Dressing and Cutting Lamb and Mutton on the Farm

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DRESSING AND CUTTING LAMB AND MUTTON ON THE FARM
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Lamb and mutton are rapidly coming into their own as popular meats, both in the city and on the farm. When farmers awake to the fact that lamb and mutton are just as palatable, practically as great in nutritive value and just as easily dressed as beef and pork, a great deal more of this meat will be consumed on the farm.

Heretofore lamb has been considered somewhat of a delicacy, to be killed only by experts and consumed by the wealthier class of people. This is due to several causes.

1. For many years the strictly wool type of sheep were in the majority in this country and their carcasses did not produce a really highclass meat product.

2. Mutton and lamb do not cure so satisfactorily as pork or beef and hence are used more as a fresh meat product.

3. Many people have a prejudice against the taste of mutton and lamb. This has been brought about partly because of improper handling of the meat and partly because everyone emphasizes the fact that mutton should always be eaten with mint sauce or something to take away the mutton flavor. If people would forget about the mint sauce and eat roast lamb the same as they do roast pork, Americans of the next generation would be consuming as much mutton and lamb as beef and pork. The taste for lamb must be cultivated the same as it has been for pork and beef.

4. There is lack of information on the part of the farmer and small butcher as to the best methods of dressing and cutting mutton and lamb. This quite often results in a poorly flavored product.

Lamb and mutton may profitably be used to a greater extent on the farms of the American people.

The mutton type of sheep is rapidly becoming popular on the small farms as well as on the western ranges of the United States. The small carcass lends itself well to the use of one family. The cuts are small and can be easily utilized while fresh. Lamb and mutton are just as easily digested as either pork or beef.

Reports from the Bureau of Animal Industry show that fewer lambs are condemned under government inspection than any other class of meat animals. The sheep is more particular about its feed than any of our other meat animals.

Sheep can be just as easily killed and can be dressed in less time and with less equipment than any other domestic meat animal.

SELECTION OF THE SHEEP FOR BUTCHERING

Health. Always select thrifty, healthy looking sheep. If they have been feeding all right and look thrifty, the chances are very good that the carcass will be free from disease of any kind.

Condition. Animals should be in medium to good condition, evenly covered with a firm, white fat. The muscles of the very thin sheep are often tough and lack flavor, while the overfat animal is wasty.

Age. Lambs should not be killed under eight weeks of age. Lambs at four or five months furnish excellent meat.
Breeding and Type. Lambs of the mutton breeds will furnish the best grade of meat. The mutton type sheep will always furnish a better intermixing of fat and lean and are not so apt to be patchy.

Quality. The very best-fine grained meat is produced by the smooth, fine boned animal. Coarse shoulders and an angular build show lack of quality and are indications of a wasty, poor grade carcass.

KILLING AND DRESSING.

HANDLING THE SHEEP BEFORE SLAUGHTER.

Sheep should be kept off feed for at least 24 hours before slaughter. Plenty of fresh water should be allowed during this time. Young lambs should not be separated from their mothers quite so long, because they will worry and fret too much. Sheep should be handled just as carefully as possible; the animal should never be struck, or grasped by the wool, as this will leave a bruised spot and spoil part of the meat. If the animal is killed just off full feed, gases will form in the stomach and may influence the flavor of the meat. The fleece should be as dry and as clean as possible. Every precaution should be taken to keep the sheep quiet and free from bruised spots. The following directions are very simple and an expert is not required to do satisfactory work.

TOOLS NECESSARY FOR KILLING

First, have a clean, dry place to work. A few boards or an old door do very well to work on. A sharp butcher knife will be needed, a small, clean box to lay the sheep on while sticking, a bucket of warm water, some clean cloths and strong string or rope, and a convenient place to hand the carcass. A common meat saw is necessary for cutting the carcass.

METHODS OF KILLING.

Stunning with hammer. A blow on the forehead will stun the sheep so that the sticking may be done without its struggling so much.

By Bleeding. This is the most satisfactory method, because you are always sure of the carcass bleeding out well.

Sticking. A right-handed man should lay the sheep on its left side on a clean box so that the fleece may be kept clean and, the animal cannot get a foothold when struggling. Grasp groove in lower jaw at end of muzzle with left hand, place left knee just back of the head with your right knee in fore flank. Draw head back against your left knee, stretching the neck. Stick knife into neck at the base of
Fig. 2—Opening pelt over knee.

Fig. 3—Opening pelt from knee to neck.

Fig. 4—Opening pelt, hock to rectum.

Note method of holding knife to prevent cutting the fell.
the right ear in angle made between jaw bone and neck. Hold back edge of knife nearest neck bone, cut thru the neck as near the neck bone as possible. (See fig. 1.) The neck can be broken or the sheep stunned by pulling the muzzle back against your left knee. Be sure to lay your knife down where the sheep cannot reach it in struggling.

SKINNING.

When thoroly bled out, lay the sheep down on Its back. Stand with your feet near the middle and facing the head of the animal. Your foot will help to hold the sheep on Its back. Place front foot of sheep between your knees and grasp pelt at knee joint. Open pelt over the front side of the knee and loosen a strip down to the fetlock or ankle joint. (See fig. 2.) Then open pelt from knee down to a point about six inches in front of breast bone.

When opening the pelt in this way, hold the knife rather flat with the point up against the under side of the pelt. (See fig. 3.) Be very careful not to cut or tear the fell, which is the thin white membrane between the pelt and the carcass.
Fig. 7—Hind shanks tied together and opening fisted along underline. Ready to hang.

Fig. 8—Opening pelt down opening made along underline.

Fig. 9—Fisting up over hind flank and leg.
Open the second front shank in the same manner as the first. Turn around and place one hind foot of sheep between your knees and grasp pelt at point of hock, open pelt over point of hock and loosen a strip down to hoof. (See fig. 4.) Open pelt from hock down to rectum. Then remove hind foot at lower joint and loosen pelt on hind shank from hock toward pastern joint. Use knife to open tendons from back of hind shank.

Wash your hands clean. Grasp triangular strip of pelt in front of brisket and fist pelt loose from brisket. (See fig. 5.) If difficult to fist loose from in front, fist up on one side and loosen from the back of brisket. It may be necessary to use a knife just a little at this point. Fist an opening just the width of your hand back to about the middle of the underline. Next start at rectum. (See fig. 6.) Lift triangular piece and fist opening over belly to meet opening made from in front.

Tie hind shanks together and hang on a strong hook. (See fig. 7.) Open pelt down opening made along underline. (See fig. 8.) Begin fistling in middle of underline (see fig. 9) and fist up over hind flank and legs on both sides, leaving pelt attached at tail and along middle of back. Start at middle again and fist down over fore leg (see fig. 10)
and remove toes at break joint, which is located just above the fetlock joint (See fig. 11). This joint will not break on the older sheep, but can easily be broken on a lamb.

Loosen pelt from tail and pull pelt straight back from the carcass; it should strip down the back to the neck.

Pull down over head as far as possible and cut head off just back of ears, or at opening made in sticking animal.

Open neck from breast bone downward, separate and loosen windpipe and gullet and tie gullet.

Carcass should be thoroughly cleaned with a hot, damp cloth. Do not wash the carcass unless it is very dirty.

GUTTING.

Cut around rectum and loosen bung gut so that it can be pulled out from the back at least two inches, and tie. Make opening just below cod or udder and open carcass down the midline about half way to the breast bone. It is well to remove the caul fat at this time (see fig. 12) in order to be sure that it is clean.

Pull large intestines down, being sure to get the bladder at the same time, and being careful not to disturb the kidneys or kidney fat. Pull out stomach, intestines and liver. The gullet should not be cut from the stomach, but pulled up through chest cavity, which can easily be done if it has been properly loosened when head is removed and neck opened.

Remove the gall bladder from the liver and cool liver as soon as possible.

Use knife to cut down just a little to one side of the center of the breast bone and remove heart and lungs.

Bend fore shanks back at knee and pin them up with a clean nail or a wooden pin. This improves the appearance of the carcass. Wipe carcass clean with a warm, damp cloth.

If the weather is warm, the carcass may be cooled more quickly by splitting down the center of the back bone with a saw, just as you would a beef or a hog, cutting the carcass into halves. Hang in a clean, cool place to cool out.

HANDLING PELT.

Skin out head and salt inside of pelt. If you wish to cure or tan the pelt for a cultivator or wagon seat, proceed as follows: Mix eight parts of common salt to one part of pulverized alum and apply to flesh side of the pelt. Allow it to lie flesh side up for eight to nine days
Fig. 13—Carcass showing cuts. A. Neck; B. Shoulder; C. Shank; D. Short rack or ribs; E. Plate; F. Flank; G. Loin; H. Leg
Fig. 14—A. Neck; C. Shank; E. Plate; F. Flank.

Fig. 15—Shoulder steaks or chops.

Fig. 16—Shoulder partially boned. 1. Neck bone and ribs; 2. Shoulder blade; 3. Arm bone just below shoulder blade.
In a place where mice will not bother it. Then hang it up four or five days until dry. Then work or crumple the hide until the inner layer will crack or peel off, leaving the soft pelt with the wool attached. This makes a fairly good grade of leather.

**CUTTING THE CARCASS.**

A sharp knife, a good saw and a clean, strong table or bench are all of the tools and equipment necessary for cutting the carcass. Much better work can be done if the carcass has been thoroughly cooled out. The various cuts may be made either before or after splitting down the backbone. (See fig. 13.)

If you desire to cut English chops, the cuts must be made before the carcass is split. Lay carcass on one side with meat side up. Make cuts 1-2-3-4. The flank $F$ is removed and may be used for stew. The breast and fore shank $E$ and $C$ are known as mutton or lamb breast or plate and are generally used as stew meats or stuffed breast of mutton or lamb. (See fig. 14.) The pocket for stuffing is made by separating the muscles at the brisket end of the plate so as to form a pocket for the dressing.

**SHOULDER.**

For the shoulder, cut 5 to 3 is made, leaving two or three ribs on the shoulder, $B$. The neck, $A$, may then be cut off to square up the shoulder. The neck is usually cut into small pieces for stew. The shoulder may be cut into steaks as in fig. 15, or it may be boned (see fig. 16), by removing ribs and neck bone, 1, then cutting into shoulder joint and removing arm bone, 3, then removing shoulder blade, 2,
by loosening the meat around the bone and pulling the blade out, tearing the feather bone on the blade loose from the meat. Remove the fell from the outside and roll shoulder so that it may be sliced across the grain of the meat and tie as in fig. 17. This is the most attractive way to prepare the shoulder for roasting.

RIBS.

The short rack or ribs, D, may be removed next by cutting on line 6 to 7, leaving one rib on the hind quarter to help hold its shape, in case it is not to be used at once. The ribs may be sliced into chops, as in fig. 18, the chops being made about one inch thick and including one rib. Or the ribs may be shaped into a crown roast by cracking them apart along the back bone and sewing the similar ends of each piece together as in fig. 19, and then sewing the other ends together and peeling some of the meat down from the rib ends. The crown roast thus made is one of the most attractive roasts in the carcass. (See fig. 20.)

LOIN.

The saddle or leg and loins may be separated on line 8 to 1, which can be made either in front of the hip bones or back of them, depending on the size of the roast preferred. The loin, G, may be used as a roast, or it may be sliced into English chops, as in fig. 21, or it may be split and sliced into ordinary chops, as in fig. 22. The chops should be cut about one inch thick and uniform in thickness.

LEG.

The leg of mutton or lamb, H, may then be trimmed up in a number of ways. The ordinary English style is to cut the hind leg off just
Fig. 19—Sewing rib cuts together to make a crown roast.

Fig. 20—Crown roast of lamb. Ready to serve.
Fig. 21—English chop. Cut from leg end of loin.

Fig. 22—Loin chop. Cut from loin after splitting along back bone.
above the hock; the French style is to trim a little of the meat off of the end of the shank bone, as in fig. 23, and the American style is to cut the hind shank off at the stifle joint, or the first joint above the hock, which makes the roast a little smaller for the roasting pan, but does not remove any of the roasting meat. Be sure to remove the fell from all of the cuts, as shown in fig. 24. The leg and loin are usually considered the two best cuts of the carcass, and are always in demand.

TRIMMINGS.

All clean trimmings should be used for stewing. The heart and tongue may be pickled and the liver either fried or boiled.

MISCELLANEOUS RECIPES.

*Using surplus fat.* Any fats not used in cooking should be made into soap. The following formula will produce a very satisfactory product. Melt fat and strain thru a cloth. To every six pounds of fat, add one pound of lye dissolved in about two and one-half pints of cold water. This should not be mixed with the fat until both have cooled down to about 70° Fahrenheit. Stir as you mix and continue stirring until the material resembles thin honey. Do not stir too long. Pour into a granite or wooden vessel and, when sufficiently hardened, cut into squares and allow to ripen in the vessel for three or four weeks in order to allow the fat and lye to be completely united.

*Corned mutton or lamb.* Any part of the carcass may be corned. Rub each piece with salt and cover with a brine of the following strength, and allow to remain in the brine about two weeks, when you can begin using it. If allowed to remain in the brine much more than three weeks it will probably need to be parboiled.

1 gal. water.
1½ pounds salt.
2 oz. salt peter.

Fig. 23.—Leg of lamb trimmed French style.
Cured mutton or lamb. Mutton or lamb may be either brine-cured or dry-cured. The leg is usually trimmed rather close at the loin end and used for curing. Rolled shoulders do very well, also.

Dry Cure. Prepare enough of the following mixture to allow for a good heavy coat to be rubbed on each piece.

- 6 lbs. salt.
- 2 lbs. sugar.
- 1½ oz. salt peter.

Rub thoroly and allow to remain in the salt about 1½ days per pound per piece. A six pound piece would stay in the salt about nine days. Brush salt off and hang in smoke-house about twelve hours. Then give a light smoke with either green hickory, maple or corn cobs.

Brine Cure. Use same pieces as in dry cure. Rub each piece with a thin coat of salt, pack in a hardwood or stone vessel and weight down. Cover the meat with the following strength brine:

- 5 gal. water.
- 9 lbs. salt.
- 2 oz. salt peter.

Allow each piece to remain in the brine about two days per pound per piece. A six pound piece would stay in the brine about twelve days. Hang in smoke house and allow to drip for 24 hours. Then smoke the same as the dry cure. Cured mutton or lamb will not keep quite as well as pork, but if kept in a dry, dark, cool place, the cured meat will keep until you have had plenty of time to use it.