

**Hickory Nut Gap Meats
Grass-Finished Beef Protocol
2010**

1. Locally Raised

1.1 All cattle must be raised and finished in the Southeastern United States. Preference given to cattle raised in the Appalachian Region as stated under the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project's Certified Appalachian Grown label.

2. Animal Identification

2.1 All animals in the program must be identified with an ear tag, no later than weaning age.

2.2 Each farmer must maintain data on the form Individual Animal Record.

2.3 Form Individual Animal Record and the Hickory Nut Gap Meats affidavit must be dropped off with the respective animal or faxed to Hickory Nut Gap Meats by the day of animal delivery.

3. Veterinary Care

3.1 Veterinary treatments, such as vaccinations and worming, must be recorded on each animal's record. This information must be available for review at any time.

3.2 Animals that have been administered sub-therapeutic antibiotics or implanted with hormones are not eligible for this program.

3.3 Artificial growth enhancers are prohibited.

3.4 Recommended withdrawal periods for wormers must be doubled prior to the slaughter of the animal.

4. Diet

4.1 Animals must remain on their mother milk for at least 90 days.

4.2 Once animals are weaned their diet can be any combination of grasses, legumes, hay, forbs, and stored feed made from grasses and legumes, such as haylage or baleage.

4.3 If a farmer chooses to graze planted annuals, the seed heads must not be formed, such as with corn.

4.4 Prohibited in the diet are grains, animal by-products, fish by-products, corn silage, and waste from food industry.

4.5 Pre-approved non-starch supplements may be used to maintain average daily gains during drought or other extreme weather conditions.

5. Pasture Management

5.1 Preference will be given to farmers who use organic pasture management and rotational grazing practices.

5.2 Animals must be raised outdoors on pasture year around with the exception of emergency weather circumstances.

6. Handling of Animals

6.1 Farmers in this program shall use low stress handling techniques in their daily work and while loading and transporting animals.

6.2 Electric prods are prohibited.

6.3 Keeping animals as calm as possible while interacting with them is critical to the animals welfare and ultimately the quality of the meat.

7. Delivery of Finished Animals

7.1 The farmer is required to give 14 days notice to Hickory Nut Gap Meats if there is a change in the Farmers Production and Delivery Plan.

7.2 Otherwise farmers shall notify Hickory Nut Gap Meats one week ahead of time that everything is scheduled as planned.

7.3 The farmer is responsible for delivering the cattle to the predetermined location of Mays Meats in Taylorsville, NC or Washington County Meats in Bristol, VA.

8. Payment

8.1 Payment rates are determined prior to the animal leaving your farm.

8.2 The payment is based upon the animal's hanging weight.

8.3 Payments will be mailed by check to the farmer within 30 days of delivery of the live animal to the processing plant.

8.4 Current payment rates are \$1.85 /lb hot carcass hanging weight.

9. Annual Meeting

9.1 Farmers participating in this program will be in communication with Hickory Nut Gap Meats regularly and receive at least one farm visit per year.

9.2 Each year Hickory Nut Gap Meats will host an annual meeting where new protocol elements and producer concerns may be discussed.

9.3 Signatures will be required annually on the updated affidavit stating that farmers follow Hickory Nut Gap Meats protocol.

I have read and understand this protocol and realize that participation in this program will be terminated if this protocol is not followed.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____ Phone _____

Address _____