

# THE MOBILE “MATANZA”

**EVERYONE** who loves to include fresh, healthy meat in their diet benefits from the TCEDC mobile “Matanza” and Cut and Wrap facility at the Taos Food Center. The Matanza provides a unique opportunity for small ranchers who once did not have the option of slaughtering livestock for commercial sale to have a USDA regulated and certified organic slaughter service brought directly to their ranch. The Matanza eliminates the need for small ranchers to purchase their own transportation equipment and haul their livestock hundreds of miles to sale barns and feedlots. The Matanza, serving ranchers in a 100 mile radius of Taos, is equipped to harvest cattle, bison, goats, pork, sheep and yak and can handle as few as one and as many as eighteen animals in one visit.

Before the day of the Matanza visit, animals are pre-selected by the rancher and separated from the rest of the herd so they can be harvested individually and not traumatized by the transport process or by being near other animals being harvested. The actual slaughter is done in a humane manner and ideally the animal never knows what is happening. If the rancher is interested in commercial sales of the meat, the USDA inspector travels with the Matanza and certifies the entire harvest process. The meat is prepared on-site for processing and hung in the refrigerated compartment of the Matanza to be transported to the TCEDC Cut and Wrap facility at the Taos Food Center. The

rancher is able to keep any “waste” materials such as organs or hides and those parts that are not used are composted at the ranch. TCEDC provides training by NM Environment Department staff on how to compost livestock offal during the semi-annual Ranchers Forums or upon request from the ranchers. The rancher makes arrangements to have the meat packaged and labeled with their ranch name and logo for sales or custom wrapped for family use. By using the Matanza the rancher saves fuel and transportation costs and ultimately has a value-added product, the cut, vacuum wrapped and labeled meat products, that he/she can sell at a much greater profit-margin than simply taking the animals to the auctions and selling by the pound on-the-hoof. Harvest and processing fees are below the general market rate.



The Matanza Team is composed of (from left to right) Gilbert Suazo, Jr., Cecilia Romero and Brian Trujillo. This Team is highly skilled and these traditional ranching skills are practiced and carried on with state-of-the art equipment and under USDA regulations. The hard-working staff takes great pride in their work and products so that

everyone can enjoy the excellent local meats.

The Matanza has processed and returned to the local community over 350,000 lbs. of healthy meat from 2008 to present, re-circulating cash through the communities, improving regional food security and reducing the carbon footprint of the producers. A huge benefit of the Matanza livestock harvesting process is that it promotes and facilitates the production of grass-fed and heritage breed animals for commercial purposes.

Taos can look forward to locally produced and processed meats for now and the future.

**Saturday, October 20, 2012** promises to be the highlight of the Harvest season for the Taos local foods producers and enthusiasts. TCEDC, in partnership with the Town of Taos, will host “Food Fest, Fall Harvest and ‘Matanza’ Celebration from 1:00 to 4:00 PM at 1021 Salazar Rd.

You will enjoy all kinds of food products from the Taos Food Center and lovingly prepared meats from the Matanza ranchers. Entertainment provided by NM music sensation “Gonzalo”. This is a fundraising event to support the Taos Food Center. Adult admission in \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door. Kids are Free. Tickets available at TCEDC and at Que Pasa.

*“People who say it can’t be done, should not interrupt those of us who are doing it”  
– Alex Goodall-*