

# Direct Marketing of Lamb to the Consumer

**John Peck**  
Mt. Salem Farm  
**Brenda Reau**  
Reau Suffolks  
**Diane Russell**  
Russell Sheep Company



---

---

---

---

---

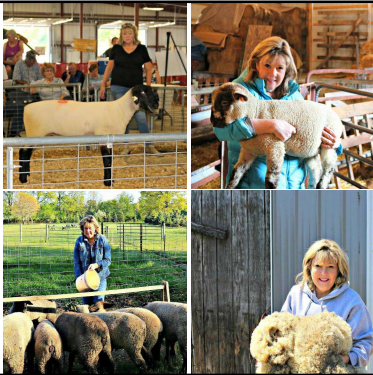
---

---

---

## Brenda Reau

- Tonight's moderator
- Raised Suffolk sheep – 38 years
- Performance based flock specializing in seedstock and commercial rams
- Direct market whole freezer lambs
- Retired Michigan State University - Associate Director, Livestock Product Development Educator
- USSA board member
- [Facebook.com/ReauSuffolks/](https://www.facebook.com/ReauSuffolks/)



2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Diane Russell

- Raised Suffolk sheep – 50+ years
- Direct marketed lamb - 11 Years
- 165 ewe flock – breeding stock, show stock, direct market lamb
- Partnership with husband Paul and son Jeremy
- Full time grain farmers -Muncie, Indiana
- Former USSA President
- [www.russellsheepcompany.com](http://www.russellsheepcompany.com)
- [Facebook.com/russellsheepcompany](https://www.facebook.com/russellsheepcompany)



3

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

**John Peck**

- Raised Suffolk sheep - 25 years
- Direct marketing lamb - 5 years
- Raise 50 lambs from breeding stock
- Purchase additional 25 feeder lambs
- Pittstown, New Jersey - one hour west of Manhattan
- <https://www.facebook.com/Mt-Salem-Farm-219962588023725/>

4

---

---

---


---

---


---

---

---




United States Department of Agriculture



**Selling legally**

- Learn the regulations for slaughter, processing, and marketing your product
- <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/e6658a9c-915f-4283-beaf-a827b35e906a/Fed-Food-Inspect-Requirements.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>



5

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---



**Understanding processing and inspection**

- Federal and state inspection
- Does your state have state inspection?
- <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/inspection/state-inspection-programs/state-inspection-and-cooperative-agreements/states-operating-their-own-mpi-programs>

6

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Figure 1. Examples of inspection marks for carcasses, processed meat (placed on package), and poultry or poultry products. (Adapted from USDA FSIS Production and Inspection Fact Sheet.)



### Federal inspection

- Requires plant to have a Grant of Inspection
- Inspectors are present during all slaughter and a portion of the time for processing
- Inspectors inspect facilities, equipment, and meat products
- This type of inspection is required for selling cuts of lamb unless you live in a state that has a state inspection program




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### State Inspection

- State inspection program is required to enforce requirements at least equal to the federal requirements
- Meat can be sold within the state but not across state lines
- 27 states have a state inspection program




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Custom exemption

- Slaughter is done for the owner of the animal
- It cannot be sold to others
- Facility still must comply with regulations and is inspected periodically




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Custom exempt plant

- May only be used if you are selling "on the hoof"
- Farmer sells to the customer live. Price can be calculated per pound or a set fee per animal
- Farmer may deliver the lamb to the slaughter plant
- Customer makes arrangements and pays for processing



10

---

---

---


---

---

---


---

---



### Evaluating a processor

- Where is the processor located – consider travel time and gas expense
- What type of packaging do they offer?
- Can they do value-added products, specialty grinds?
- Can they do a custom label?
- How do they set up the schedule?



11

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Storing and selling lamb legally

- Check with State Department of Agriculture or local health department to see what you need. Regulator varies by state.
- Some require a license/permit to offer meat for sale
- Some require a license/permit for you to store your meat



12

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Labeling

- Product name
- Handling statement – Keep Frozen, Keep Refrigerated, Perishable
- USDA mark of inspection/establishment number
- Net weight (unless weighed on scale in front of consumer)
- Name, address
- Safe handling instructions
- Nutritional labeling – posted at point of sale if not on package
- Ingredient statement if more than one ingredient

13

---

---

---

---

---

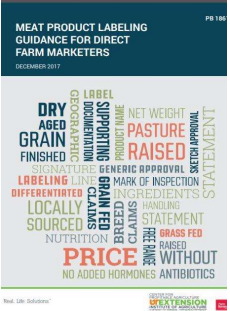
---

---


---

---

---



## Helpful guide on labeling



<https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/PB1861.pdf>

14

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---


---

---


## Working with a processor




Schedule early



Bring the number of lambs for your reservation



Be clear in your cutting and wrapping instructions



Pay promptly

15

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---





### How will direct marketing affect your operation?

- Genetics
- Management
- Feeding

16

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Meeting demand for product

- Can you produce enough lambs to meet the demand of a year round business?
- Winter born lambs are ready to harvest summer/fall
- How many do you need to harvest and store for the year ahead?
- Can you purchase lambs from other producers to meet your needs?
- Will they be the same carcass quality as your breeding?

17

---

---

---


---

---

---


---

---



### Producing a premium product

- Market lambs at ideal age/weight for excellent carcass quality
- Leanness
- Most customers prefer vacuum packed in clear wrap
- Label accurately
- Keep it frozen



18

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Selling all parts of the carcass is necessary to be profitable

- Legs and chops sell easily
- Other cuts need creative marketing or fabrication into specialty products

19

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Specialty products

- Offering specialty products beyond traditional cuts adds more value to the carcass and more variety for your customers
- Sausages, smoked cuts, gyro meat, snack sticks
- Pet products – dog bones, liver chews

20

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Exploring market options

- Farmers' markets
- Restaurants
- Local meat market or grocery store
- Distributor
- On-farm store
- Direct to consumer from home



21

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Farmers' Markets

- Great exposure to customers to build your brand
- Is labor intensive with travel, set-up, and sales time
- Can be indoor or outdoor market
- Invest in a quality, easy-to-put-up tent
- Being a regular vendor is important
- How will you accept payment - checks, credit/debit cards

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Restaurants

- Require top quality
- Consistency in chop/rack size is important
- Stable supply is important
- Develop a relationship with the chef or owner
- Be prepared for a lot of staff turnover
- Often don't plan very far ahead for ordering
- Stick to privately owned restaurants rather than chains
- Encourage them to identify the source farm on their menu




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Transporting your product

- Refrigerated van or truck
- Freezers on trailer with generator
- Coolers
  - ✓ Use high quality coolers
  - ✓ Keep coolers closed
  - ✓ Handle carefully and sanitize after each use
  - ✓ Always have a thermometer

---

---

---

---

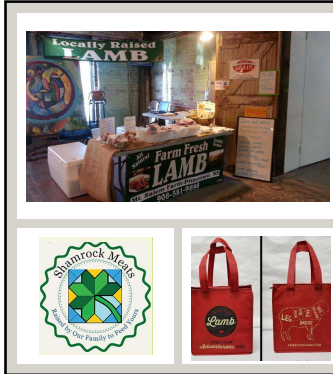
---

---

---

---





### Marketing tools

- Attractive signage
- Logo
- Business cards
- Brochure that tells the farm/product story
- Recipes
- Sample tasting
- Website
- Social media
- American Lamb Board – free materials  
<https://lambresourcecenter.com/promotional-tools/markets-fairs-festivals/>
- ALB Shopping and cooler bags  
<https://lambresourcecenter.com/promotional-tools/swag/>

25

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Complimentary products

- Offer complimentary products of interest to customers
- Diversifying your product line means there is more for the customer to buy
- Seasoning mixes
- Rubs
- Marinades or sauces
- Be sure to follow regulations if you are making the products

26

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Pricing your product

- Know your costs! This requires careful record keeping to include all costs.
- Don't try to compete on price. You have a locally grown product which adds value in the mind of consumers.
- Selling wholesale to restaurants or retailers will require a lower price but should also result in a labor savings.

27

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The screenshot shows the LAMB Resource Center website. The main navigation menu includes: LAMB/CREATORS, MARKET NEWS, MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES, EVENTS, FINANCING, and PRODUCTED RESOURCES. The featured content is a banner for 'DAI DUE BUTCHER SHOP' with the text 'PRICING CALCULATOR' below it. A URL is provided: <https://lambresourcecenter.com/marketing-resources/cost-calculator/>. The page number '28' is in the bottom right corner.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Finance and record keeping**

- Keep excellent records of inventory, income, and expenses
- What does it cost to produce the product?
- Processing costs really add up
- Transportation costs can add a lot to the total cost of the product
- Vendor space, marketing materials are a cost
- Evaluate what sells and what doesn't – can you take the cuts that don't sell well and make them into something else more marketable?

The slide number '29' is in the bottom right corner.

---

---

---

---


---

---


---

---


**Insurance**



LIABILITY INSURANCE IS ESSENTIAL



CHECK WITH SEVERAL COMPANIES FOR QUOTES



MANY RETAILERS REQUIRE LIABILITY INSURANCE

The slide number '30' is in the bottom right corner.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Communicating with customers

- Educate customers about your product
- Promote your product in a positive way without tearing down others
- Be prepared for all kinds of questions
- Be prepared to deal with animal rights activists
- Listen and learn from your customers what they want



31

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Do you have enough time?

- Be realistic in how much time you have to commit to the business
- Delivery of the lamb to the processor
- Meat pick-up and handling
- Market set-up and selling
- Making deliveries
- Communications with processor and customers
- Record keeping
- Marketing and social media



32

---

---

---

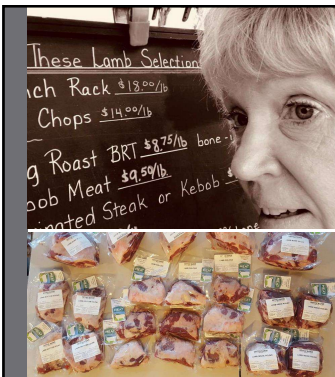
---

---

---

---

---



Questions ???



33

---

---

---

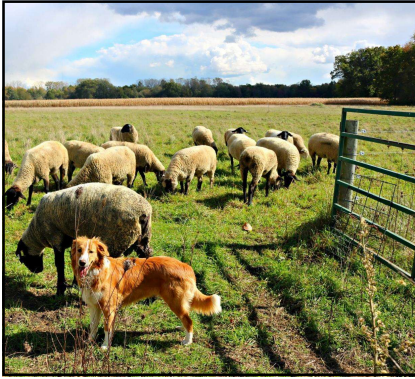
---

---

---

---

---



**Photo credits**

Thank you to all who provided photos for this presentation!

- ❖ American Lamb Board
- ❖ Diamond K Sheep Company
- ❖ Kitzan Family Farms
- ❖ Mapleton Mynd Shropshires
- ❖ Mt. Salem Farm
- ❖ Reau Suffolks
- ❖ Russell Sheep Company
- ❖ Shamrock Meats
- ❖ University of California - Davis
- ❖ USDA

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

John Peck  
[Mtsalemsuffolks@yahoo.com](mailto:Mtsalemsuffolks@yahoo.com)

Brenda Reau  
[reau@msu.edu](mailto:reau@msu.edu)

Diane Russell  
[russellmd54@gmail.com](mailto:russellmd54@gmail.com)

**Thank you for participating!**

- Presentation and handouts will be linked on the USSA website to view or download and print:
- <https://suffolks.org/wp/suffolk-u-webinar-series/>

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---