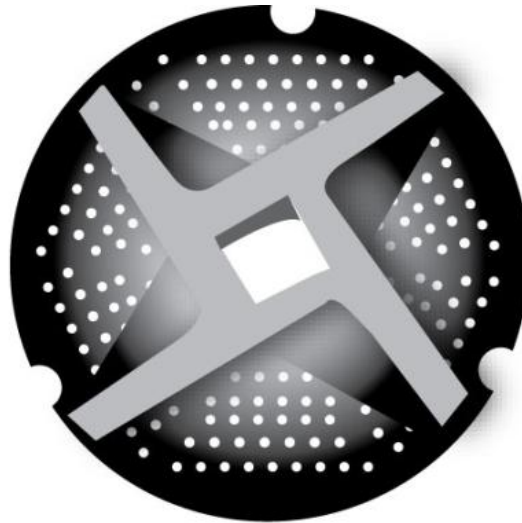


Profiles in Small-Scale Processing: Blue Ridge Meats



NICHE MEAT PROCESSOR

ASSISTANCE NETWORK



May 28, 2015

www.nichemeatprocessing.org

Today's speaker

Lois Aylestock

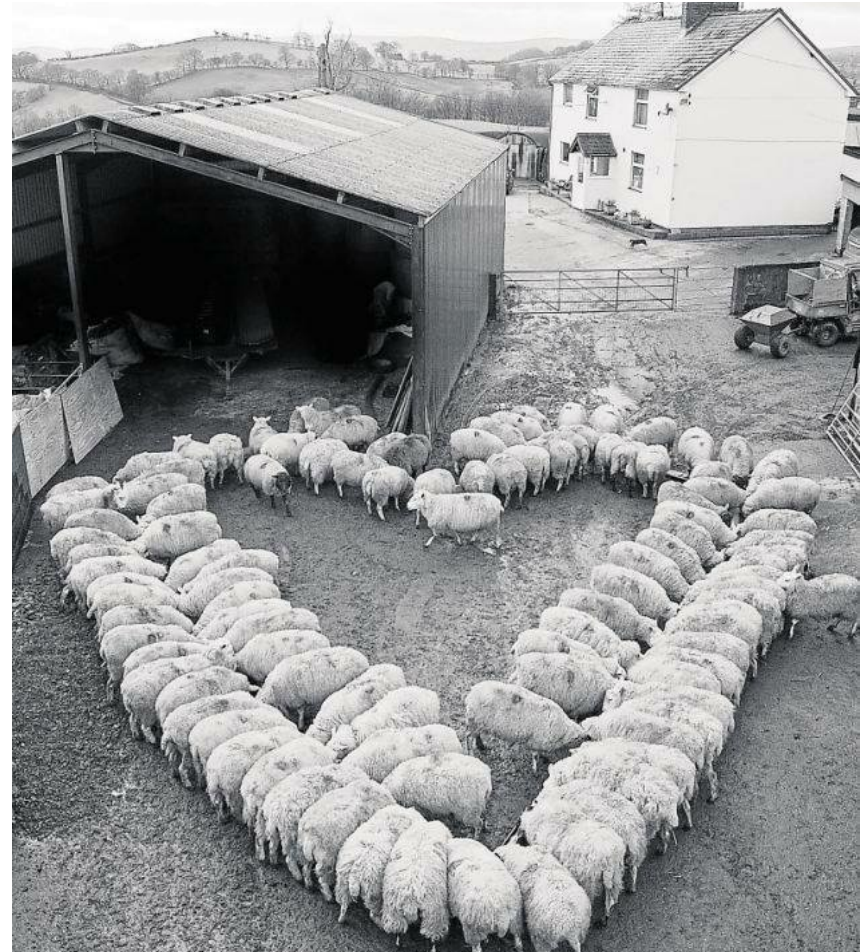
Vice President of Blue
Ridge Meats

Front Royal, VA

blueridgemeats.com



Why I do what I do



How I got started...

- Former vegetarian and makeup executive
- A few thoughts on being a woman in a male dominated business...



About Blue Ridge Meats: The Business

- USDA-inspected, small-scale slaughter and processing facility.
- We process approx. 30 - 50 hd./week
- Slaughter, cut & wrap and value-added processing
- Small retail counter



About Blue Ridge Meats: The Facility

- Humane slaughter was most important to me – our kill floor uses a Temple Grandin design
- ~ 7,000 sq ft.
- Built in 1967, we purchased the plant in Sept.2006



dry-aging cooler

Inspection Options

- USDA
- Virginia State (VDACS)
- You must be the communication bridge between the two *OR* make a clear decision between state and federal.



Day-to-Day Operations: Finances



The cost of running the whole place: vendors, credit, cash flow, salaries, taxes, sanitary stuff, equipment, the actual plant, coffee and snacks, *insurance that you cannot afford*, etc.

Day-to-Day Operations: Customer Service



What is *really* our job?
Education.

- Teaching your customers what they are selling
- Yields: “you stole my meat!”, “is that all there is?”, “why can’t I have _____?”
- There is a bridge to be built between the farmers and the processors: we cannot do it all.

Day-to-Day Operations: Staff



Good staffing is crucial!

Use contracts and
remember who you hire
represents YOU.

Day-to-Day Operations: Labeling

- LSAS: the "Ferris wheel of adjectives"
- POS Claims (Point of Sale Claims)
- Who is monitoring the "farmers"?



If only I knew...

Things to think about before you sign your life away...

- Impact on your family and your time
- You are the boss: responsibility always falls on you
- You're married to your business partner (in our case, we actually are!)
- THE WEATHER



Advice for those starting out:

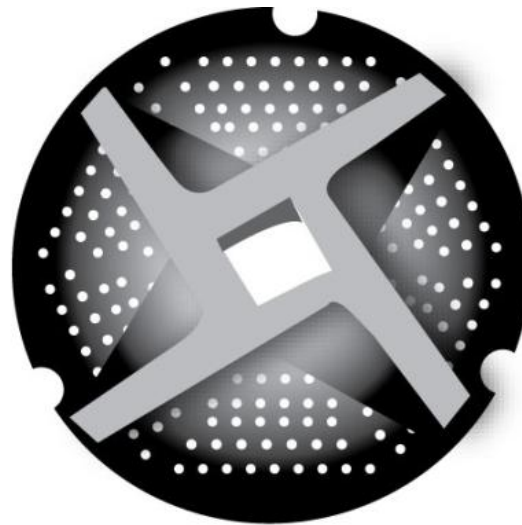


- Location, location, location
- Niche market? What do you want to do and who is your target audience?
- Competition: How many other slaughterhouses are near you?

Questions?



Thank you!



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