



## Mountain State Ground Beef Program Frequently Asked Questions

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**What is the Mountain State Ground Beef Program?** The Mountain State Ground Beef Program is a partnership between Buzz Food Service/Appalachian Abattoir, the West Virginia Cattlemen's Association with support from WVU Extension, the West Virginia Department of Agriculture and other educational support organizations across the state. The partners are pleased to announce selection by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) for funding the proposal "West Virginia Branded Beef: Expanding into Wholesale markets and Advancing West Virginia's Livestock Value Chain."

This project will expand the capacity of the local meat value-chain, improve economic opportunities for WV's 12,000 cattlemen and women, and increase local access to WV beef products by cultivating the vibrant public-private partnership focused on the WV Branded beef program and aggregating, processing, distributing this product in new wholesale/retail channels.

This team is implementing a WV Branded Ground Beef program to diversify market opportunities for all WV beef producers and meet identified wholesale market demand for local West Virginia beef. The product will be supported through statewide marketing efforts.

More information:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/FY2021LFPPDescriptionofFundedProjects.pdf>

**Who is eligible to participate?** Farmers located in the state of West Virginia.

**What livestock are eligible to be sold into the program?** This program is intended to be based on mature market cows.

**How are farmers paid for their market cows?** Producers will be paid on the hot carcass weight (HCW). Producers will be paid 5% premium over a prior day [USDA report](#). Carcasses that come in under 500# will be paid Eastern area market price without the 5% premium.

To use this report:

- Once in the report, unclick the "National" box, so it will list regions on the next step. Then down below from the dropdown box, choose "Between" or "Exact" if you have multiple dates of reports or just one day.
- Hit "Continue" button.
- On the next page, go to "Region Name" from the drop-down box, choose "Eastern Area" (not East) and then at the bottom "Generate Report"
- Then the next page, choose the report date you want and click.



**What does being paid on the hot carcass weight mean?** Market cows are typically sold at markets on the live weight. In this case, however producers will be paid on the hot carcass weight which is the weight of the carcass after the animal has been harvested, with the hide and inedible offal removed. This is typically 45-55% of the live weight for market cattle.

More information: <https://www.alberta.ca/understanding-dressing-percentage-of-harvest-cattle.aspx>

**What if a carcass is condemned at the harvest facility?** That animal is declared unfit to enter the food chain according to the USDA meat inspector. Producers with condemned carcasses will not be compensated. More information: <https://ask.usda.gov/s/article/What-are-the-causes-for-total-carcass-condemnation?>

**What are the requirements for getting on the Approved Supplier list?** Because the project is focused on meeting retail standards for food safety and animal welfare, there are several requirements that must be met by participating farmers.

- ❖ Participating producers must hold current BQA Certification
- ❖ Verification for each animal that it has been in West Virginia
- ❖ Verification of all vaccine withdrawal records
- ❖ Individual eartags for each participating livestock.

Additionally, producers must agree to a farm visit from Appalachian Abattoir and/or WVCA staff member. Consulting veterinarians may be contacted as part of the verification process.

**I'm not BQA Certified but I would like to be, how do I obtain certification?** WVU Extension is coordinating educational events throughout the state to help producers obtain and maintain certification. For more information contact Ronnie Helmondollar, [RRHelmondollar@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:RRHelmondollar@mail.wvu.edu)  
For more information about BQA please visit: <https://www.bqa.org/beef-quality-assurance-certification>

**Where will Mountain State Ground Beef be sold?** Buzz Food Service and Appalachian Abattoir will take possession of the meat at the harvest facility and will market this product to retail outlets throughout the region. The goal is for a Mountain State Ground Beef product to be found in supermarkets across the state.

**How will I get my market cows to harvest?** West Virginia Cattleman's Association will be organizing several regional drop off sites across the state to help offset transportation costs for participating producers. Approved producers may drop livestock off individually once an order has been confirmed.



**Where will the Beef be harvested and packaged?** The beef will be processed at Appalachian Abattoir, a USDA inspected harvest facility located in Charleston West Virginia. This state of the art facility has been constructed with humane handling and food safety at the forefront.

**What is the WV Cattlemen's Association?** West Virginia Cattlemen's Association is a 501(c)-3 non-profit with a membership of more than 400 cattle producers, providing industry education, legislative support and promotion of West Virginia's beef cattle industry. Learn more at <https://www.wvcattlemen.org/>

**What is Buzz Food Service?** Locally-owned and locally-operated in Charleston, WV since 1938, Buzz Food Service is a family-owned meat-processing and distribution business that will open a new, state-of-the-art livestock processing facility in 2022. Buzz is the premier distributor of meat and seafood to restaurants, hotels, country clubs and resort properties in West Virginia and surrounding states. Buzz is expanding the business to include live animal harvest and value-added processing with the construction of a co-located facility named Appalachian Abattoir. Learn more at [www.beef.buzz](http://www.beef.buzz).

**What is Appalachian Abattoir?** Appalachian Abattoir is a locally-owned, meat processing facility located in Charleston, West Virginia. Our goal at Appalachian Abattoir is to provide the highest quality products with the highest level of service while pursuing efficiency, sustainability, and while providing educational opportunities for staff, producers and students throughout the region. Appalachian Abattoir will be a full-service USDA inspected harvest facility. Key features include: USDA inspected plant, USDA grading services, Harvest, cut/wrap processing services, High quality cuts and direct purchase from producers, Source verification for local products, quality packaging and labeling, value-added product capabilities, scalding and smokehouse on-site, multi-species: beef, pork, lamb, goat \*No bison, rabbits or poultry, Animal welfare/humane handling.

**What is WVU Extension?** West Virginia University Extension experts are located in every county in West Virginia, ready to offer research-based knowledge, tips and education to improve our communities.

WVU Extension will be offering educational opportunities throughout 2022-2024 to support beef producers interested in participating in the Mountain State Ground Beef project. More information: <https://extension.wvu.edu/>

#### **What is the USDA Local Food Promotion Program?**

The Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) funds projects that develop, coordinate and expand local and regional food business enterprises that engage as intermediaries in indirect producer to consumer marketing to help increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products. Grants can be used for the planning stages of establishing or expanding a local and regional food business enterprise or to improve or expand a food business that supports locally and regionally produced agricultural products and food system



infrastructure by performing feasibility studies, market research, training and technical assistance for the business enterprise and/or for producers working with the business enterprise. A 10 % or a 25% match is required.

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp>

Funded projects 2021:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/FY2021LFPPDescriptionofFundedProjects.pdf>

