procurement of Local Meat Poultry and Seafood

⁶<https://healthyschoolrecipes.com/beef-crumbles-raw-ground-beef-love-them-both/>