

WIU School of Ag opens Leatherneck Meats

Setting the Purple and Gold Standard for University Farms pork sales

Students in the Western Illinois University School of Agriculture have found a unique way to raise money for the department while learning valuable career skills, by starting Leatherneck Country Meats – The Purple and Gold Standard of Western Illinois University, a pork sales operation run from the University Farm.

Hogs are among the animals raised at the University farm as part of the University's academic offerings, including classes on swine science and as part of WIU's nationally-successful Livestock Judging Team.

According to Jay Pittman, an assistant research technician at the University Farm said seven students are employed by the center to handle all aspects of animal care, from feeding to farrowing.

While some of the pigs who are raised are sold to individual buyers to raise for judging in 4-H and FFA events, there are several that are typically sold off to processing plants.

"The goal is raising show pigs," said WIU senior agriculture business major Dalton Humphrey, of Eaton Rapids, MI. "We also have a few online sales a year."

The majority of the Leatherneck Country Meats operation is run by students. Faculty from the WIU School of Agriculture advise the students.

"We are excited to make WIU pork available to the public," said WIU Instructor Jana Knupp. "Our students work hard to raise high quality livestock in a responsible way. Purchasing WIU pork provides the customer with a premium product, while also supporting the animal science program at WIU."

Once the hogs are ready for processing, they are taken to the new Farmhouse Meat Company in Carthage. The owners of the new meat locker include WIU alumni Kristin Hulls and John Carroll.

Leatherneck Country Meats is available in three bundles, including:

- The Rocky Bundle - \$120: Two roasts or hams, six-eight pork chops, three pounds of bacon and eight pounds of sausage.
- The Purple and Gold Bundle - \$310: Three pounds of rack spare ribs, four two-pound Boston butt roasts, two shoulder roasts, eight pounds of bacon, 10-12 bone-in chops, five pounds of sausage, two packages of brats and a whole ham, halved.
- The Whole Hog - \$400: The meat is processed to the buyers' specifications. The

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JANA KNUPP, Instructor



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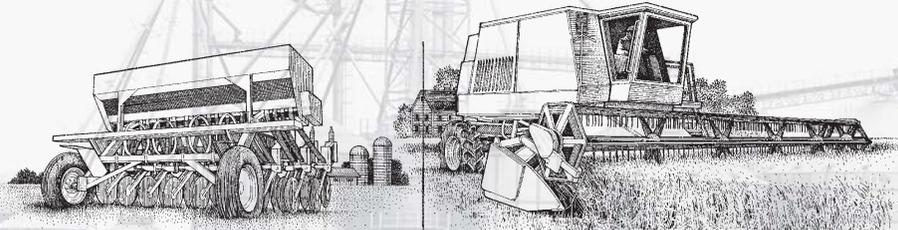


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