



Barb and Steve Beutler, owners of Beutler Meats & Catering in Lafayette

# Making the cut

Tradition,  
discipline put  
fresh meat  
business over  
the top.

STORY BY JENNIFER STREISAND  
PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HEINZ

When you think of freshness, you normally think of fruits and vegetables, but the taste very much applies to beef and pork, too, says Barb Beutler, co-owner and office manager of Beutler Meats & Catering in Lafayette. Steve and Barb Beutler operate the meat processing facility and retail store at 801 South First St., which customizes both the processing and retail orders to best suit the needs of all of their customers.

“We are a state-inspected meat processing facility,” says Steve Beutler, president of Beutler Meats & Catering. “We do custom butchering of beef, pork and lamb. And then we have a retail store where any customer can come in and shop here.”

Custom butchering means that the Beutlers and staff take detailed instructions from farmers who bring in cattle, hogs and sheep pertaining to the specific cuts of the meat, the thickness of their steaks, particular sizes of the roast, making the meat into hamburger patties and so on. They ask their customers how they cook their meat, which often determines how the meat is cut and in what quantities.



For Greater Lafayette residents who are not farmers, but who want to eat locally raised farm meat, the Beutler retail store smells of the freshness Barb and Steve Beutler describe when they talk about the quality of their product. The freshness means great tasting meat with a tender consistency.

“Our beef is dry aged,” Steve Beutler says. “That means it hangs in the cooler in a controlled humidity and temperature atmosphere. After the animal is slaughtered, and prior to cutting when beef is dry aged, two things happen: moisture evaporates from the muscle, creating a greater concentration of beefy flavor, and secondly, the beef’s natural enzymes break down the fibrous connective tissue in the muscle, which tenderizes the meat.”

The process of producing fresh meat is involved and highly regulated, notes Beutler, particularly because Beutlers slaughters in addition to the processing.

“Our facilities are like a surgical room,” he says. “With all of the stainless steel, the cleaning, the sanitizing, and everything that we have to do for food safety.” The Beutlers run their facility to meet USDA regulations. In addition, a state meat inspector checks in at Beutlers every day.

If you are squeamish about meat hanging in coolers but still love the taste of beef, Beutlers offers just the right environment, because the slaughtering and meat processing sections are out of sight and sound of the general consumer.

“We have the feel of a hometown butcher shop without being exposed to the actual butchering,” says Mary Stratton, the secretary and public relations coordinator at Beutlers. She has worked there since 1972, taking time off to raise her children.

In fact, there is little turnover among the 16 employees at Beutler Meats, many of whom have worked for the Beutlers for more than 15 years, such as Stratton.

Penny Glotzbach, the bookkeeper for the business, has worked there since 1978. She has stayed because she says Steve and Barb Beutler care about their employees, and the environment is family oriented. Therefore, her employers understand the pressures that family life sometimes places on employees.

“It’s personal here,” notes Glotzbach. Her relationship with the Beutlers goes back to the original owner of Beutler Meats, Bob Beutler, Steve’s father, who founded the business in 1953. Glotzbach worked for Bob Beutler when he owned the business. The facility originally opened in Otterbein. He paid \$2,000 to buy the facility in an auction, and once the business was open for a while, it took off from there, says Bob Beutler. They stayed in Otterbein until 1970, when they moved to the facility on First Street in Lafayette. The new facility had more space and was centrally located, explains Bob Beutler, who is now retired from the business. He comes in about once a week to help his son and daughter-in-law and the staff.

It took years of learning the specifics and a tremendous amount of discipline to grow the business into what it is today, where farmers rely on the Beutlers, and come from as far as 60 miles away to have their meat processed. ▶▶

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The Beutler Meats & Catering family

“We have processed a lot of meat over the years,” Bob Beutler says. “It’s interesting work, pleasing people, and a big job.”

As general manager for operations, Charlie Ewing has a very important job with Beutler Meats because he is involved with the slaughtering of the animals and maintaining the coolers. He’s been at Beutlers for about 18 years, traveling 25 miles every morning to be at work at 7 a.m.

“People really enjoy doing what they do here,” notes Ewing, who proudly says, “This is the best place in town to work.”

Of the employees, Stratton, in particular, has contact with customers who come into the retail store to shop for meat. The store looks very similar to the type of environment that you would see in the meat and deli section of a grocery store, with a meat case showcasing packaged meats. Beutlers is a more intimate environment for choosing your favorite meat. If you don’t see the cut you want displayed, if you ask, you are most likely to get it, if not on the spot, then in the very near future.

Beutlers has a full menu for catering and family dinners, which includes a lot of special orders, particularly during holidays.

“For example, we will sell about 80 to 100 prime ribs at Christmas time,” says Steve Beutler. For the catering, the Beutlers can sell full meals, including side dishes that are cooked in their on-site kitchen.

They also do a lot of wholesales for the Greater Lafayette fairs.

“Someone might call in and want 25 state fair rib eye steaks, which are thinly sliced, typically between 5 and 6 ounces, and they are a quick grilling steak, which is great for a sandwich,” he explains.

Of all of his years in the business, Bob Beutler reflects on the effort involved.

“It takes a lot of time, energy, honesty, a solid work plan and good help, and it all has to work together,” he says. “We don’t know what the future makes, but we keep on going.” ❄

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# Savory recipes

These perfectly, meaty meals are a great way to warm up a chilly autumn evening.

## Pot Roast for the Slow Cooker

Barb Beutler, co-owner and office manager, Beutler Meats & Catering, Lafayette

- 1, 2 to 3 lb. arm or chuck roast
- 1 can of beef broth
- 3 to 4 potatoes – cut these in half or in quarters
- 4 to 5 carrots, cut up
- 1 onion, sliced
- Salt, pepper and garlic powder to taste
- 1 cup water

Put the roast into a Crock Pot or a slow cooker. Pour the beef broth and water over roast. Season with salt, pepper and garlic powder. After approximately 2 hours of cooking, add vegetables around the meat or under the meat. Continue cooking for an additional 2 to 3 hours. Choose the setting on the slow cooker depending on how much time you have to cook the meat and its size.

## Prime Rib with Soy Sauce

Steve Beutler, Beutler Meats & Catering

- 1 whole prime rib roast
- Snider's Prime Rib Seasoning (available at Beutler Meats)
- Soy sauce
- 1 can of beef stock

Pour the beef stock over the beef roast and sprinkle soy sauce over the roast. Season with Snider's Prime Rib Seasoning. For a prime rib roast at least 10 pounds or more, bake in a 350 degree oven uncovered for 2 hours. Then baste with the drippings and cover with foil for 1 to 1 1/2 hours more. Check the internal temperature in the center of the roast, until it reaches 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Take the prime rib out of the oven and let it rest. At this point you can slice the meat and return it to the pan with the drippings. Now you are ready to serve it, or return it to a warm-low temperature oven, covered, until ready to serve.

## Pan Broiled Venison Steaks

Cindy Barnett, Purdue University Extension, Whitley County

- 6 venison steaks, 1/2- to 1-inch thick
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon charcoal seasoning (optional)

### Marinade:

- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 2/3 cup salad oil
- 1/2 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 Tablespoon ketchup
- 1 Tablespoon onion, grated
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon Tabasco sauce
- 3 Tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon water
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

Measure and pour all marinade ingredients into a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Cover and shake the jar well. Place marinade in large glass bowl. Add steaks and allow to stand for several hours or overnight in the refrigerator. Remove steaks from marinade and drain well. Season the steaks with salt, pepper and charcoal seasoning.

Heat oil in a frying pan. Cook the steaks quickly at a high heat, turning every 30 seconds until they are done. Do not overcook. Add only enough oil to prevent the meat from sticking to the pan. Serves 6.



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