

# USDA Inspected Mobile Processing for Small Scale Livestock Producers

The meat processing industry has become more consolidated in recent years resulting in fewer locations where animals can be processed under USDA inspection. This has created a crisis for limited resource producers that can't afford to transport small numbers of animals long distances to be processed. The current system also makes it difficult to sell inspected meats in the communities where they are produced.

What began six years ago with a few farmers in San Juan County, WA talking about how to increase profits raising livestock has resulted in a mobile unit that field slaughters on the farm under USDA inspection. This is the first unit of its type in the nation. This project was led by a non-profit organization with help from producers, retailers, and WSU Extension Faculty.

With this type of local processing, producers can easily market their meat products to upscale restaurants, specialty meat shops and farmers markets. They can also choose how to finish their animals depending on customer demand. More customers today are looking for grass finished and "naturally-raised" meats believing they have increased health benefits.

The unit is owned by the Lopez Community Land Trust (a nonprofit organization) and will be operated by the Islands' Grown Farmers Cooperative a new producers cooperative in San Juan County.



## Specifications-

This goose-neck type trailer is 33 ft. overall, 8.5 ft. wide, 13 ft. tall from the ground, 11 ft. from floor to ceiling, and was custom built by Featherlite Manufacturing in Iowa.

Pulled by an F450 diesel flatbed, this trailer contains three sections: processing, refrigeration, and HVAC/storage. Pickup and trailer together are 49 ft. long and have a combined GVW of 32,000 lbs.

Cooler capacity is for 10 steers, or equivalent amounts of other types (e.g. 40 lambs, or 20 hogs).

The unit has a 10 KW diesel generator and holds 300 gallons of water. Processing rate for lambs is about 20 animals per 8-hr. day (6 hrs processing, 2 hrs set-up and clean-up). Cost for the unit is approximately \$150,000 which includes project coordination and testing.

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