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# SELLING YAK MEAT IN THE US

BY: DANIELE GARNER



## RULES TO REMEMBER



**If you're going to sell yak meat retail or wholesale, you **MUST** process at a USDA facility.**



**If you will only be selling meat in-state (will not cross state lines), be sure to contact your state on laws and regulations for any licensing and labeling.**



**You cannot label meat with a statement (organic, antibiotic free, etc.) without USDA approval.**



**\* "Not for sale" labeling is the only way yak can be processed without a label and/or at a non-USDA inspected facility. This is only if you sell a whole animal to be processed by the buyer.**

# WHERE TO START



## FIND A PROCESSOR

VIEW THE FSIS PDF ON THE WEBSITE TO FIND PROCESSORS NEAR YOU. CALL THEM ASK ABOUT PROCESSING YAK, THEIR COST AND INSPECTION FEES, AND A COPY OF THEIR PROCESSING LABEL.



## GET ANY LICENSING/LABELING FOR PROCESSING IN AND APPROVED.

YOU MAY GO THROUGH THE USDA DIRECTLY TO GET LABEL APPROVAL OR YOU CAN HAVE A PRIVATE COMPANY SUBMIT IT FOR APPROVAL. CONTACT YOUR STATE TO FIND OUT IF YOU NEED TO CARRY A LICENSE FOR RETAIL/WHOLESALE. FOR EXAMPLE; IN THE STATE OF COLORADO YOU HAVE TO CARRY A WHOLESALE LICENSE AND HAVE AN INSPECTION DONE ON YOUR FREEZER.



## PLAN WHAT ANIMAL(S) YOU WILL BE PROCESSING.

HANGING WEIGHT YIELD ON A YAK CARCASS IS APPROXIMATELY 53%-60% OF LIVE WEIGHT. PACKED YIELD IS APPROXIMATELY 53%-60% OF HANGING WEIGHT. YOU WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU ARE PROCESSING AN ANIMAL AT A DECENT WEIGHT IN ORDER TO GET ENOUGH YIELD TO SELL AND MAKE A PROFIT.



## CREATE A FEEDING PLAN.

FEEDING OUT IS BASED SOLELY ON YOUR OPERATION AND MARKET. THE POINT TO FEEDING IS TO INCREASE RATE OF GAIN (LBS PER DAY), CREATE MARBLING OF THE MEAT, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY TO CREATE CONSISTENCY IN YOUR PRODUCT.



## PRICE & MARKET YOUR PRODUCT.

CHECK AROUND YOUR AREA FOR ANY OTHER YAK MEAT BEING SOLD AND/OR ASK OTHER LOCAL OR REGIONAL YAK RANCHES ABOUT PRICING ON THEIR PRODUCT. IF THERE ARE NO NEARBY YAK RANCHES, YAK PRICES ARE LIKE BISON PRICES. MAKE SURE TO MARKET YOUR PRODUCT; FIND CUSTOMERS, ADVERTISE, USE SOCIAL MEDIA.



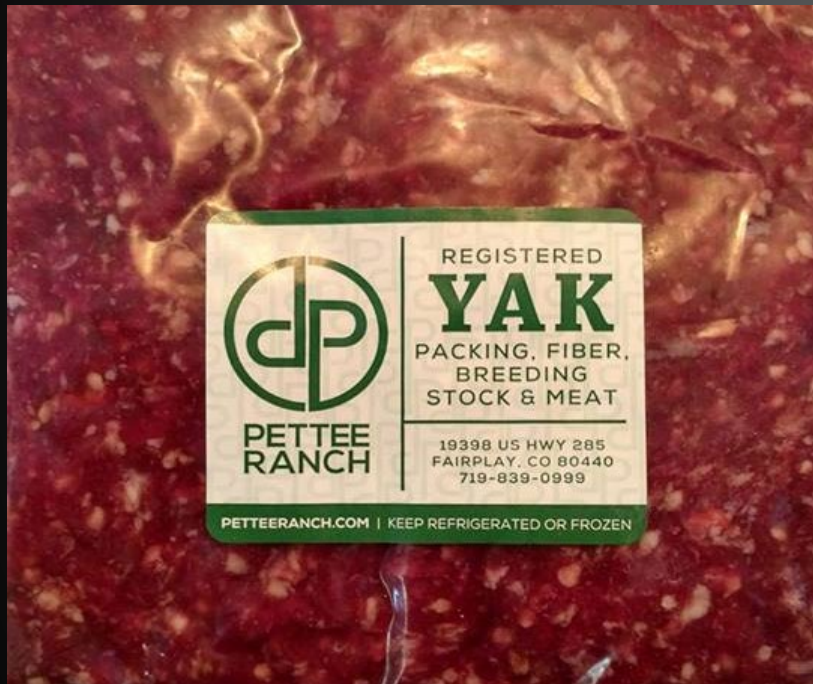
Voluntary Federal inspection for animals not covered under mandatory inspection (i.e., yak, buffalo, rabbit, reindeer, elk, deer, antelope) is handled under the Agricultural Marketing Act. This Act gives the Secretary of Agriculture the authority to take whatever steps are necessary to make the product marketable. The FSIS inspector must have knowledge about that particular species and the carcass must fit available equipment in the plant. Businesses that request voluntary inspection must pay an hourly fee for the service whereas mandatory inspection is funded by tax dollars.

For voluntary inspection, the mark of inspection (as referenced in 9 CFR 352.7–Marking Inspected Products) illustrates the mark to be the shape of a triangle for exotic species.



# USDA PROCESSING

# USDA LABELING



- To apply yourself for a label; use the FSIS link to go over guidelines and submitting for approval.

<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulatory-compliance/labeling>

- For outside party help, many of our IYAK members have received help from Steph Harmon at Label Compliance Solutions.

**Steph Harmon**

**USDA Label Compliance Specialist**

**Label Compliance Solutions**

**Phone 303-910-6886**

[steph@labelcompliancesolutions.com](mailto:steph@labelcompliancesolutions.com)

[www.labelcompliancesolutions.com](http://www.labelcompliancesolutions.com)

## MARKETING: FINISHING

Decisions on how to feed out your animals is based solely on your consumer preference. Certain areas of the country prefer their meat come from grass fed (Not to be confused with grass finished). While others prefer the taste of grain or alfalfa finished. If animals are finished on alfalfa, they can be considered "100% grass fed".

When feeding out, animals are usually given grain during the last 90 to 120 days before slaughter. The fat of grass fed animals is yellow, because it contains beta-carotene. However, most consumers prefer the fat to be white as yellow fat tends to have a bitter taste. Yak can also be fed out on alfalfa instead of grain that will give the fat more of a grain fed profile.

# MARKETING: LABELING (YOU MUST APPLY TO THE USDA TO USE THESE CLAIMS ON YOUR LABEL)



**Natural:** A product containing no artificial ingredient or added color and is only minimally processed. Minimal processing means that the product was processed in a manner that does not fundamentally alter the product. The label must include a statement explaining the meaning of the term natural (such as “no artificial ingredients; minimally processed”).



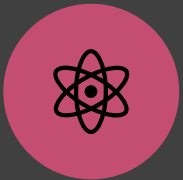
**No Hormones:** The term “no hormones administered” may be approved for use on the label of beef products if sufficient documentation is provided to the Agency by the producer showing no hormones have been used in raising the animals.



When animals have less than 100-percent access to grass or forage the partial “grass fed” claim must accurately reflect the circumstances of raising, e.g., “Made from cows fed 85% grass and 15% corn.”



**Grassfed:** “Grass Fed” or “100% Grass Fed” claims may only be applied to meat and meat product labels derived from cattle that were only (100%) fed grass (forage) after being weaned from their mother’s milk. The diet must be derived solely from forage, and animals cannot be fed grain or grain by-products and must have continuous access to pasture during the growing season until slaughter. This means 100% grass-fed animals are never confined to a feedlot. Forage consists of grass (annual and perennial), forbs (e.g., legumes, Brassica), browse, or cereal grain crops in the vegetative (pre-grain) state. Hay, haylage, baleage, silage, crop residue without grain, and other roughage sources may also be included as acceptable feed sources.



**Organic:** For information about the National Organic Program and use of the term “organic” on labels, refer to these factsheets from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service: • Organic Food Standards and Labels: The Facts • Labeling and Marketing Information



**No Antibiotics:** The terms “no antibiotics added” may be used on labels for meat or poultry products if sufficient documentation is provided by the producer to the Agency demonstrating that the animals were raised without antibiotics.



**Grass Finished:** The claim “Grass Finished” is not the same as “Grass Fed” because animals that are “grass finished” can be fed grain, in which case the claim “Grain Fed, Grass Finished” would be truthful and not misleading.

# MARKETING: HOW IS YAK DIFFERENT FROM OTHER MEAT?

- Yak is a deep red color before cooking because there is little to no marbling (white flecks of fat within the meat muscle). Yak is said to have a sweet, rich flavor even more so than bison.

Christina A. Mireles DeWitt  
Associate Professor, Food Science  
Oregon State University

**Table depicting lipid, cholesterol and iron values of different muscle food products.**

|             | Yak ribeye | Beef ribeye (choice) | Pork Center rib | Bison ribeye | Poultry Breast | Turkey Breast | Skipjack Tuna | Farmed Salmon |
|-------------|------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Fat         | 2 (3%)     | 9 (16%)              | 7 (12%)         | 2.5 (5%)     | 3 (5%)         | 1 (2%)        | 1 (2%)        | 15 (25%)      |
| Saturated*  | 44%        | 46%                  | 38%             | 43%          | 32%            | 29%           | 39%           | 28%           |
| Monounsat*  | 37%        | 50%                  | 50%             | 48%          | 44%            | 43%           | 23%           | 35%           |
| Polyunsat*  | 9%         | 3%                   | 12%             | 9%           | 23%            | 27%           | 38%           | 36%           |
| Omega 6**   | 6%         | 3%                   | 11%             | 9%           | 22%            | 25%           | 5%            | 10%           |
| Omega 3**   | 3%         | <0.1%                | 0.5%            | 0.3%         | 1%             | 2%            | 33%           | 25%           |
| Cholesterol | 50 (17%)   | 65 (22%)             | 60 (21%)        | 70 (23%)     | 70 (24%)       | 50 (16%)      | 55 (18%)      | 60 (21%)      |
| Iron        | 2.5 (15%)  | 2.5 (15%)            | 0.9 (6%)        | 3.2 (15%)    | 0.4 (2%)       | 1.6 (10%)     | 1.4 (8%)      | 0.4 (2%)      |

Values for Fat, Cholesterol and Iron are reported based on one serving (113 g) across all products. The value is rounded according to nutritional labeling rules. The values in parenthesis represent the % Daily Value (%DV). Percent daily values were calculated from raw data, not from rounded data.

\*Values represent the percent of total fat. For example of the 2 grams of fat found in one serving of Yak ribeye, 0.88 g are saturated fats ( $2 \times 0.44 = .88$ )

\*\*Values demonstrate the percent of the total fat that is omega 6 or omega 3 type fat. Omega 6 and 3 are the polyunsaturated fats. Values when combined should be close to the polyunsaturated contribution to total fat.



# MARKETING: YAK NUTRITIONAL LABELS

**Silliker Canada Co**

90 Gough Road  
Markham, Ontario  
Canada L3R 5V5

TEL: (905) 479-5255  
FAX: (905) 479-4645  
Email: Markham.CustomerCare@Silliker.com

## Ribeye Yak

### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 4 oz (113 g)  
Servings Per Container to be specified

| Amount Per Serving        |               | Calories from Fat 15 |      |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------------------|------|
|                           |               | %Daily Value*        |      |
| <b>Calories</b>           | 120           |                      |      |
| <b>Total Fat</b>          | 2 g           |                      | 3 %  |
| Saturated Fat             | 1 g           |                      | 5 %  |
| Trans Fat                 | 0 g           |                      |      |
| <b>Cholesterol</b>        | 50 mg         |                      | 17 % |
| <b>Sodium</b>             | 85 mg         |                      | 4 %  |
| <b>Total Carbohydrate</b> | less than 1 g |                      | 0 %  |
| Dietary Fiber             | 0 g           |                      | 0 %  |
| Sugars                    | 0 g           |                      |      |
| <b>Protein</b>            | 25 g          |                      |      |
| Vitamin A                 | 0 %           | Vitamin C            | 0 %  |
| Calcium                   | 2 %           | Iron                 | 15 % |

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your Calorie needs.

|                    | Calories: | 2,000   | 2,500   |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|---------|
| Total Fat          | Less than | 65g     | 80g     |
| Sat Fat            | Less than | 20g     | 25g     |
| Cholesterol        | Less than | 300mg   | 300mg   |
| Sodium             | Less than | 2,400mg | 2,400mg |
| Total Carbohydrate |           | 300g    | 375g    |
| Dietary Fiber      |           | 25g     | 30g     |

Dietary Fiber, Sugars, Vitamin A and Vitamin C were not tested and assumed to be zero.

### U.S.A. NUTRITION LABEL

Serving size was provided by the client.  
Servings per Container was not provided by the client, it is mandatory for US label.  
The household measure corresponding to 113 g should be declared in the Serving Size information; for example if the steak is pre-cut the serving size should indicate "1 piece (113 g)" or as the case may be.

Cross Reference: COA-CHG-33908146-0  
Sample ID: 322553624

**Silliker Canada Co**

90 Gough Road  
Markham, Ontario  
Canada L3R 5V5

TEL: (905) 479-5255  
FAX: (905) 479-4645  
Email: Markham.CustomerCare@Silliker.com

## Round Steak Yak

### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 4 oz (113 g)  
Servings Per Container to be specified

| Amount Per Serving        |               | Calories from Fat 15 |      |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------------------|------|
|                           |               | %Daily Value*        |      |
| <b>Calories</b>           | 120           |                      |      |
| <b>Total Fat</b>          | 1.5 g         |                      | 2 %  |
| Saturated Fat             | 0.5 g         |                      | 2 %  |
| Trans Fat                 | 0 g           |                      |      |
| <b>Cholesterol</b>        | 60 mg         |                      | 20 % |
| <b>Sodium</b>             | 55 mg         |                      | 2 %  |
| <b>Total Carbohydrate</b> | less than 1 g |                      | 0 %  |
| Dietary Fiber             | 0 g           |                      | 0 %  |
| Sugars                    | 0 g           |                      |      |
| <b>Protein</b>            | 26 g          |                      |      |
| Vitamin A                 | 0 %           | Vitamin C            | 0 %  |
| Calcium                   | 0 %           | Iron                 | 20 % |

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your Calorie needs.

|                    | Calories: | 2,000   | 2,500   |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|---------|
| Total Fat          | Less than | 65g     | 80g     |
| Sat Fat            | Less than | 20g     | 25g     |
| Cholesterol        | Less than | 300mg   | 300mg   |
| Sodium             | Less than | 2,400mg | 2,400mg |
| Total Carbohydrate |           | 300g    | 375g    |
| Dietary Fiber      |           | 25g     | 30g     |

Dietary Fiber, Sugars, Vitamin A and Vitamin C were not tested and assumed to be zero.

### U.S.A. NUTRITION LABEL

Serving size was provided by the client.  
Servings per Container was not provided by the client, it is mandatory for US label.  
The household measure corresponding to 113 g should be declared in the Serving Size information; for example if the steak is pre-cut the serving size should indicate "1 piece (113 g)" or as the case may be.

Cross Reference: COA-CHG-33908145-0  
Sample ID: 322553577

**Silliker Canada Co**

90 Gough Road  
Markham, Ontario  
Canada L3R 5V5

TEL: (905) 479-5255  
FAX: (905) 479-4645  
Email: Markham.CustomerCare@Silliker.com

## Ground Yak

### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 4 oz (113 g)  
Servings Per Container to be specified

| Amount Per Serving        |        | Calories from Fat 70 |      |
|---------------------------|--------|----------------------|------|
|                           |        | %Daily Value*        |      |
| <b>Calories</b>           | 170    |                      |      |
| <b>Total Fat</b>          | 8 g    |                      | 12 % |
| Saturated Fat             | 3.5 g  |                      | 18 % |
| Trans Fat                 | 0 g    |                      |      |
| <b>Cholesterol</b>        | 60 mg  |                      | 20 % |
| <b>Sodium</b>             | 100 mg |                      | 4 %  |
| <b>Total Carbohydrate</b> | 0 g    |                      | 0 %  |
| Dietary Fiber             | 0 g    |                      | 0 %  |
| Sugars                    | 0 g    |                      |      |
| <b>Protein</b>            | 23 g   |                      |      |
| Vitamin A                 | 0 %    | Vitamin C            | 0 %  |
| Calcium                   | 0 %    | Iron                 | 15 % |

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your Calorie needs.

|                    | Calories: | 2,000   | 2,500   |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|---------|
| Total Fat          | Less than | 65g     | 80g     |
| Sat Fat            | Less than | 20g     | 25g     |
| Cholesterol        | Less than | 300mg   | 300mg   |
| Sodium             | Less than | 2,400mg | 2,400mg |
| Total Carbohydrate |           | 300g    | 375g    |
| Dietary Fiber      |           | 25g     | 30g     |

Dietary fiber, sugars, vitamin A and vitamin C were not tested and assumed to be zero.

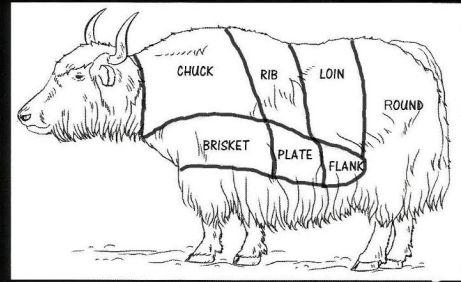
### U.S.A. NUTRITION LABEL

Serving size was provided by the client. Client must ensure serving size is consistent with the RACC for this product category. The equivalent household measure corresponding to the declared serving weight must be indicated in the Serving Size information.  
Servings per Container was not provided by the client, it is mandatory for US label.

Cross Reference: COA-CHG-33923887-0  
Sample ID: 322553508

# MARKETING: CUTS OF MEAT

# Yak Meat Cuts



## Chuck

|   |                                |   |                                      |                                       |
|---|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Flat Iron</b><br>                      | <b>Top Blade Steak</b><br>     | <b>Chuck Roast</b><br>                        | <b>Chuck Arm Roast</b><br>           | <b>Mock Tender Steak</b><br>          |
| <b>Mock Tender Roast</b><br>              | <b>Shoulder Clod Roast</b><br> | <b>Shoulder Center Steak, Ranch Steak</b><br> | <b>Petite Chuck Tender Roast</b><br> | <b>Shoulder Tender Medallions</b><br> |
| <b>Cross Rib Roast, English Roast</b><br> | <b>Sierra Cut</b><br>          | <b>Denver Cut, Underblade steak</b><br>       | <b>Country-style Chuck Ribs</b><br>  | <b>Chuck Short Ribs</b><br>           |
| <b>Chuck Eye Steak</b><br>                | <b>Chuck Eye Roast</b><br>     |   |                                      |                                       |

## Round

|                                     |                                     |                                      |                                       |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Rump Roast</b><br>               | <b>Top Round London Broil</b><br>   | <b>Top Round Roast</b><br>           | <b>Round Petite Tender Steaks</b><br> |
| <b>Top Round Steak</b><br>          | <b>Bottom Round Steak</b><br>       | <b>Bottom Round London Broil</b><br> |                                       |
| <b>Bottom Round Roast</b><br>       | <b>Eye of Round Roast</b><br>       | <b>Eye of Round Steak</b><br>        | <b>Sirloin Tip Roast</b><br>          |
| <b>Sirloin Tip Center Roast</b><br> | <b>Sirloin Tip Center Steak</b><br> | <b>Sirloin Tip Side Steak</b><br>    | <b>Butterfly Top Round Steak</b><br>  |

## Rib

|                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Ribeye Steak, Delmonico</b><br> | <b>Prime Rib, Ribeye Roast</b><br> |
| <b>Filet of Rib</b><br>            | <b>Rib Satay</b><br>               |
| <b>Ribeye Roast</b><br>            | <b>Cowboy Steak</b><br>            |
| <b>Rib Steak</b><br>               | <b>Short Ribs</b><br>              |
| <b>Back Ribs</b><br>               | <b>Chef Cut Ribeye</b><br>         |

- KEY**
- Grill
  - Marinate & Grill
  - Braise
  - Sauté
  - Roast
  - Cooking time under 30 minutes

## Brisket & Shank

|                         |                         |                          |                            |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Beef Brisket</b><br> | <b>Brisket Flat</b><br> | <b>Brisket Point</b><br> | <b>Shank Cross Cut</b><br> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|

## Short Plate

|                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Short Ribs</b><br> | <b>Skirt Steak</b><br> |
|-----------------------|------------------------|

## Flank

|                        |                 |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Flank Steak</b><br> | <b>Flap</b><br> |
|------------------------|-----------------|

## Short Loin

|   |  |                              |
|---|--|------------------------------|
| <b>Bone-in Strip Steak, Shell Steak</b><br> | <b>Strip Steak</b><br>                   | <b>Filet of Strip</b><br>    |
| <b>Strip Roast</b><br>                      | <b>Tenderloin Roast</b><br>              | <b>Porterhouse Steak</b><br> |
| <b>T-bone Steak</b><br>                     | <b>Filet Mignon Tenderloin Steak</b><br> |                              |
| <b>Hanger Steak, Hanging Tender</b><br>     |  |                              |

## Sirloin

|                                     |                             |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Center Cut Sirloin Steak</b><br> | <b>Sirloin Steak</b><br>    |
| <b>Coulotte Steak</b><br>           | <b>Filet of Sirloin</b><br> |
| <b>Tri-tip Steak</b><br>            | <b>Tri-tip Roast</b><br>    |
| <b>Ball Tip Steak</b><br>           | <b>Ball Tip Roast</b><br>   |
| <b>Bottom Sirloin Flap Meat</b><br> |                             |

## Other

|                        |                       |                 |                     |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| <b>Cubed Steak</b><br> | <b>abob</b><br>       | <b>Stew</b><br> | <b>Stir-fry</b><br> |
| <b>Fajita</b><br>      | <b>Ground Yak</b><br> |                 |                     |

Courtesy of  
**Bow Creek Ranch LLC Lenora KS**

**Pettee Ranch LLC Fairplay CO**

# MARKETING: SAFE HANDLING & STORAGE TIME

## Storage Time

- Ground or cut-up yak meat will keep its best quality in the freezer for 4 months. Larger cuts, such as chops, steaks, legs, or loins will keep their best quality 6 to 9 within 3 to 4 days.
- Recommended that regular chub packs be used within a year, while vacuum sealed is good for three years.

## Safe Handling

- Thawed yak should be immediately refrigerated it at 40 °F or below; use within 3 to 5 days, or freeze at 0 °F or below.
- Follow instructions on the package

## Thawing Frozen Yak Meat

- There are two ways to thaw yak meat: in the refrigerator or in cold water, never thaw in the microwave it will ruin the flavor. Never thaw on the counter or in other locations. It's best to plan for slow, safe thawing in the refrigerator. To thaw in cold water, do not remove packaging. Be sure the package is airtight or put it into a leakproof bag. Submerge the package in cold water, changing the water every 30 minutes so it continues to thaw.
- Foods defrosted by the cold water method should be cooked before refreezing because they may potentially have been held at temperatures above 40 °F allowing harmful bacteria to grow.

# MARKETING: PREPARING YAK

## Preparing Yak

Yak is very lean and generally lacks fat marbling, so care should be taken to not overcook it.

- In general, yak should be cooked using low heat (325 °F) and longer cooking times.
- Braising or other moist cooking methods are recommended for yak roasts and steaks.
- For thin-sliced yak, use quick cooking methods such as broiling and pan frying.
- Cook raw ground yak to an internal temperature of 160 °F as measured with a food thermometer.
- Cook all raw yak steaks and roasts to a minimum internal temperature of 145 °F as measured with a food thermometer before removing meat from the heat source. For safety and quality, allow meat to rest for at least three minutes before carving or consuming. For reasons of personal preference, consumers may choose to cook meat to higher temperatures.
- Less tender cuts should be braised (roasted or simmered with a small amount of liquid in a tightly covered pan) or stewed.



# MARKETING: ADVERTISING



THANK YOU!

VISIT

[HTTPS://WWW.IYAK.ORG/MEAT](https://www.iyak.org/meat)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Daniele Garner; Pettee Ranch LLC  
[www.petteeranch.com](http://www.petteeranch.com)