

Assignment #2

Butchery

Cul 500-5035

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Overview

We are going to dive into the world of butchery. Butchery is one of the oldest practices in the world. Butchery is important because it tells the story of how meat reaches our table safely and the process of how different cuts are used, when broken down. This helps to show how no meat goes to waste and the whole animal is respected and used completely. We will look at the history of butchery and how the USDA regulations were formed to protect consumers. Next we will look at the different cuts of meat including primal and sub primal. Lastly, we will look at modern day butchers and what consumers are looking for.

Implications

The first evidence of butchery was discovered to be approximately 2.8 million years ago in Ethiopia. Although this could change as new archaeologies are being discovered. The remnants of bones and generic tools were discovered. As societies began to evolve so did butchery. “Butchery became a more highly regulated trade in the Middle Ages, with Butchers forming guilds to control the quality of meat and set prices between themselves.” In the Victorian era, demand for butchers grew even more as people couldn’t hunt as easily for their own food. The wealthy ate larger quality pieces, while the poor ate the cheaper cuts to add calories and flavor to soups and stews. Over the years and centuries, butchery became a class

of its own. People who wanted to learn butchery studied the craft and passed it on to others. Some people used it at home to butcher their own animals to provide for their families. In 1898, a situation occurred in a canning plant that made soldiers sick from unsanitary techniques used. This prompted the USDA to inspect animals before and after slaughter to make sure the meat was safe. Conditions improved but also allowed uneatable meat to slide through the inspections at times. The Meat Inspection Act of 1906 was formed to regulate guidelines and safe practices of meat handling. This law was amended again in 1967, the Wholesome Meat Act. The FDA also made guidelines to prevent contamination during handling, processing, and transportation of meat.

In butchery there are divisions of meat from the whole carcass, sides, front quarter, hind quarter, primals, sub-primals, retail cuts, and bones. This ensures the least amount of waste. When processing beef, for example, you start with the whole carcass which is then divided in half. Once the beef is divided in half, it can then be divided by the front and hind quarters. These larger pieces of meat are divided down into primals cuts. For beef, there are 8 primal cuts—chuck, rib, Loin, round, flank, short plate, brisket, and shank. The primal cuts are still rather large and can be broken down into sub-primal cuts. Chuck can be broken down into chuck tender, chuck roll, shoulder clod, square cut chuck. The rib is broken down into ribeye roll, back ribs, short ribs,

and rib oven. Loins are broken down into the tenderloin, strip loin, and short loin. The round is cut into the bottom round, eye of round, sirloin tip. And top round. The flank is left as a flank steak. Short plate can be broken down into the hanger steak, inside skirt steak, outside skirt steak, short ribs, and flanken style short ribs. Brisket is further cut down into the brisket flat half and the brisket point half. The shank refers to the cross cut on the leg. With all of these sub-primal cuts, they can be shipped to stores to produce the retail cuts for the consumer. All that is left are the bones and those are bought by the consumers for use also. This shows how the head to tail usage applies.

Summary

Butchery has evolved over millions of years. Butchery has gone through many changes with the introduction of specialized tools to standardized practices governing safety. In current years, the consumer is looking at sustainable and ethical farming practices. Consumers are looking for a smaller scale butcher that focuses on higher quality sourced meats and artisanal techniques. Consumers are understanding the different cuts and preparation needs for the different cuts. Thus enabling the consumer to make decisions about what they want to put in their bodies. Butchering is an art in itself.

References

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