

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Custom Processing in Illinois

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### WHAT IS CUSTOM SLAUGHTER? WHAT CONSTITUTES A CUSTOM OPERATION?

A custom operation is one in which a person or entity offers slaughter and/or processing services to the public for a fee. The animal to be slaughtered or the meat to be processed belongs to the customer, not the establishment. After the services are rendered, all the resultant edible material must be returned to the owner of the animal for consumption by their household.

### DOES A CUSTOM OPERATION HAVE TO BE LICENSED?

Yes, as a Type 2 Establishment with the Illinois Department of Agriculture. A **Type 2 license** permits establishments to receive live animals and/or meat products for slaughter and processing as a service only. Meat products produced in a Type 2 establishment are not produced under inspection and are not eligible for commercial sale. However, a live animal can be sold to the consumer and then delivered to the Type 2 processor. The consumer also pays the processor and picks up the finished product. The owner of the animal can use this meat for their own household only.

### HOW DO I SELL MEAT AND/OR POULTRY PRODUCTS TO THE PUBLIC?

If you are going to slaughter livestock or poultry and offer that meat for sale, these animals must be slaughtered at a facility with a Type 1 license from the Illinois Department of Agriculture or the USDA. Products for sale must be prepared from meat that originated from an "approved source." Evidence that a meat or poultry product comes from an approved source is the presence of a state (in the shape of Illinois) or federal (circle) mark of inspection on the product.

**Type 1 license** – permits establishments to receive live animals and/or meat products for slaughter and processing, under inspection by State of Illinois Dept. of Agriculture personnel. Properly labeled & inspected products are eligible for intrastate sale when they are inspected by the State of Illinois Dept. of Agriculture. For interstate sales, meat products must be USDA inspected in a Type 1 establishment.

### HOW DO I FIND A CUSTOM SLAUGHTER ESTABLISHMENT?

The Illinois Association of Meat Processors maintains a map of member sites, some of whom engage in custom slaughter: [illinoismeatprocessors.com/plant\\_members.php](http://illinoismeatprocessors.com/plant_members.php) At the present time, many are booked for the next several weeks or months as producer demand is high.

**COMPILED BY:** Bailey Harsh, Assistant Professor  
Meat Science & Muscle Biology, [bharsh2@illinois.edu](mailto:bharsh2@illinois.edu)

**DISCLAIMER:** This information is intended to inform those thinking about, or engaged, in processing animals on the farm. The information provided is intended to present the importance of food safety and associated risks. It is not intended to explain the process of dressing procedures, nor promote this activity. Meat processing is complicated, it should not be taken lightly. Person(s) involved should understand that carelessness is not an option with food safety.

**SOURCES:** American Veterinary Medical Association, [www.avma.org/sites/default/files/resources/Humane-Slaughter-Guidelines.pdf](http://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/resources/Humane-Slaughter-Guidelines.pdf); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov); Food and Animal Organization [www.fao.org/3/t0756e/T0756E00.html](http://www.fao.org/3/t0756e/T0756E00.html) Illinois Department of Agriculture [www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Animals/meat-inspection/Pages/Faq-Resources.aspx#h6](http://www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Animals/meat-inspection/Pages/Faq-Resources.aspx#h6)