



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USDA Teams Up with Vermont Beef Producers to Provide Local Market Data

Posted by Levi Geyer, Agricultural Marketing Service Market News Reporter in [Conservation](#), [Food and Nutrition](#), [Farming](#)

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Our new local and regional Market News reports are just one way USDA is ensuring that farmers and ranchers get access to the resources they need to thrive in the local market sector. Photo courtesy of Cascade Brook Farm.

It wasn't too long ago that beef was far less traveled, and families often put a side of beef away in the freezer for the winter. Modern day conveniences make beef and the beef buying experience more suitable to a faster pace of life, but old traditions are hard to let

go. Across the board, we're seeing a return to buying local, and—although modern conveniences are still enjoyed—local beef is also more accessible.

[USDA Market News](#), part of [USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service](#), recently created a series of market reports on locally or regionally produced agricultural products, including beef. As a part of the [2014 Farm Bill](#), the reports provide farmers, other agricultural businesses and consumers with a one-stop-shop for market and pricing information for local and regional food outlets.

In Vermont, local and regional food systems are a well-established norm. When making routine trips to Vermont at the request of the Vermont Beef Producers Association (VBPA), we noted that the majority of producers in the area were selling their products directly to consumers. As we developed more local and regional market reports, VBPA recognized the potential value and impact the data would have for smaller producers. Within a month VBPA put together a contact list of producers willing to contribute price information on direct sales for our local beef report.

In July, the [Vermont Direct to Consumer – Monthly Beef Report](#) was first released providing price information for local beef sold within Vermont and other regional areas. Prices reflect beef sold as whole, half, and quarter carcasses, as well as retail sales off the farm or at farmers markets. The total trade volume for the region is also recorded.

The report is 100% producer driven, and information is submitted on a voluntary basis. As the first report of its kind, the feedback from producers has been amazing.

“All I can say this is very impressive, useful and should have value to many operations and consumers in the area and beyond. As a seller of primarily carcasses, the report is especially valuable to us,” said Ed and Cindy Canane, owners and operators of Cascade Brook Farm.

Thanks to VBPA and its network of producers, beef producers across Vermont now have more local data than ever before. The objective amongst the producers was quite simple—determine the fair market value of “home-raised beef” sold direct to the consumer. This report meets that objective and has provided some further benefits to establishing price information for accurate development of farm plans, loan applications and insurance.

Small and mid-sized producers are a vital part of America's agricultural future, and we are dedicated to ensuring their success. Our new local and regional Market News reports are just one way USDA is ensuring that farmers and ranchers participating in this market sector get access to the resources they need to thrive. Visit our website for more [local and regional USDA Market News reports](#).

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