

PFLA Direct Sales Tool Kit



Wester Logie Farm - Fife Dexters



Ardross Farm
Source: Our Isles

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2. Introduction

Selling direct to customers is about more than adding value and financial return, it is about the relationships you build with your customers, the satisfaction of producing real, nourishing food, and the resilience you bring to your business from building your own market.

You have the opportunity to be a price maker, giving yourself more autonomy and control over the process, to honour your land and livestock by delivering exceptionally good food to your customers. These rewards create a happy fulfilling lifestyle which is good for your wellbeing (as long as you don't give yourself too much to do!).

“Be clear about what you want from your direct selling enterprise - your objectives, why you are doing it and what you want to sell. Look after your customers well and treat everyone like a potential customer. Be open and transparent.” - Denise Walton, Peelham



Denise and her family at Peelham Farm

Source: [The List](#)

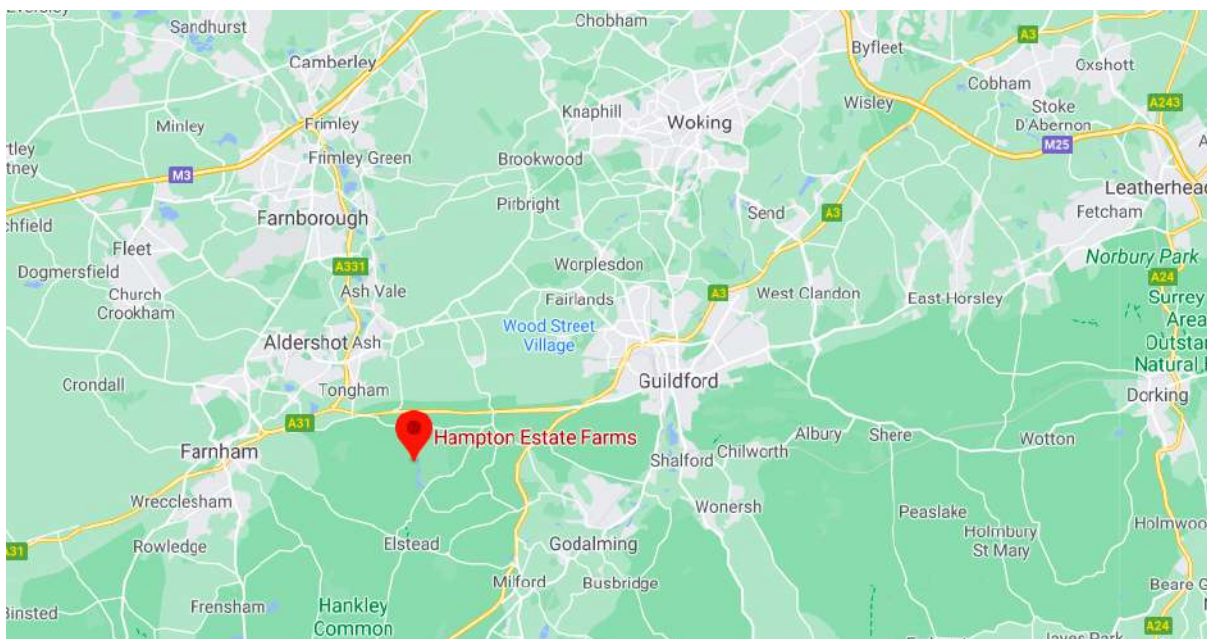
3. Consider all these things before you get going

3.1. Your location

Where are the nearest cities, towns, villages and roads? Do you have a good base of local customers to tap into? Where do they live? How will they get to your farm to pick up? How good is your location for direct selling? Is your location more suited to local delivery or couriers? Are you aiming at a national market?

These are all important questions to ask yourself as you start. Your location may inform your strategy, for example if access to the farm is good, a collection model is a cheap, easy way for customers to get their products, as well as allowing them to see the farm and meet the farmer. However, if access to the farm is challenging, or your area is sparsely populated, local or national delivery might be a better option. It is necessary to account for time and costs spent on delivery; couriers can be expensive if you don't negotiate a good deal.

"Hampton Estate is near several major roads and motorways, we knew that it would be easy for people to get to us and there is a thriving local community. We were already a people-facing estate and happy for people to come here!" - Bill Biddell, Hampton Estate



Hampton Estate is close to A31, A331, A3, M3 and M25

Source: Google Maps

3.2. Your time

How much time do you have? When do you want to be working? Think about the different ways you can sell and choose the one which is right for you.

Managing relationships (abattoirs/ butchers/ processors/ suppliers): Don't underestimate time spent on the phone/ email and building relationships.

Collections and deliveries: Hours often condensed over a few days. A day spent preparing produce, a day spent handing orders over at the farm or delivering them. Minimum 20 hours.

Marketing: Ongoing, can be split across weeks and months. Around 12 hours a month or more for social media and emails.

Customer service: Often reactive, sometimes daily work. Between 30 minutes to 1 hour or more in a working day to respond to customer queries (when you are in a selling cycle).

Farmers Markets: Hours often condensed over weekends. Preparing produce on a Friday, spending Saturday and/or Sunday transporting and selling in a local town or village. Minimum 20 hours for one market.

Honesty shops: Between 1-2 hours daily checking and restocking (depending on how busy it is).

Time of year: Moving meat and milk around in summer months is more risky from a health and safety perspective, plus sales generally dip during these months when people are away on holiday.

Calving/lambing cycles: The seasonality of your herds and flocks influences when you have products to sell.

"It can be tough but you've just got to get on with it - be patient because it can take a while to get things rolling smoothly but it will get easier." - Cathy Boyd, Whittington Lodge



Cathy Boyd of Cotswold Beef
Source: cotswoldbeef.com

3.3. Your investment

When starting a new direct selling enterprise there is a minimum amount of time and money you need to invest to get it off the ground. These costs can be prohibitive, so it is important to have a clear overview of what they are from the word go, and how much you want to invest at the start (how much you are prepared to write off).

Go at your own pace and structure your setup in a way that fits in with your life. Starting your business doesn't have to be onerous. This is an investment in your lifestyle as well as your business, so minimise stress as much as possible.

Meat: At the very least you need to spend time finding your first customers, and pay to have your animal slaughtered, butchered and packaged. At the most you can invest in your own butchery, a refrigerated van and so on. Pre-selling meat before it is ready is a good way to support your cash flow.

Dairy: If you bottle at home, at the least you need a pasteurizer (if you don't sell raw milk) and designated area to bottle milk. For processed products, at the least find a friend who has a processing unit and rent it from them, so you can learn about the equipment first, and invest later. Start small and learn about your market. If you bottle more milk than you can sell it is lost income and it would have been better going onto a tanker.

Return on investment: Financial planning such as creating a Profit and Loss and projected Cash Flow will help you understand your business. If you keep your setup costs low, your cash flow will be better, whereas if you need to invest a lot, your cash flow will be more tricky. If you have savings to invest you will make a profit more quickly, if you need to borrow money to invest it will take longer. Make sure that your business has the potential to be profitable, otherwise you will not be able to pay off that initial investment. **If you can take a lean approach and keep initial investment low, you will make your money back faster, and open the door for reinvesting and scaling up.**

Equipment: There is essential equipment you need to get started. Don't underestimate how much space a carcass or processed dairy products such as ice cream can take up. **At the minimum you will need one chest freezer and a large standing fridge.** Always check out what you can get second hand; it is a good way to save a few pennies. It is worth looking into getting a walk-in fridge, particularly if you are dealing with beef. It is helpful for packing orders as well as storing produce.

ESSENTIAL	EXTRA
Large refrigerator or walk in chiller (meat and dairy)	Tow vehicle
Chest freezer (meat and dairy)	Livestock trailer
Scales (meat)	Fridge trailer/ van
Label printer (meat)	Vacuum packer

	Mincer
	Burger press
	Scales with in built label printer
	Pasteurizer
	Bottle washer
	Bottling machine

Infrastructure: At the minimum you'll need a clean and clear area to pack your orders or space for a walk-in fridge. Think about where your customers will come to collect - do you have a suitable barn or a gazebo you can have outside?

ESSENTIAL	EXTRA
Packing area	Certified kitchen
Space for fridge/freezer	
Collection area	

3.4. Dealbreakers

Even with the lowest level of investment these are the elements you cannot start a new direct selling operation without:

Meat	
Packing area	Clean and dry space to pack/ sort meat
Fridge	Standing fridge to store orders which are not picked up same day
Freezer	Chest freezer to store meat not sold same day
Scales	Weigh cuts and write weights on labels
Marketing	Write up of products shared in emails/ flyers/ website
Collection/ Delivery	Host collection at the farm in all weathers OR organise local delivery/ courier

Dairy	
Fridge	Standing fridge to store milk or processed products
Freezer	Chest freezer to store milk or processed products
Packaging	Bottles for liquid milk, packaging for processed products
Marketing	Write up of products shared in emails/ flyers/ website
Collection/ Delivery	Sell at the farm gate (honesty shop, shop, vending machine) and/or local delivery/ milk round

4. Three approaches to direct selling

If you've never tried direct selling before and would prefer to start with a lower cost and time investment we recommend you test your market with a simple setup.

As you start to find out who your customers are and grow orders, you can reinvest your profits and take your set up to the next level. It helps to know your costs inside out.

Choose the setup which you feel most comfortable with, and when you have a sense of the cost and time investment you can assess how well the enterprise works for you.

"Keep a record of how much time you invest. It will help you to understand the true costs." - Will Howard Davis

1- Testing the water: Low cost/time investment

The lean and simple approach. Test your market with a 'minimum viable product'. Consider what the maximum cost is that you can spend and write off; and try to make this back with your plan.

- Set up a simple **information website**, share product descriptions and prices, and a simple order form customers can fill in and submit which pushes order details into a spreadsheet OR set up a simple **e-commerce website**, write descriptions of your products, price them, add photos and take payments in advance.
- Email your website to your local friends, family and community, and ask them to forward on.
- Set up a social media channel you feel comfortable with.
- Ask your customers to come to the farm to pick up and pay by bacs or cash.
- If you don't sell everything, consider any local chefs/ restaurants/ other outlets you can sell to, and make sure you have enough freezer space in case you can't sell it.
- Collect feedback from your customers, get a feel for who they are, why they buy, what they want to see.

Meat: Minimum viable product is a box of meat. Boxes make it easier to sell the whole carcass, carrying less risk. Find an abattoir which can take care of the slaughter, butchery and packaging for you. Use a haulier to take your animals there - make sure it is within 2 hours so you can safely pick up the meat yourself in your car. If this goes well, look at the next level of cost/time investment.

Dairy: Minimum viable product is bottled liquid milk OR one type of cheese OR one type of yoghurt OR one type of butter OR one flavour of ice cream. Trying one product to start with allows you to test the market, get customer feedback, and adapt based on what our customers want. Find a local processing plant you can rent to make your product. Ice cream is a good product to start with as it has a 12 month shelf life. If you are bottling, can you borrow or hire a pasteurizer before you invest in one? You can bottle milk with a jug, there is no need to have a machine.

2 - Growing your orders: Medium cost/time investment

When you have a better idea of your market, who wants to buy your produce and how they engage with you, think about scaling up your marketing and logistics. Take time to photograph your individual products and upgrade your website. Set yourself up with an email marketing software like mailchimp so you can prepare nice emails to send to your potential customers. Scale up your social media activity - use it as a shop front. Offer card payments when customers come to pick up from the farm.

Meat: Adaptations to processing - do you need to create your own labels or change your cutting list based on customer feedback? If you are looking to change up your butchery then research what other options you have and consider how the meat will be transported there and back to you.

Dairy: What feedback have you had? Do you want to invest in branded milk bottles, or cheese labels, or a customer loyalty system? What other processed products can you make? Try working with a local cheese maker, or expand from ice cream into liquid milk.

3 - Scaling up: High cost/time investment

When you have a good idea about your time and cost investment and the viability of your direct selling enterprise, consider investing in longer term infrastructure. Take time to build and update your website with juicy information. Add an area for people to sign up to your mailing list on the website and connect the form with your email marketing software so the signups automatically join your mailing list. Send regular email newsletters sharing about your products, recipes and special offers. Put more time into social media, really use it to tell your story. Partner up with other businesses to sell your products and theirs.

Meat: If you would prefer to butcher at home now is the time to look at these costs; the equipment is expensive and there is time involved in getting your kitchen set up and certified. Think about whether you want to offer delivery and what refrigerated transport you might need. Invest in resources you need if you want to scale up your supply: more fridges, freezers, space, staff etc.

Dairy: Do you want to invest in your own equipment, based on what you have learnt from hiring and borrowing. A pasteurizer is a good place to start, perhaps a vending machine.



Andy Rumming in his home butchery
Source: [Andy Rumming's Beef website](#)

MEAT			
Approach	Testing the Water	Growing orders	Scaling up
Investment	Low	Medium	High
Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic equipment - Haulage - Slaughter - Butchery - Website / payments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New equipment - Packaging - Labels - Marketing - Event costs - Deliveries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New equipment - Staff salaries - Vehicles - Advertising
Time / people	- Easy to do yourself		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hire butcher - Hire processors
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Packing area - Collection area 		- Certified kitchen
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fridge - Freezer - Scales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Label maker - Walk in fridge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fridge van - Home butchery equipment - Home processing equipment

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Livestock trailer - Tow vehicle
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic website with prepayments / order form - Build email list starting with friends and family - Set up a social media channel - Collect feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good product photographs - Set up email marketing software and send newsletters - Increase social media presence - Farm events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing and social media campaigns - Regular email newsletters - Build partnerships with interesting food & farming businesses and chefs - Develop and share recipes
Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find a local abattoir which will slaughter, butcher, package and label - Use a haulier to transport livestock - Collect meat in your car 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adapt cutting list based on customer feedback - Create own labels - Switch butcher to non-abattoir one if necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Home butchery - Develop new products - Pies, pasties, charcuterie - Switch abattoirs if necessary - Take livestock to abattoir yourself and pick up in fridge van
Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collect at farm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local deliveries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Couriers

DAIRY			
Approach	Testing the Water	Growing orders	Scaling up
Investment	Low	Medium	High
Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic equipment - Website - Online payments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New equipment - Marketing - Event costs - Deliveries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New equipment - Advertising - Vehicles - Staff salaries
Time / people			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hire processor
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certified kitchen - Packing area - Collection area / honesty shop 		
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fridge - Freezer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pasteurizer - Walk in fridge - Label maker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fridge van - Vending machine - Processing equipment

Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic website with prepayments - Build email list starting with friends and family - Set up a social media channel - Collect feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good product photographs - Send regular email newsletters (eg mailchimp) - Increase social media presence - Farm events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing and social media campaigns - Build partnerships with interesting food & farming businesses - Develop and share recipes
Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rent, hire or borrow processing equipment - Outsource processes (cheese/ yoghurt making) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bottling at home - Processing at home - Branded milk bottles - Create own labels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop new products (cheese/ butter etc)
Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collect at farm (honesty shop / fridge collection point) - Payment by cash / online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offer local deliveries - Offer card payments at farm collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offer courier service

4.1. Consistency

Think about the buying cycles of your customers, is it a product they need to buy every day, week or month? **Ideally you want customers to keep coming back; this is easier and cheaper than finding new customers.** Being consistent with your supply will ensure your customers get into the rhythm of buying from you again, again and again.

Dairy: If you sell milk, customers will want to buy at the most daily or weekly. Maintain supply to retain customers, but don't produce more than you can sell. Stay very connected with the demand.

Meat: Once you have sold your first carcass, and are thinking about doing the next one, set a consistent schedule of when you will send livestock to the abattoir. Bi-monthly is a good place to start, working towards monthly. Communicate this clearly to your customers and help them find a rhythm for when they will be re-stocking your meat. Always make sure you know when your next carcass will be ready, so if a customer doesn't want to buy this time you can take an order for the next time. Make sure you record what you get back from each carcass so you have a better idea of what you can presell on your next dates.

4.2. Diversity of outlets

Don't put all your eggs in one basket! It helps to have a diverse range of outlets which you sell to, as many as you can realistically manage. **When you are testing direct selling do this with one or two carcasses or a bit of milk from your tank but don't go the whole hog until you are sure it will work for you.** Keep selling your livestock/ meat/ milk as you were previously alongside direct selling. If one market goes down, you have the others to keep you going.

Farm shops, food halls, food hubs, farmers markets and food festivals could be an option. Do you have something like [Macknades](#) near you? This is another great way of reaching more people further afield who may then come to buy directly from you.

Restaurants are a good way to get your name out there. Negotiate with restaurants on what they will take and make it a good deal for you. Make sure the restaurant puts the name of your farm/ business on their menu or on the table so their customers hear about you and look you up. On the other hand, relationships with restaurants can be short lived as menus and requirements change, they will probably come and go, so don't put all your eggs in this basket.



Source: PFLA

Meat: When you're starting out you could sell to a restaurant at the price you would sell to a butcher plus your costs of getting it to them so the restaurant gets it cheaper in exchange for sharing about your farm. They might even be keen to butcher it too. If restaurants want a regular supply of meat make sure they will take a side of beef / whole lamb / a whole pig etc, rather than all the racks or all the sirloin, leaving you with the rest to sell. If you have a lot of one cut you haven't been able to sell, find a restaurant that will take it and put it on a special.

You could sell to butchers, but make sure you get a good price for your meat, especially if it is Pfl certified. Do not undervalue your produce, many butchers will want a decent mark up on your price and if it already has a Pfl or Organic premium this will lessen their mark up - do not let them drive

you down! You might need to find more forward thinking/ progressive butchers that value grass-fed instead of grain-fed. They might also be able to pick it up from the abattoir for you.



Bowhouse Butchery
Source: Our Isles

4.3. People you need to be best friends with

There are important stakeholders who you will need on board your direct selling enterprise. In particular your local **Environmental Health Officer** will help you meet the rules and regulations for handling and selling fresh and frozen produce.

Meat: Your **abattoir** is integral to the welfare of your livestock and quality of your product, make sure you have a great relationship, maybe take them a packet of biscuits every now and again!

Your **butcher** plays a huge part in creating your products, so make sure you have a very in depth chat with them to understand how they work and build a trusting relationship.



MacDuff, Wishaw, Scotland
Source: Our Isles

5. Your products

These are the considerations for creating your product range. Keep it simple at first and evolve your product offering based on customer feedback.

5.1. Meat

5.1.1. Hanging

Whether you hang a carcass and for how long depends on the customer and finish you want to achieve. Restaurants will prefer beef which is aged well, whereas butchers may prefer to hang the carcass themselves. Hanging is something customers will look for too. Find information on how long to hang a carcass in [5.1. Meat](#).



MacDuff, Wishaw, Scotland

Source: Our Isles

5.1.2. Fresh vs frozen

It's possible to do both, but selling fresh will help with your cash flow and minimise the risk of issues which happen when freezing; power cuts, spoilage and mishaps. The quicker it goes to your end customer the more likely you will retain value and quality. Chefs will most likely prefer to have meat fresh. However, there are setups where selling frozen works well, it depends on what your customers want, and when they want it.



Source: PFLA

5.1.3. Boxes vs individual cuts

The main **advantage of boxes** is you can make them up so that they include a bit of each part of the carcass, making it easier to shift the less popular cuts. If you pre sell all your boxes (or most of them) you can shift it all fresh, meaning you need less cold storage space and incur less risk of storing. These advantages make it easier and quicker to start direct selling and are included in the 'Testing the Water' approach.

The **disadvantage of boxes** is that it is difficult to set and price a specific weight for boxes; when your meat is butchered each cut will be a slightly different weight, so as you put your boxes together you will see that it is near impossible to get an exact weight for each box. One way to get around this would be to specify a weight range, for example a 8- 8.75kg box, for a set price. Alternatively you can adapt the price based on the weight, however this is problematic if you are pre selling your boxes.

Deciding what to put in boxes: When putting your boxes together, always price up each individual cut and make sure that it does not come to more than the total price of the box, this is particularly important if you have pre-sold boxes, make sure you do not lose any value, this is your profit margin. Swap cuts around to make sure that each box is at the value you have pre-sold it at. You may find your customers don't like making decisions, and are happy for you to decide what they get in their boxes. Think about your customers and what suits them; do they have a big freezer, how much do they want to buy in one go? If you are selling in bulk you need to find customers who find this appealing. They need to have decent freezer space and be happy to try out more unusual cuts.

"We do a small 1.75kg box which is really popular, and these customers come back and buy everytime." - Matt & Laura, Sandy Hill



Taster Beef Box

£75.00

Tax included.

Delivery Date Options

31st March FRESH

ADD TO CART

BUY IT NOW



This box is perfect for Couples.

Cotswold Beef Taster Box

[Source: cotswoldbeef.com](http://cotswoldbeef.com)

Fidelity Weston has found success with 'slow cook' and 'fast cook' boxes. If you find you have a lot of a particular cut think up a box product for that! It is definitely worth getting your offal back too.



Slow Cook Beef Box

£95.00

Tax included.

Delivery Date Options

31st March. FRESH

ADD TO CART

BUY IT NOW



This box is perfect for people who love to slow cook Beef

Cotswold Beef Slow Cook Beef Box

[Source: cotswoldbeef.com](http://cotswoldbeef.com)

"Our frozen offal boxes are really popular - I get people from all over the country contacting me about them!" - Cathy Boyd, Whittington Lodge Farm

If you decide to sell **individual cuts** it's important to find markets for the less popular cuts; you don't want to stockpile these in your freezer. Look for restaurants who want to do a slow cooked brisket burger special for example, or highlight these cuts in your newsletter and share a great recipe for them. It is likely people will come to you with specific orders, and it's great if you can be flexible enough to accommodate these, even if you have set boxes as well. You will need to adapt your cutting list for these orders - a good relationship with your butcher is essential.

"If a whole cow was made out of ribeye it would be easy to sell - the key thing is finding markets to shift the less popular cuts." - Silas Hedley-Lawrence, English Farm

When you're starting out, it is probably easiest to start with standard boxes, offer the option to do individual cuts, and evolve into the niche you find your customers want. Getting feedback from your customers is really important to understand what they really like and how you can best serve them. Don't be afraid to adapt!

Beef: Due to the volume of meat you get back from one carcass, beef lends itself well to a box system, it will help you balance the carcass and shift as much meat as possible. It is likely you will still have some individual cuts left over to sell.

Lamb: Selling a half or whole lamb boxes when you're starting out will make your life easier than selling individual cuts.

PFLA Forum Threads: [Meat Boxes](#), [Marketing own Beef via local shops](#),

5.2. Dairy

5.2.1. Bottling Liquid Milk

If you already milk cattle, and have a tank of raw milk, it makes sense to sell liquid milk. You can either sell pasteurized milk or raw milk. Think about whether you want to sell pints or litres, in glass or plastic bottles. You do not need to sell homogenised milk; [non-homogenised milk is as nature intended](#), plus a homogeniser is a commercial piece of kit and very expensive.



Source: PFLA

Pasteurized milk: You'll need a pasteurizer - this process kills off any harmful bacteria in the milk, reducing health and safety concerns. See [FSA Milk Producer Guidance](#) on milk hygiene and testing for antibiotic residues

Raw milk: There are more health and safety considerations for raw milk. Before you take the plunge, see if this is something your customers want. You need to create a Food Safety Management System based on [HACCP](#) for selling raw milk and will be inspected by a Dairy Hygiene Officer every 6 months. See [FSA Raw Milk Guidance](#) and get in touch with the [Raw Milk Association](#) for support (PFLA member Rebecca Mayhew is on the committee).



Old Hall Farm raw milk and butter
Source: Rebecca Mayhew

5.2.2. Processed products

Think about cream, butter, ice cream and cheese. All require different equipment and time investments. What makes sense for your business? Ice cream will have an extended shelf life and cheesemaking can be a long process so you may not get a quick return on investment. What expertise do you have? Can you partner up with a local chef to make these products you can sell? Is there a local chef who wants to use your products in their restaurant? Create something you can get behind, and that you like to eat too. If you make these products yourself you will need to get food safety qualifications like [HACCP](#).

"We went to cookery demos with a local chef, and they asked if we could make butter for them. We gave it a go and now we supply their restaurant with 5-7kg of butter a week." - Rebecca Mayhew, Old Hall Farm

5.3. Pricing

It is really necessary to have a handle on your costs before you price your products. What is your cost of production? This is your starting point for your price, then add a premium for organic/PfL and your profit. PfL produce is organic and should be sold at organic prices.

Do your research on the prices local farms, farm shops and supermarkets charge to get a ballpark for what your price range could be. Waitrose and bigger organic farms are a good place to start. If you are PfL or organic then look closely at these ranges.

You are producing a high quality product and it should be priced appropriately. Do not undervalue yourself! It is easier to lower your prices than to put them up, but if you have loyal and happy customers then putting them up won't be a problem. Direct selling is about adding value, so have a very clear idea of your production costs and take it into account when they change, so that you will make a return.

Meat: If you do boxes create a spreadsheet of all the individual prices of each cut as you will probably sell extras/ do special orders. Make sure that the cost of the cuts adds up to the value of the box, and not more. You can always rejiggle cuts around to make sure the value of each individual cut matches the total price you charge for it. Don't give people a discount because they are buying in bulk, they are getting the pick of the cuts before others buy the rest, so they are really getting the value. Make sure your boxes are affordable; if you only sell at £120 a pop you will alienate customers. This is why small boxes are good.

"Make sure you value your product, it is outstanding and niche, be brave about demanding the right price. Don't panic because you've got 200kg to sell and drop your price!" - Cathy Body, Cotswold Beef

Selling to butchers: As a PfL producer you can get a decent deadweight price when you sell to a butcher. Make sure you know what this price is, as when you sell at the farmgate you need to take a higher price to justify the marketing/ time/ operations costs you put in after butchery. For example if you can sell a beef carcass to a butcher for £1500, aim to sell it yourself from the farm at a price of £2000 to make a profit.

"Another thing I found was that if butchers are offering a decent price deadweight you need to charge more than you think to cover all your time etc" - Fidelity Weston, Romshed Farm

"The price of lamb varies a lot over the year so you need to decide if you are going to peg your prices to this movement or keep them the same throughout the year. Until this year I did the latter but prices are so high that I got more money by selling it to a butcher with no costs than I did last year selling it customers with all the costs so I am now pegging it to the Organic price and adding

on the butchery costs depending on how the customer wants it cut - that is based on the deadweight. I will get less in the autumn and summer and more in the spring.” - Fidelity Weston, Romshed Farm

Check out how Fidelity prices her meat cuts on [the Romshed Farm website](#).

PFLA Forum Threads: [Wholesale Beef Prices](#)

6. Marketing

Decide if you want to focus on a national or local market at first. When you're starting out a local market makes sense; look to your local community, in particular family, friends and neighbours who live close by and can spread the word.

Local people can more easily come to pick up from you, are more likely to keep coming back, and can share about you in your local area. Laura and Matt from Sandy Hill Mob got set up in 2018, they sold their first carcass to family and friends, and then word of mouth started to grow.

"You have got to raise your head above the parapet and do things to get noticed!" - Cathy Body, Cotswold Beef

Put yourself in the shoes of your customer: Below you will find a list of different marketing tactics; choose the approaches which are most straightforward for you, you can always scale up your efforts later on. Make sure you assess who your customers will be, put yourself in their shoes, where are they looking online? Do they read email newsletters or printed parish newsletters? Do they attend local events? Tailor your marketing strategy for them.

Tracking success: Think about how you can raise awareness and get the word out about your produce in a cheap/free/cost effective way. When you have tried different marketing tactics, assess their success; what is the return on time and cost invested in marketing? One thing to note is that while flyers might seem like an easy idea, it is tricky to track their success. With a website and social media, you will get better insights on how many people actually find you through these channels. Social media is like an online flyer. If you do have a very strong local community, flyering in villages could work well.

"An important part of selling is listening to people - the more in touch with your customers you are, the more they come back and the more they spend. That is the benefit of building personal relationships with your customers." - Cathy Boyd, Whittington Lodge Farm

6.1. Value propositions

It is really important to communicate **your story** and why you are selling directly to your customers. Share the journey you have been on. Try writing two or three paragraphs about your farm, the people involved, your livestock, why you are doing this; something that shows what you are committed to, which moves your customers and makes them feel good about engaging with you. This will help you with adding information to your emails/ website/ social media etc as well as when you chat to customers. **People will always remember how you make them feel, not necessarily what you say!**

Think about what value you provide for your customers and make sure you communicate this value clearly. What is special about your products?

Examples:

- Organic
- Pfl Certified
- Traceability
- Taste
- Quality
- High Welfare
- Local
- Independent
- Ethical
- Diversity of cuts
- Environmental Impact
- Health Benefits
- Product Range
- Waste reduction
- Doorstep Delivery
- Opportunities to come to the farm



“Be confident about your products! It helps if you can cook and eat as many of your cuts as possible so you feel confident about selling them and how good they taste.” - Andy Rumming

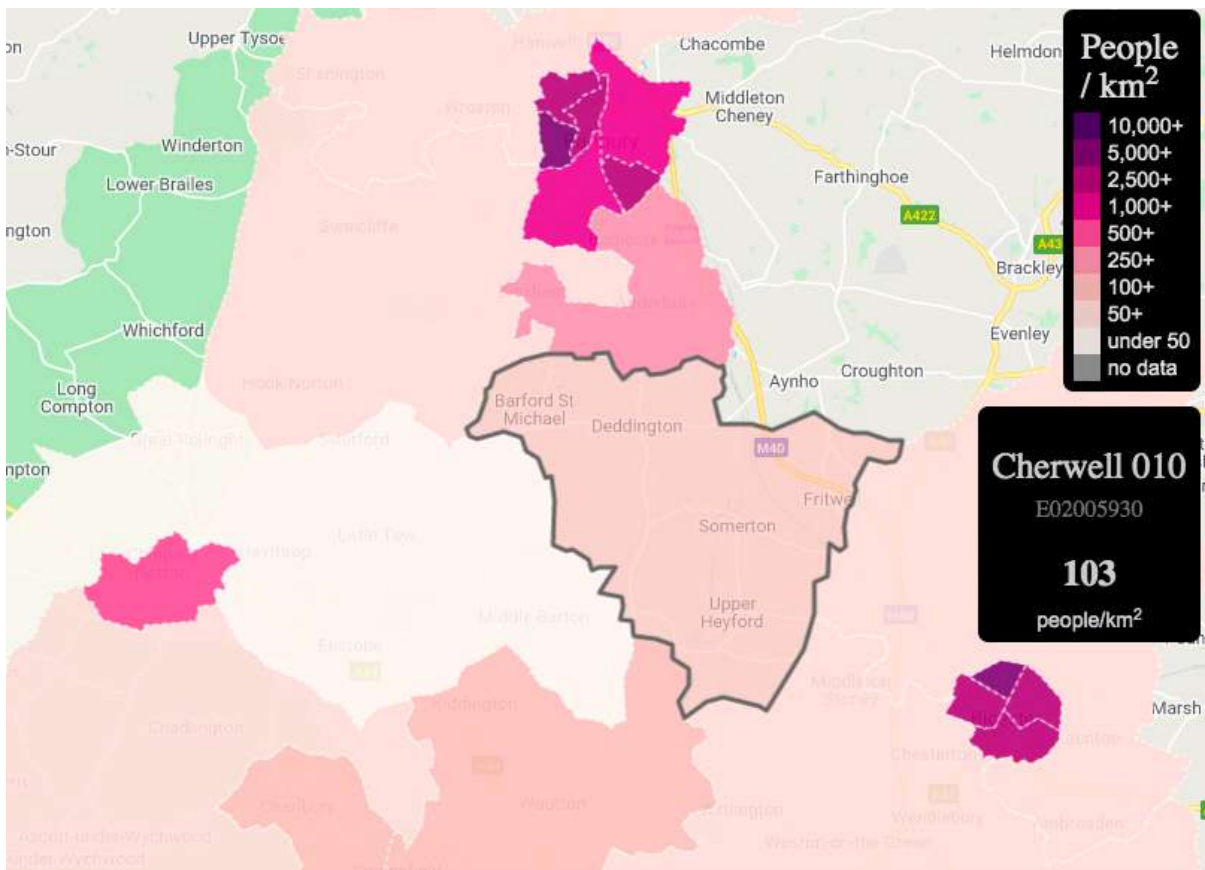


Andy Rumming's Beef Shin Stew
Source: [Andy Rumming's Beef website](#)

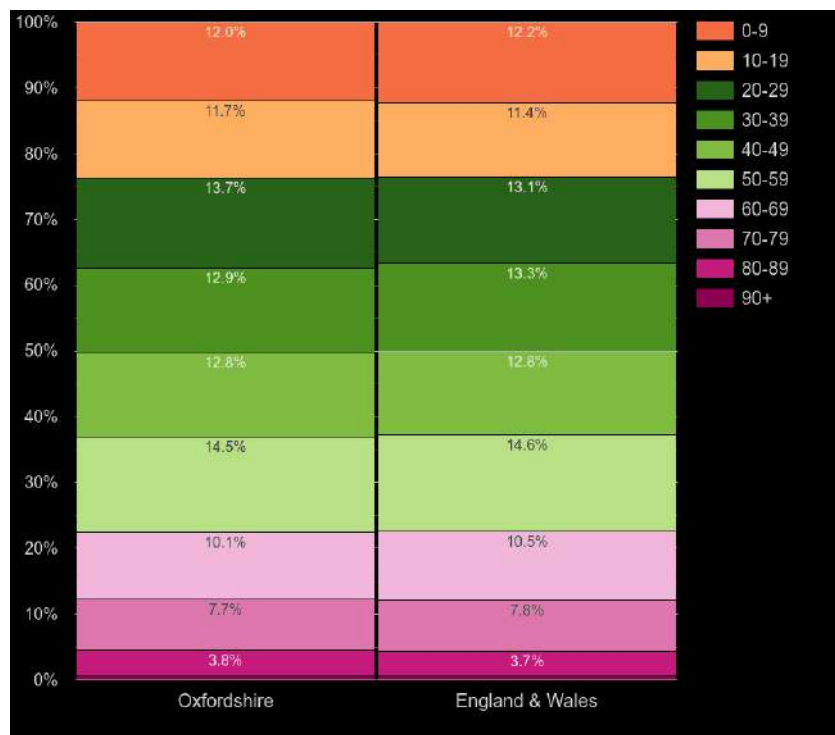
6.2. Market Research

Find your market: it is likely that the customers you find in Mid-Wales will be very different from Surrey. Figure out who you are selling to and think about how to reach them. Build your brand for them.

Do online research: check out your local population demographics (age/ income/ density), think about consumer trends and whether your customers are looking to support local / ethical choices/ be creative with cooking. Explore census data on [Plumplot](#).



Oxfordshire population density
Plumplot.co.uk



% share of age groups in population - Oxfordshire compared to England & Wales
Plumplot.co.uk

On the ground research: talk to people who may potentially be your customers, find out what meat they would buy and how. What are their questions about your business? What value are they looking for?

6.3. Branding

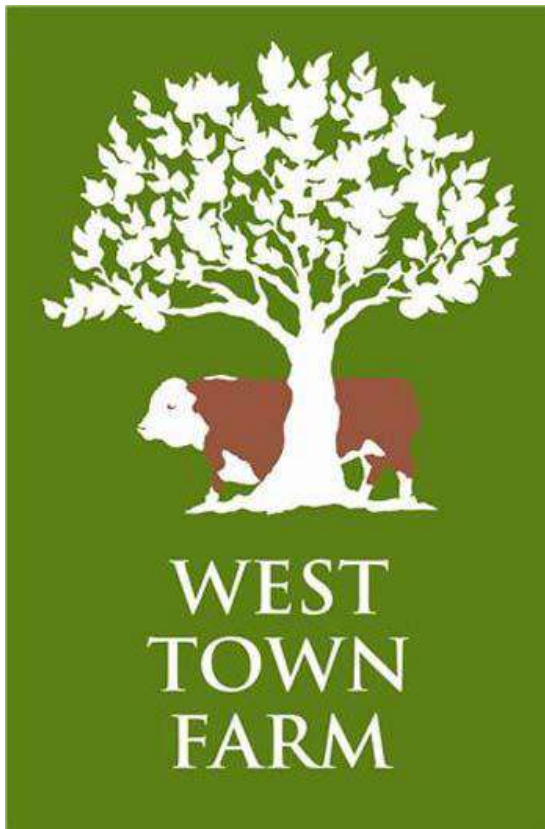
Decide on a name for your direct selling enterprise, create a logo and a strapline. These brand elements help your customers to recognise and connect with your brand. You can have them on your website, your labels, flyers and anything else you use to communicate about your farm and direct selling.

Are you able to create a simple design yourself or do you want to work with someone to do this?

Watch this [30 min talk with William Kendall at Groundswell 2019](#). He has done brilliant work branding New Covent Garden Soup, Green & Blacks Chocolate and Cawston Press drinks.



Logo credit: [Sandy Hill Mob](#)



*Conservation grazing
Improving biodiversity*



Andy Rummings's
BEEF



Cotswold Beef



6.4. Phone

The old school way to get started is by phoning your local community, and taking orders on the phone. This is doable at the start, but it is time consuming. At the least have a phone number people can reach you on if they have questions or a problem with their order.

6.5. Word of mouth

Word of mouth is one of the biggest drivers of sales, it is also free, so make great products and get people talking about them!

"Most people are buying into the farmer and farm and if you are passionate and your farm is a haven for wildlife it will sell itself." - Silas Hedley-Lawrence, English Farm



Silas Headley Lawrence, English Farm

Source: [Silas' Instagram](#)

6.6. Flyers and posters

If you aren't ready to invest in a website yet create a flyer to share. If you are comfortable designing something yourself, keep it simple and include key details: farm name, what you are selling, a bit about your story, a nice photo and contact details. It seems that there is varied success with flyers; sometimes they work well and other times they don't work at all, so if you are not keen to try designing something then a website would be a better use of your time.

6.7. Local marketing

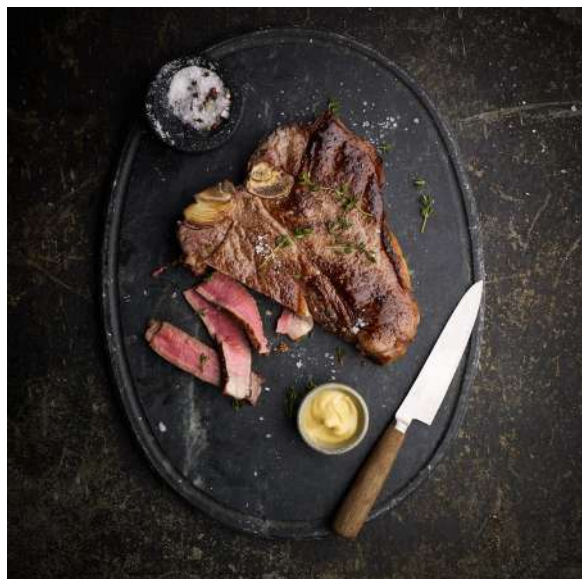
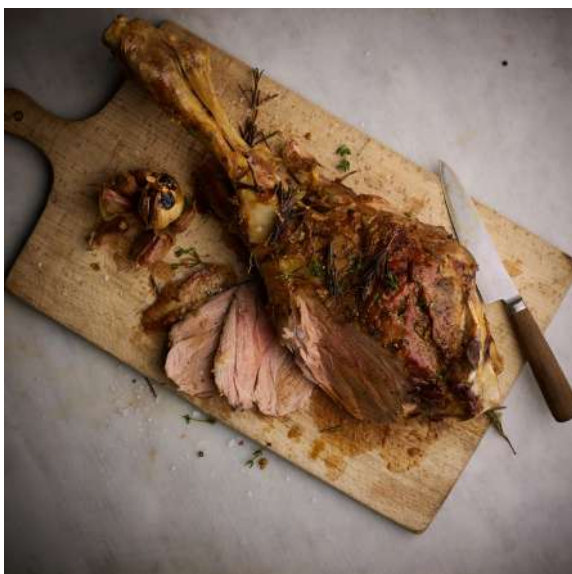
Create the environment for word of mouth to spread! A good place to start is door to door leafleting, as well as sticking them up on telegraph poles and notice boards in your surrounding area. Graham from Hayes Meadow calls this the 'parish pump'. Use your flyer design to create an ad which can go in parish newsletters in local villages, these are often well read and a good way to reach the community. Search for local groups who might want to buy your meat; local shoots,

parenting groups, bridge clubs, transition networks etc. Get a stand at the local fetes and shows - Cathy Boyd does three to four shows a year. Talking on local radio stations is a great way to reach lots of people.

Get your new direct selling enterprise mentioned in the local papers and magazines! Think about your story and what will appeal to your potential audience. Is there a national event like 'Great British Beef Week' you can use to give you an angle which local news would jump on? [Write a press release](#) and make a list of all the different local news outlets you could send it to.

6.8. Product photos

Take great photos of your products. Do you have a friend who knows their way around a camera and can help you get a few good photos? You could swap these for free products.



Ethical Butcher Product Photos

Source: PFLA



Lamb and pork product photos
Source: Ridley Browell, [Wheathill Farm](#)



Colwell Cheese
Source: PFLA

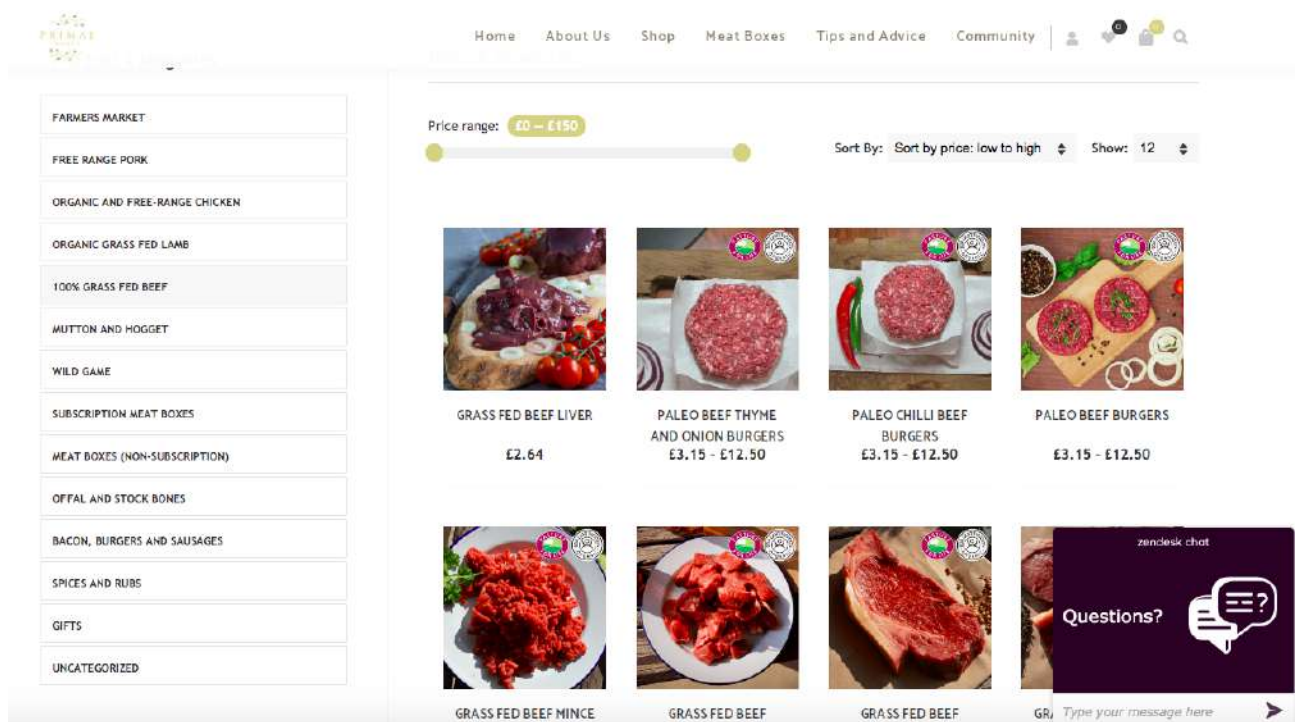
6.9. Website

A website is an essential tool for communicating information about your farm and produce. It doesn't need to be flashy, just clear. Make sure you can keep it up-to-date. Including a blog and linking your social media pages to your website are great ways to keep fresh information flowing.

You can send a link to all your local contacts, as well as ask other local businesses to share a link to it on their website. It is like your online flyer so think about all the ways you can get eyeballs on it! Post the link in relevant facebook groups, on local forums, on social media. But don't spam!

There are several approaches you can take with selling via a website:

Partnering up: Sign up to someone else's platform! If you aren't confident with making your own website you can sell your produce via an existing marketplace or promote yourself via a directory website. An online marketplace will resell your produce and take a cut - but they will also deal with all the technical requirements and any associated costs. Do you have a local food hub which sells via a click & collect website? Marketplaces: [Primal Meats](#), [Farmdrop](#), [Big Barn](#), [Produce and Provide](#), [The Produce Market](#). A directory will link potential customers to your own website. Directories: [Farms to Feed Us](#), [Where to Meat](#), [Live Frankly](#)



primalmeats.co.uk

Information website: Create your own website to share information about your products and include a page with an order form. Collect payments later by bacs / cash. This approach keeps fees low and lends itself well to a local market who can come to pick up from the farm. You could offer card payments/ send remote payment links with izettle - make sure to account for the fees. Examples: [Romshed Farm](#), [Hampton Estate](#), [English Farm](#)

Organic and Pasture-fed – Buy Here

- **Tips on How to Buy**
- Our meat is seasonal so the best way to keep updated with what is available is to join our email newsletter. **Only place an order if it says we are taking orders in the section below**
- If you have not ordered before I am happy to talk you through your decisions or any special requirements. Email enquiries and telephone number to farm@weald.co.uk
- When our meat is available, we open our PopUpShop on the farm for collection and sales. We do not send out meat.
- For more information, prices and to place your order, use the relevant link opposite. The lamb links cover hogget and mutton orders too.
- Please check from the section below that it is the right time for orders.
- You will get a confirmation email if your order has come through OK.
- Best value is to buy in quantity for the freezer, butchered and packed to your requirements, but individual cuts are also available.
- We sell most of our meat when it is fresh but often have extra in the freezer so do contact us if you would like to pick up frozen meat.
- You pay for your meat when you collect it. We take cheque, cash or payment via Bacs.

Eat seasonally – an approximate overview

Jan – April – from the freezer

April – June – Hogget

July – Beef, chicken

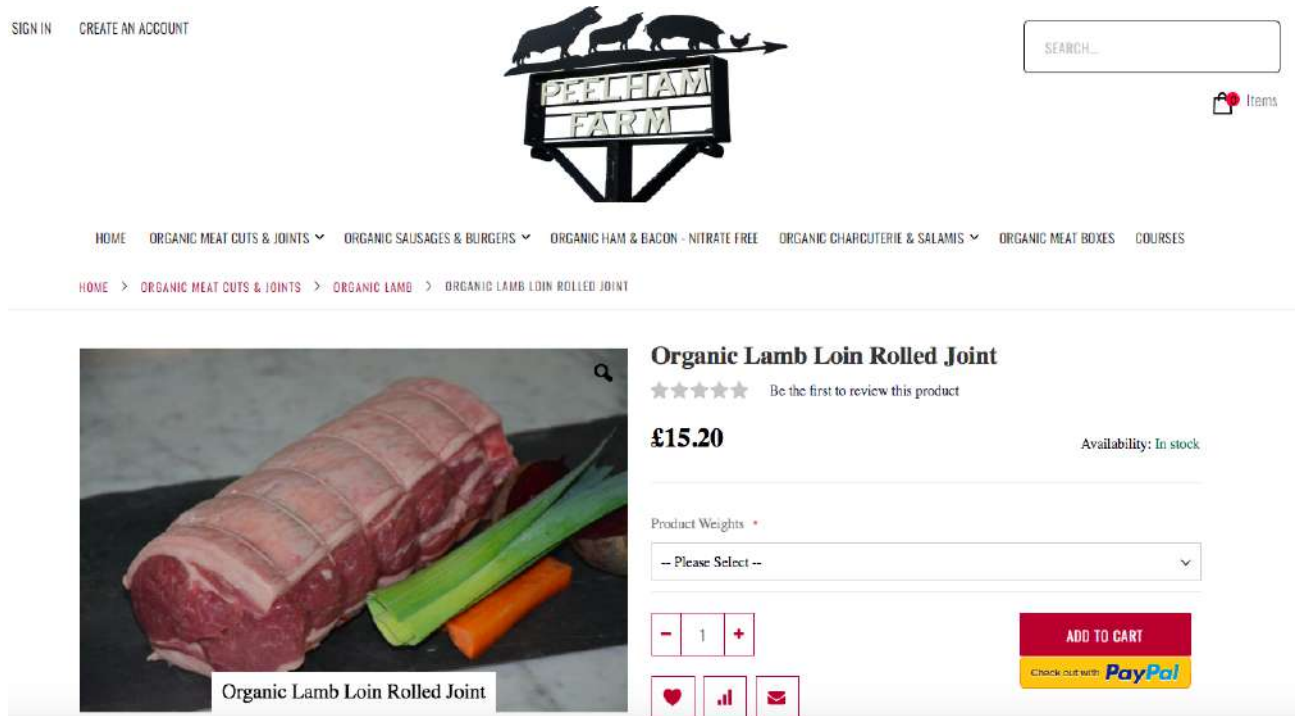
Aug – Nov – Lamb, beef, chicken

[Order Whole / Half Lamb](#)
[Order Lamb Cuts](#)
[Order Beef](#)
[Order Chicken](#)

romshedfarm.co.uk

E-commerce website: Create your own website to support online sales and take prepayments, use good photos of your products. Make sure you know the costs of using websites like shopify and taking online payments and add these into your costs. It will make it easier to sell to customers beyond your local area and take payments for delivery/couriers. Cathy Boyd is testing Shopify and said it is very quick to set up - they had their shop up and running in a week. Cathy feels Shopify has better functionality than Squarespace, but the latter might be better for someone with no website experience.

Examples: [Hayes Meadow Farm](#), [Peelham Farm](#), [Andy Rumming's Beef](#), [Old Hall Farm](#), [Daltons Dairy](#), [Wheathill Farm](#), [Cotswold Beef](#)



The screenshot shows the Peelham Farm website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for SIGN IN, CREATE AN ACCOUNT, and a search bar. Below the navigation bar is a large image of a lamb on a sign that says "PEELHAM FARM". The main navigation menu includes links for HOME, ORGANIC MEAT CUTS & JOINTS, ORGANIC SAUSAGES & BURGERS, ORGANIC HAM & BACON - NITRATE FREE, ORGANIC CHARCUTERIE & SALAMIS, ORGANIC MEAT BOXES, and COURSES. The breadcrumb trail shows the path: HOME > ORGANIC MEAT CUTS & JOINTS > ORGANIC LAMB > ORGANIC LAMB LOIN ROLLED JOINT. The product page for "Organic Lamb Loin Rolled Joint" features a large image of the product, a price of £15.20, and a button to ADD TO CART. The product is marked as "In stock". There is also a section for "Product Weights" with a dropdown menu and a quantity selector.

Peelhamfarm.co.uk

[About
Daltons](#)[Fresh
Products](#)[Honesty
Shop](#)[News
Scoops](#)[New
Outlets](#)[Get In
Touch](#)[Online
Shop](#)[Log
In](#)[Trade
Signup](#)

Online Shop

Showing all 7 results

Default sorting ▼



Blue Stilton Cheese- 200g
£4.00

Add to basket



Daltons Artisan Butter 200g
£3.00

Add to basket



Daltons Dairy Gift Voucher
£10.00 - £20.00

Select options



Daltons Honey
£6.50

Add to basket

daltonsdairy.co.uk

Tools for building websites: It can be quick and easy to set up a website using online tools - you need to choose one you get along with and [buy a domain for your website](#).

[Squarespace](#), [Wordpress](#), [Shopify](#), [Magento](#), [Woocommerce](#), [Wix](#), [BigCommerce](#), [Weebly](#), [Mobirise](#), [Food Commerce](#), [Squareup](#), [Prestashop](#), [EKM](#)

If you aren't confident about making a website yourself, find someone who can offer a little help to get you going. Do you have a family member or friend who might be able to help out in return for free products? Same goes for photography of your products. There are services like Fiverr which offer cost-effective help for fixing your website if it breaks - top tip from Graham at Hayes Meadow. Try [Fiverr](#), [People per hour](#)

List of pages to include on your website:

- Homepage
- About the farm
- Sign up for newsletter
- Shop/ order form
- Contact us
- Privacy statement
- Terms and conditions

PFLA Forum Threads: [Online Purchase](#), [Direct Sales Website](#)

6.10. Email marketing

Collecting email addresses and sending out a round robin newsletter is a great way to reach customers. Every time you speak to someone who is interested in buying from you make sure you take their email and check they are happy to be added to your mailing list. If someone comes to you for more information, always ask for their email and add them to your list.

"I think the key is using a mail list like Mail Chimp and by any way possible getting folks' email addresses to go on it. I think you only need 150 email addresses to sell 1 beef animal every month/6 weeks." - Andy Rumming (PFLA Forum)

Keep the tone of your emails friendly, relaxed and informal - put your customers in a good mood when they read it. Do send consistent emails but don't spam! Remember to add a signup form for your email newsletter to your website - connecting your website form to mailchimp so new signups automatically get added to your email contacts list is very helpful and will save you a lot of time adding them manually.

Data protection: If you are collecting personal details you always need to ensure that each person has given you permission to contact them. If contacts sign up themselves they are giving you permission to contact them, so you do not need to ask permission as you would if you add them to your list manually. This is helpful from a GDPR perspective.

Meat: Send a newsletter when you have meat on the way, communicate what you will have, what your products are, when it will be ready, how it will be picked up/collected, how much it costs, how to order, perhaps some recipes, and the next date meat will be ready in case customers don't want it now but do want it next time.

Try [Mailchimp](#), [Hubspot](#), [Sender](#), [Sendinblue](#)



February 2021

HAMPTON NEWSLETTER

Our next Beef Collection Day is **FRIDAY 26TH FEBRUARY 2021**



Thank you to everyone for ordering and picking up your beef so incredibly efficiently last week. No one forgot, everyone Drove Thru and the hot topic of conversation via each wound down window was who had had the vaccine. It's great to know that so many have been successfully jabbed. And now it's time to remind you of our **next Drive Thru on Friday 26th FEBRUARY**. If there was any further vindication needed for purchasing Hampton Pasture for Life Beef, just have a look at The Daily Telegraph of Monday 1st February where beef from The Hampton Estate is described as 'Hands down the best we have ever bought and tasted'. Check out page 21 for such kind comments.

Screenshot from Hampton Estate's email newsletter

Hamptonestate.co.uk

6.11. Social media

This is a great way to add credibility to your brand, and acts as part of your mosaic where customers can follow/find out about you. Social media will not sell your products by itself, but it is an important touchpoint for sharing information and one of the elements of a successful business.

Which channels: Look at the different social media channels your customers are on, and decide which one you can do best. Think of it as your shop window. Instagram and facebook can work well, use them to tell the story of your farm. Share photos of your livestock, recipes of how to cook your meat and make it look amazing (because it is!). Remember that customers will remember how you make them feel when you share pictures of your farm, take them there! In general you will find an older audience on facebook, and a younger audience on instagram - remember who your customers are, think about where they are looking online, and choose the appropriate channel.

"We found facebook really good, it was more powerful than a website for us. It is quick and easy to update; we would add a new product, get a few likes and shares, and the orders would start coming in." - Rebecca Mayhew, Old Hall Farm



Old Hall Farm is at **Old Hall Farm**.

14 February at 09:56 · Bungay · 🌐



Happy Valentine's Day! We're all feeling the love for our goddesses this morning, and grateful to them for giving us such wonderful [#rawjerseymilk](#).

It's not too late to pop up and get a hamper or present for your loved ones and family - we're open 8-6 and have plenty of stock, including our valentines milkshakes which are gorgeous!!

See you soon!!

[#rawmilk](#) [#cowswithcalvesatfoot](#) [#wherethecowsknowtheirnames](#)
[#cowwithcalfdairy](#)



[Facebook post from Old Hall Farm](#)

Customer queries: Treat your customers like royalty, they need to have a fabulous experience buying from you, so you keep them coming back and give them a reason to chat to their friends about you. Ensure your tone is friendly, approachable, helpful, and knowledgeable about your products. If people get in touch, direct them to your website where they can join your mailing list/place an order, OR ask them if they would like to be added to your email list, so they get notified about when your meat is available.

Design: Make your social media posts as visual as possible. Nice photos are a great place to start, and as you get more confident start thinking about making some simple graphics. Have a look at other farms and what they put on social media. [Pipers Farm](#) does great visual content. Try using a simple tool like [Canva](#) to make graphics with text and logos overlaid.



[Pipers Farm Instagram](#)

Scheduling: It saves time to plan what you are going to post and use a scheduling tool to schedule your posts, so you don't need to do this in real time.

Try: [Buffer](#), [Planoly](#), [Hootsuite](#)

Social media advertising: When your enterprise is established and you know where your customers look online, you could try social media advertising. Be sure you are reaching people who will become customers and that it's not costing lots of money for no sales!





6.12. Farm Events

Bringing people to your farm is a great way to share about your farm and products. Bring in customers by giving tasters, show people how delicious your produce is and encourage them to buy. In addition, this is an opportunity to diversify your revenue, giving you the opportunity to sell other goods and services such as tours of the farm, drinks and snacks, supper clubs, workshops and more - get creative!

[Open Farm Sunday](#) is a nice way to annually invite the local community to see your farm and it is a nationally advertised day by LEAF.

"For me getting going was achieved by having an Open Farm Sunday event and getting people along to see the farm and offering meat to sell. That event is brilliant as they do all the publicity etc - it's a really easy way to get people to come along." - Fidelity Weston, Romshed Farm



*Come to the Launch of
Pasture-fed in Kent!*



100% grass-fed

Open Farm Sunday

7th June 2015

**Celebrate British farming and food. Visit a farm
near you to find out how your food is produced.**

Where: Romshed Farm, Bank Lane,
Underriver TN15 0SD

Time: 11am-4pm

Contact: Fidelity 01732 463372

Activities:

Free entry! Meet the piglets, calves, lambs.
Children's activities and wildlife gardening advice
with Kent Wildlife Trust, farm walks to see the
animals and wildflower meadows, demonstration
beehive, minibeast activities. Delicious Dexter
beef and hogget burgers provided by Court Farm
Butchers. Teas and cakes by Queen Alfred Cakes.
Just come along and relax.

A great day out for the whole family!



LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming), Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire CV8 2LG | www.leafuk.org | 024 7641 3911 | enquiries@leafuk.org | LEAF is a registered charity no. 1045781

[Romshed Farm Open Farm Sunday Flyer](#)

You could turn your collections into an event like Hampton Estate who organise 'Beef Days'. Customers pre-order and come to pick up their beef, and get a coffee and cake and see their friends at the same time. During the pandemic they transitioned to a 'drive thru' model which works just as well. For all events make sure you have the necessary insurance in place, and provide WC and hand washing facilities.



[Hampton Estate Beef Day Collection](#)

Do your own events, such as lambing days or farm walks. Pop up dinners/ restaurants are a great way to showcase produce and collaborate with local chefs. If there are people already doing these in your area why not invite them to host one at your farm, then you don't have to do the cooking but you can provide the produce and venue.



Romshed Farm x The Country Trust School Lambing Day

[Source: The Country Trust Facebook](#)



West Town Farm Barn Dance

Source: PFLA

6.13. Food festivals and farmers markets

Try taking a stand at a food festival or a farmers market within 5-10 miles of your farm. It is a great way to share with the local community a bit more about what you are doing, personal discussions are one of the best adverts. What you say is important, people will also buy into you as a person (and remember how you made them feel!).

If you are employing someone to do the stand make sure they know what to say. Take plenty of leaflets and make your stand look really good and inviting. Think about doing tasters of your products, it is a great way to encourage people to buy, but make sure you consider food hygiene and insurance.

Rebecca Mayhew from Old Hall Farm started off doing farmers markets before opening an honesty shop at the farm. Due to the publicity of the farmers market all their customers knew about the shop launch.



Rebecca Mayhew from Old Hall Farm at a local farmers market
Source: Rebecca Mayhew



Cathy Boyd & Dale Webb from Cotswold Beef
Source: PFLA

6.14. Partnerships and certifications

If you have neighbours producing great food why not do some cross-promotion. You can share each other's leaflets, talk about each other on social media, and mention each other's products to your mailing list. It's a win win!

Do you have a certification such as PFLA or organic? It is likely these organisations will promote your business to their members, so remember to check if you can be listed on their website and what support they give with promotion.

6.15. Recipes and seasonal specials

Sharing recipes is a great way to get your customers interested in different products, particularly the less well known ones. Foodies will come to you to buy them, so talk about them in your newsletters and on your website, and make them sound delicious.

Meat: If you are working with your butcher to have a more extensive cutting list, use these cuts for your marketing! Fidelity Weston's top tip: Create a page of recipes for the lesser known cuts to go out with each box, this helps customers to discover how tasty they can be



Source: PFLA

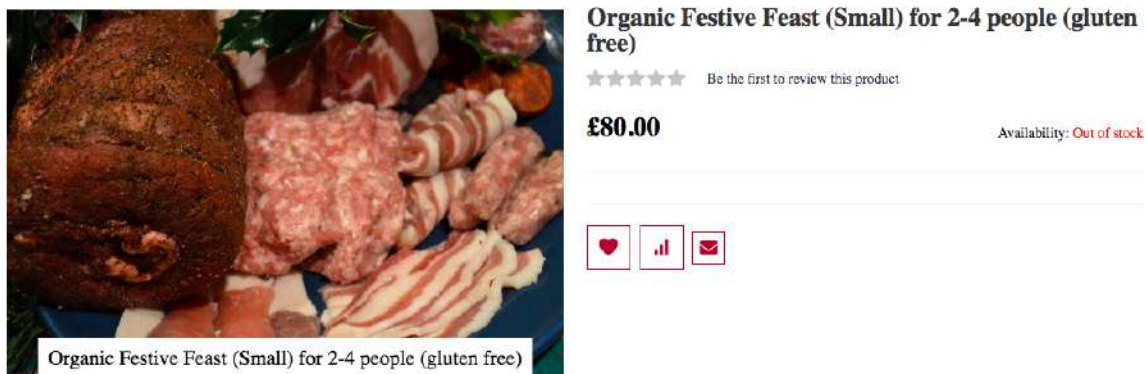
"We had a glut of silverside so we shared a recipe for salt beef silverside in our newsletter. This worked a treat and we quickly sold out of this cut!" - Bill Bidell, Hampton Estate



Beef Bordelaise

Source: PFLA

Why not try a taster box or Christmas box, which you can encourage your customer to buy for themselves or as a gift for their friends/ colleagues/ family.



Screenshot from: [Peelham Organic meat boxes](#)

6.16. Networking, customer service and loyalty

Be really approachable, chat, answer questions, build your network, align with people you share values with. The more people you network with, the more people might mention you in articles/ on social media/ on the radio!

Customer service is key, and if you have a good relationship with your customers they will be more forgiving if there is a problem. If a customer isn't happy with a cut that's ok, it's best to take it back and refund them. **Retaining a customer is FAR easier than finding a new one.**

Always be happy to answer customer questions. The more information you share with people the more they will understand you and your process. If you do have negative feedback, for example people think it is too expensive or prefer to go to the supermarket, don't take it personally. It can be tough to find your customers but they are out there, always stay positive and **treat everyone like a potential customer.**

Building customer loyalty is very important and it is worthwhile working hard on this. How you communicate has a huge impact on customers. The customer is always first and always right. Give them the benefit of the doubt unless you are 100% sure they are pulling a fast one!

"The repeat customer is the most important customer. The customers who come to you and buy directly are conscientious ones, they need looking after and they will ask questions." - Denise Walton, Peelham Farm

7. Taking orders

Working out an efficient system to record orders will save you time in the long run.

Meat: When you have your butchery dates booked in, start marketing your meat and taking orders 1-3 months before. Calculate how much meat you will get based on the liveweight, conformation and fat class. Once you have done a few carcasses and recorded what you get back you will have a good idea of what to expect.

Depending on what your box breakdown is, you will have a rough idea of how many boxes you'll get from a carcass. Keep this in mind and aim to pre-sell at least 50% or as much as you are sure you will get. Constantly monitor your orders and have in mind what you've got left to sell. If you don't pre sell everything you can upsell when people come to purchase. Create a waiting list of people who you can contact if you have meat left over.

If you are offering individual cuts, make sure you track the orders and incorporate them into the cutting list you send to the butcher. If there is anything you don't sell make sure you have space in your freezer to freeze it down quickly. It's nice to offer customers the opportunity to browse extra bits at collection and these can be added to their order.

Dairy: Customers buy dairy products, in particular milk, on a regular basis. Keep this in mind when you set up your ordering system. If they need fresh milk every three days, they are unlikely to want to do a one off purchase every time, so perhaps a subscription system would be better. Processed products such as cheese and ice cream have a longer shelf life, and will likely be bought less often, and so a straightforward ordering process is more appropriate. If you do delivery, setting up an ordering system with set delivery days makes sense, so you are not running round every day sorting out deliveries. Keep a close eye on supply and demand for processed products and make sure you set your stock accordingly.

Make sure you take the following details for your customers: name, email, home address and order. Make it very clear when their order will be ready - give details of how collection/delivery works.

By phone: This is more personal but also more time consuming! It will work if you don't have a lot of orders at once but it is hard to scale up. Ordering by text may also work and can plug into a tech system in the future.

By email: When you have produce available you can email all your potential customers, and ask them to respond to your email with their orders. This is a quick way to get the word out, but you will need to manually enter the details into a list/spreadsheet - leaving some room for human error.

Online form: Create a simple online form to email to customers. They fill out their details and it will be automatically logged in a spreadsheet for you. Make sure the link to the order form is obvious; a bold link in an email or big button on your website. It is important to note that setting up a simple online shop with a tool like Shopify may save you time in the long run, so consider this before going down the online form route. If you really are not comfortable with an online shop and taking pre-payments, then an order form is a better option, but it will probably take more time to manage the process. Try [Typeform](#), [Google Forms](#)



100% GRASS FED BEEF

HOME ABOUT US THE MOB SHOP GALLERY NEWS CONTACT

Please fill in the below form to place an order for beef and/or pork boxes!

*all fields are required

Name *

First Name

Last Name

Email *

Phone Number *

What would you like to order *

Delivery or Collection? *

We offer free local delivery - visit www.sandyhillmeats.co.uk/delivery to see if you are within our delivery range.

☐ I live within your free local delivery area and would like you to deliver!

☐ I will collect my order from Eastleach Downs GL7 3PX

☐ Other - use the address box to let us know what's happening!

Address and Postcode *

SUBMIT

[Sandy Hill Mob Order Form](#)

Online shop: Create a simple online shop and take pre-payments. The customer's details are automatically logged and you can add them to your mailing list. Only open your shop when you have meat to sell and make sure you keep on top of the stock levels. There are costs involved with setting this up, but in the long run it will save time. You will need to choose a payment service provider to link with your online shop. Make sure that the online shop is easy to find when customers come to your home page.

Building an online shop is not as hard as you might think so do give it a go! However, if you are not confident with setting up your own online shop see if you can find someone to help you, preferably on a pro bono basis or payment in kind (think swapping free products for website help). Do you have a family member or good friend who can help you? If you can, always try to find developers by referral, so you can be sure they are reliable and won't give you the runaround. Services like [Fiverr](#) can connect you with web designers if you need professional support.

Website builders:

[Squarespace](#) / [Squarespace Tutorial for Beginners](#)

[Wordpress](#) / [How To Make a WordPress Website](#)
[Shopify](#) / [Shopify Tutorial for Beginners](#)
[Magento](#) / [Magento Beginner Tutorials](#)
[Woocommerce](#) / [Step-By-Step Woocommerce Tutorial](#)
[Wix](#) / [Wix Tutorial 2021](#)
[BigCommerce](#) / [BigCommerce Tutorial 2021](#)

Ordering software: Technology like [Good Order](#) gives you the opportunities to easily set up and manage your orders for click and collect or delivery. [Mossgiel Dairy](#) uses this system for their click and collect orders.

8. Taking payments

8.1. Payments in advance

If you use a website with an online shop it is easy to take advanced payments. You will need to connect a [payment service provider](#). Each transaction will cost you a %, but a lot of the work will be done for you, you should then have a list of orders already paid for. It is worth remembering that if advanced payments suit your model, they are also good for your cash flow!

Payment service providers: [Paypal](#), [Stripe](#), [Worldpay](#)

8.2. Payments on collection

There are no costs involved if you take cash, cheque or bacs payments, but it does take time to deal with all these. Take payment when customers pick up their produce and give them an invoice. If they pay by bacs you will need to check when they pay and chase if they don't.

If you'd like to offer card payments there are systems to do so, try [sumup](#) or [iZettle](#). iZettle offers the function to send 'remote payment links' which make it easy for customers to click on these and pay, plus this software makes it easy to record and track payments quickly.

If you decide to go down an honesty shop route, you can have a locked cash box where customers can put cash. You could also install an iPad, using software like iZettle, where customers select the product they are buying, and tap their card. If you are concerned your iPad will get stolen use a secure tablet lock, for example a [Universal Tablet Lock Adhesive Security Plate](#).

Angus Dalton from Dalton's Dairies leaves an iPad in their honesty shop: *"It makes it really easy for the customers to come and pick up their milk, they select their products, tap their card and away they go."*



Dalton's Dairy Honesty Shop

[Source: daltonsdairy.co.uk](http://daltonsdairy.co.uk)

9. Meat: slaughter, abattoir, butchery, processing

9.1. Getting organised for slaughter

Choosing an animal: The weight, fat class and conformation of an animal will affect meat quality and salable meat yield. Fat is necessary for flavour, but you don't want so much that it compromises meat quality.

Andy Rumming recommends that for your first carcass you visually assess your livestock and try to select the animal with the best conformation; not a cull, not the smallest and not necessarily the biggest. If it is overfat it could cause problems. It will be more work for the butcher trimming the fat, potentially making it more expensive, and will create more waste.

[See the AHDB guide on selecting animals for slaughter.](#)

Beef: As a guideline the R4L conformation and fat class is what the market demands..
See the [AHDB Guide on understanding cattle and carcasses](#)

Lamb: As a guideline the R3L conformation and fat class is what the market demands.
See the [AHDB Guide on understanding sheep and carcasses](#)

Cathy Boyd said it is worth noting that with some native breeds it is difficult to achieve commercial standards for meat; getting the R grade is a challenge, but the 4L is easier. Butchers will often have specifications for the type of carcass they want, and if you keep native breeds which make it hard to meet these, direct selling is probably more suitable for your business.

"You can teach yourself what makes a good carcass by experience if you cannot go on a course - which would be recommended. At Romshed Farm we have done that; if you test each lamb before it goes off and then get the grades and weights back you can remember how they reflect the lambs you sent off, so worth trying to get your eye in." - Fidelity Weston, Romshed Farm

However, if the quality of your meat is excellent, your customers are buying it, and your business is profitable, the conformation and fat classes do not necessarily matter as much when selecting an animal for slaughter.

Booking abattoir and butcher: Abattoirs and butchers are very busy and if you want to have your meat on a certain date **you need to be organised about booking** it in. Booking ahead is essential to get sufficient time to hang your meat as well as any specific dates you want, especially around Christmas and Easter.

When you are in flow try booking 3 or 4 dates in advance, so you are organised and able to tell your customers when the next batch of meat is ready. Don't get caught out with enquiring late and not getting the dates you want!

9.2. Abattoir

Do your research and choose an abattoir based on your needs. Make sure you contact them to get all the details before you book your livestock in. Consider how long it takes to get to the abattoir; it's important for minimising stress on the way there, and for transporting your meat safely back.

Ideally it should be within a two hour drive. Think about your logistics and weigh up what is easiest. If you are transporting elsewhere for butchery you may need to think about refrigerated transport. Perhaps your butcher will be able to pick up the carcass and bring it back to their cutting plant.

When starting out it is helpful to find an abattoir which has a cutting plant, so you will get it back butchered and packaged with basic labels. This minimises what you have to do when you get the meat back; perhaps just adding an additional label with the extra details you need on there. It is a lot less daunting if all these elements are taken care of by the abattoir. As you grow, you will probably want to have more control over these areas, and there are solutions for finding your own butcher, sourcing your own packaging and prepping your own labels.

Beef: If you are sending cattle over 30 months (OTM) they must have their spinal cord removed after slaughter and once this happens the carcass starts to degrade. It is better for meat quality if this can be done after hanging, and make sure there is a short time between the cord being removed and the carcass butchered and packaged as once it is removed the meat will degrade. This is an issue the PFLA and Campaign for Small Abattoirs are working on to clarify guidelines around to make sure that OTM animals are correctly processed and hung.

Find out as much as you can about the process at the abattoir, for example the method they use to stun, which does not affect meat quality, but is an important welfare consideration and something your customers might ask about. It is important you have 100% familiarity of all the processes at your chosen abattoir; if you have any reservations then do not use them.



MacDuff, Wishaw, Scotland

Source: *Our Isles*

UK Abattoirs list: Download a list of all approved food establishments from the [government website here](#) - check for slaughterhouses in your area. You can also find butchers here too.

Organic certified abattoirs list: Download a list of organic certified abattoirs from the [Soil Association website here](#).

Note that the PFLA collaborates with other certifying bodies, such as organic, to verify processes in abattoirs. PFLA and organic certified abattoirs are recommended. If you are PFLA certified you need to slaughter your livestock at a PFLA recommended abattoir. The PFLA will ensure that abattoirs handle, lairage, stun and kill animals to meet best practice animal welfare requirements. All animals marketed as Certified Pasture for Life meat must be stunned prior to slaughter.

9.3. Transporting livestock

It is essential for welfare and meat quality to make sure the animal is not stressed when they go to the abattoir. A well designed stock race and ramp into the lorry/ trailer will help minimise stress. Get your animals used to the trailer before they go; if you can, put them in a barn overnight and let them walk in and out. You will probably have the option to take the animal the night before or on the morning of slaughter. Taking the night before is good because they will shake off the stress of the transport and have time to adjust to their new environment, but it will be stressful if they are mixed with other livestock they don't know, so check with your abattoir how this works. They are not supposed to mix livestock but if they are very busy it is a risk.

If you transport livestock yourself for commercial activity and the journey is over 65km (40 miles) you will need to [apply for a Type 1 transporter authorisation with the Animal and Plant Health Agency](#). If you are transporting livestock for over 8 hours you need to apply for Type 2. Once you have this it lasts for five years before you need to renew it. Each time you transport livestock you will need a certificate for that journey.

If you use a haulier, do your research and make sure they understand how important it is not to stress the animals. Make sure whoever is driving knows their route and takes it steady, drive like a granny! It might be cheaper to use a haulier to start off with, if you don't have your own livestock trailer. Check your haulier's certifications.

9.4. Offal

If you get the offal back you need to pick this up right after the slaughter. Ask your abattoir how it works and what cuts they give you. Make sure you get the cuts you want and that the offal they give you is definitely from your animal.

See AHDB Guide of [Lamb offal](#) and [Beef offal](#).



Offal Box

£60.00

Tax included.

Delivery Date options

24th March - 1 left

ADD TO CART

BUY IT NOW



This very popular frozen beef offal box is perfect for those who want to stock up the freezer with the most nutrient dense cuts of beef available.

Cotswold Beef Offal

[Source: cotswoldbeef.com](http://cotswoldbeef.com)

9.5. Hanging

Hanging increases taste and tenderness. Your foodie customers, in particular chefs, will definitely be looking for meat that has been hung. It should be done in a chiller at a controlled temperature, ideally without other types of meat in with it, and without the door being open and closed. When you hang meat you will lose weight as water evaporates, but this will be made up for in flavour and tenderness. As the water evaporates from the meat it concentrates the flavour.



MacDuff, Wishaw, Scotland
Source: Our Isles

Your abattoir should have the capacity to hang your carcass - but if you want to have more control over this part of the process perhaps there is possibility to hang the carcass with your butcher, another farm with a cold storage for hanging, or in your own refrigerated unit. **Remember to tell your abattoir how long you want your carcass hung for.**

Beef: Ideally you want to hang the whole carcass as long as possible, around three weeks is good. A carcass with a thicker fat covering can be hung for longer. Some cuts benefit more from hanging than others, for example you may want to hang the hindquarters for longer, maybe four weeks; the forequarters and slow cooking cuts will be tasty and tender with less hanging. It is best to discuss with your abattoir or butcher how long you want the carcass to be hung. While hanging is important for flavour, don't hang for longer than is necessary, because as water evaporates their weight and therefore value decreases.

"One thing to note is there are different rules for hanging at abattoirs and butchers. Abattoirs have to hang forequarters in vacuum packs, whereas butchers don't." - Fidelity Weston, Romshed Farm

How much control you have over what is hung and the hanging process will depend where you hang and butcher the carcass. These are all points to be mindful of as you evolve your business, but when you're starting out, it's fine to hang the whole carcass for the sake of simplicity. Not sure which is best? Try both methods and taste your meat. You are the best judge!

Lamb: It is not always necessary to hang lamb, you can cut it straight away, but one week of hanging would be good for flavour. An old ewe would need a couple of weeks hanging and a hogget between one and two weeks. Discuss with your butcher and see what they think.

9.6. Questions to ask your abattoir

- Can they slaughter to your required standards - organic/ pfla/biodynamic certified?
- How far in advance to you need to book slaughter
- Do they offer lairage to keep animals overnight before slaughter
- What is the process for picking up offal
- What offal will you get back - check what they will give you
- What are their facilities for hanging - will it be hung with other meat in the chiller?

9.7. Butchery

It is really important to do your research, don't be shy, ask your potential butcher a lot of questions. It might be helpful to do a butchery course to learn the basics. This is a really key element to getting the quality of your products right. For your first animal keep it simple by using the butcher at your abattoir, but make sure you are happy with how they do things, and be abundantly clear with your instructions.

Butchery courses: [School of Artisan Food](#), [Peelham Farm](#)



Source: PFLA

Keep in close contact with your butcher, speak to them regularly, if they are on social media link in with them there and talk about them. Don't be afraid to change and adapt your butchery to improve your products. Do ask other farmers already direct selling about their approach, and see if there are opportunities to collaborate, if a neighbour already has a cutting plant, can you use it during the weekend or evening?



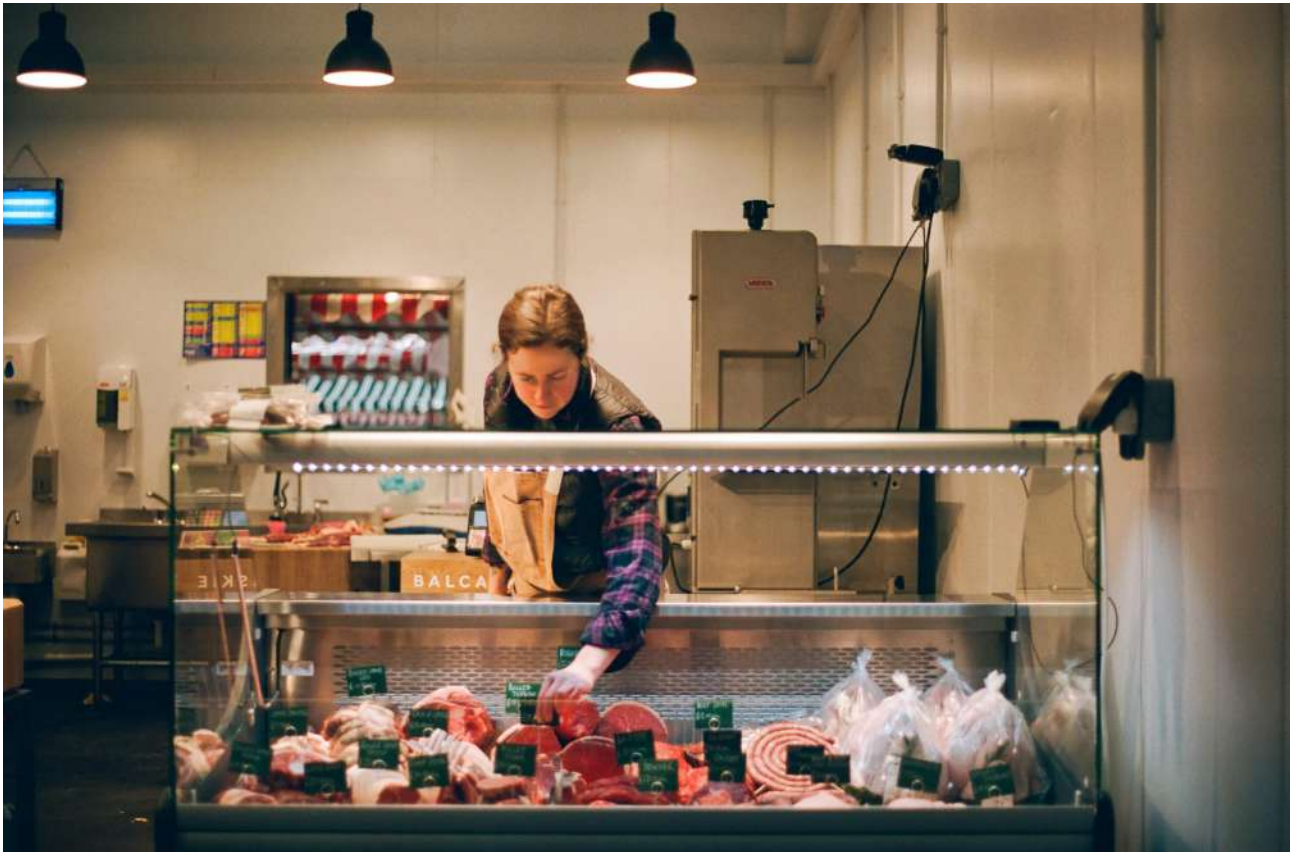
Bowhouse Butcher

Source: Our Isles

When you're getting started it is more straightforward to work with an abattoir with an on site cutting plant and have your meat butchered there. This simplifies the process for you. Butchering at home gives you more control over the process, but it requires significant cost and time investment which may not be sensible to take on while you are testing and building your market.

If you decide to work with a butcher not located at the abattoir, ask them if they are able to collect your carcass from the abattoir. They may have other meat to pick up, and this is a good way to take care of logistics and make sure your carcass gets to the butcher safely.

Have a look at the [AHDB Direct Selling Tools](#) to get an idea of cuts, yield and profit.



Bowhouse Butcher
Source: Our Isles

9.7.1. Butchering at home

Register as a cutting plant: If you decide to butcher at home you will need a good space which you can certify with the FSA/ Environmental Health as a registered cutting plant.

See [FSA - Applying for approval of a meat establishment](#).

Health and Safety: If you are going to touch the meat you need to have a Butchers [HACCP \(Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points\)](#) qualification so you can do risk assessments for the space and food.

Finding a butcher: It can be challenging to find a good butcher who you can rely on. Ask around, see who is available for contract jobs.

Equipment: you'll need to invest in all the equipment for butchering, packaging and have enough space to store all your meat. You can pick up a lot of this second hand - look at the classifieds in [The Farmers Guardian](#) and [Farmers Weekly](#). Check out [Nisbets](#), [Fisher UK](#), [Butchers Equipment Warehouse](#), [CS Catering](#), [Second Hand Catering Equipment](#).



Source: PFLA

BUTCHERY EQUIPMENT
Butchers table
Chopping boards
Knives (butcher might come with these)
Vac packer
Mincer
Burger press
Cold storage units
Label Maker - brother ql700 label printer



Bowhouse Butchery
Source: Our Isles

9.7.2. Choosing cuts

There is merit in keeping it simple, but don't shy away from having a more extensive cutting list, as this could make you more money on your carcass. Consider where the value is in your carcass, and try to maximise this. As you get to know your market you can start to fine tune the cuts you get. It is important to make sure you can sell all your cuts.

You could offer products such as steak boxes, in which case you might lean towards getting more steaks, which are good for 1-2 person households without children. Whereas a box with stewing cuts and mince might be better for families. What are the profiles of your customers?



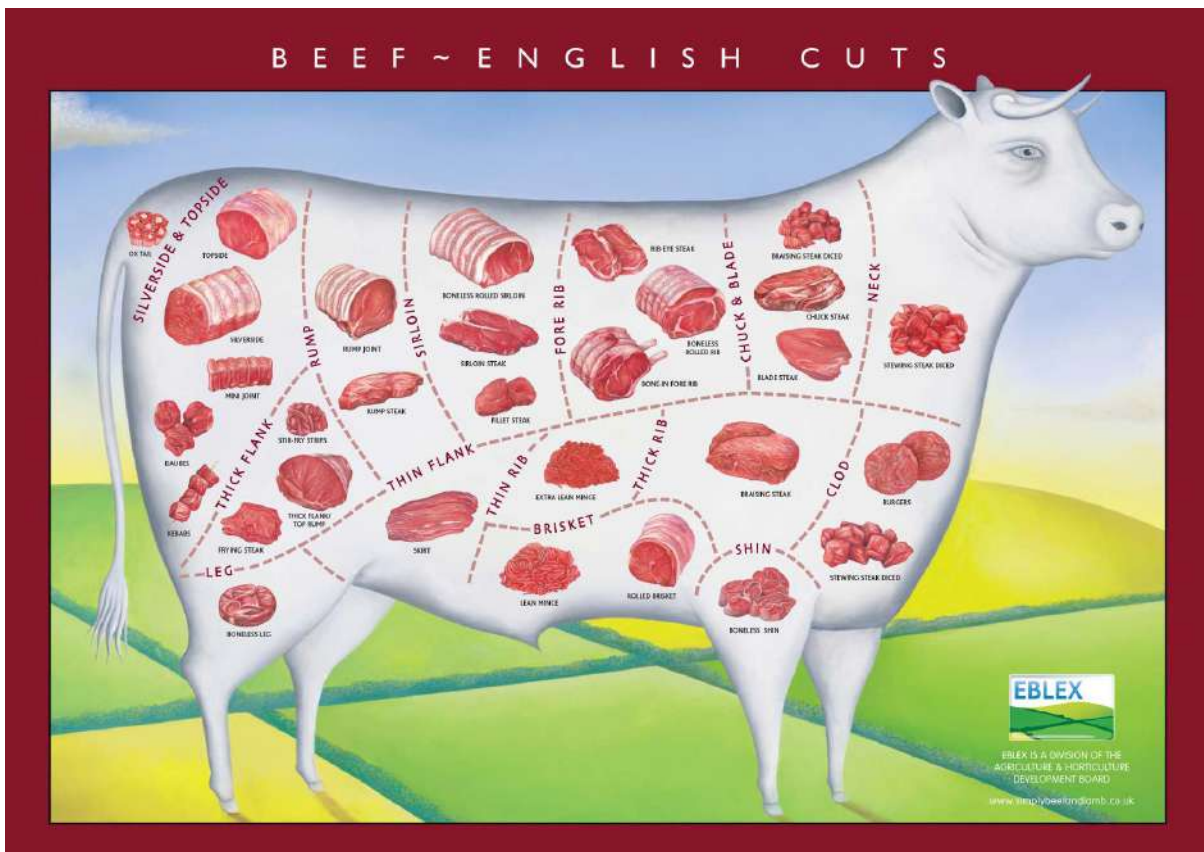
Skirt on the BBQ

Source: PFLA

Beef: While leg of mutton and top rump joints are lesser known, it is best to get these and explain to your customer what to do with them. If you decide to mince them you will sell them for a lower price/kg, losing value. Similarly, think about parts of the forequarter which can be cut as rib eye and flat iron steaks instead of being diced, as it will be more valuable as steaks; it is the difference between £25/kg and £12/kg. The same goes for skirt which is in the hind flank. If it is sold as skirt instead of being diced it is £20/kg. Onglet also known as a hanger steak is part of your offal; make sure you get this back. It can also be sold at £20/kg. Don't feel like you have to make burgers when you get started, you can always supply mince with instructions on making burgers, and scale up into burgers once you are more established.

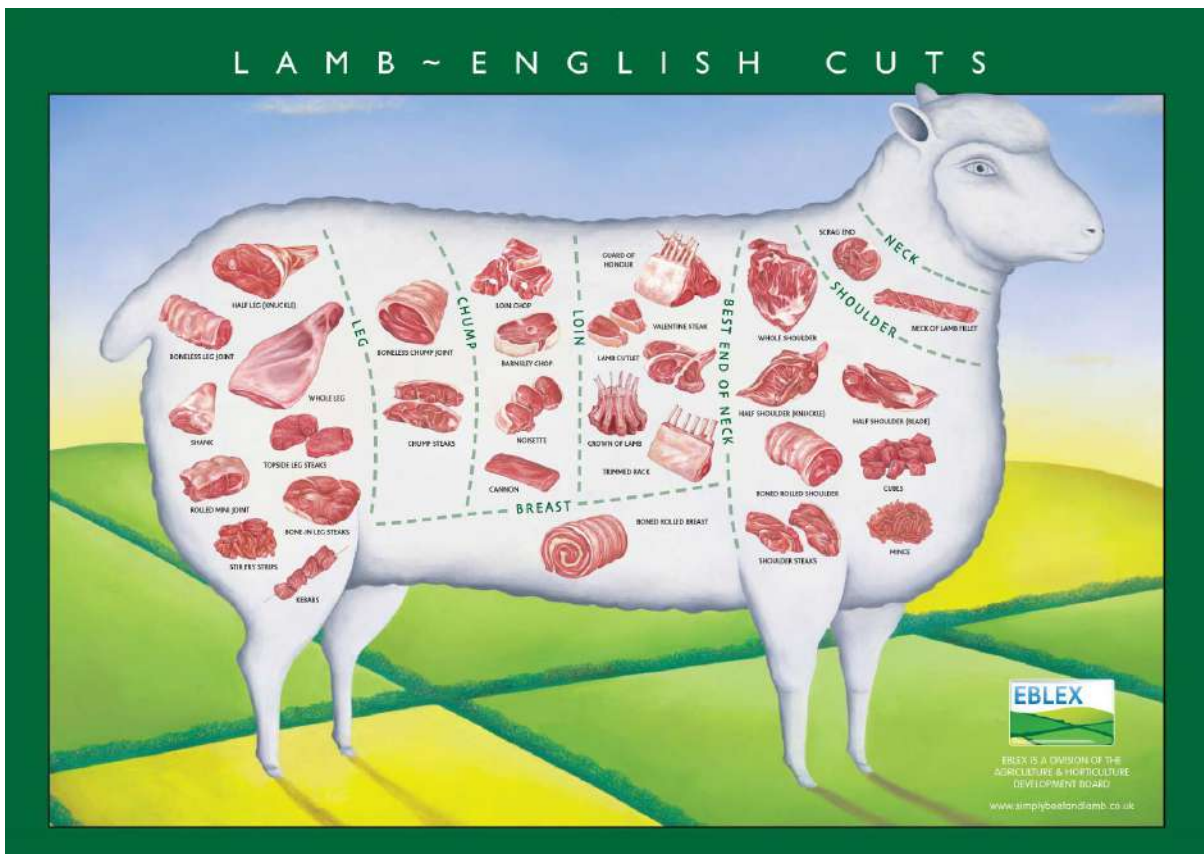


Bowhouse Butchery
Source: Our Isles





Bowhouse Butchery Lamb
Source: Our Isles



Lamb: It is easier and more straightforward to sell a half or whole lamb instead of separate cuts. Some butchers might charge more to dice and mince cuts because joints are so much easier and anything more adds time and cost.

9.7.3. Sizing cuts

Think about your customers. What size are their freezers? How big are their households? Do they have young children? Build your products for them. Most people won't want massive joints unless it is Christmas or a family occasion. You can always get bigger ones cut to order, but for boxes keep them relatively small; between 1 - 2kg is good.

Your butcher will be inclined to do bigger joints and bigger packs of mince because it is less work for them, but less useful for you. Make sure that you are clear about the pack sizes for mince and diced, around 500g is a good start. You could pack steaks in pairs, if you are selling fresh these can be frozen separately by the customer.

9.7.4. Make your cutting list

Be very clear about how you want your carcass butchered. If you take bespoke / custom orders make sure you take these into account when you write and send your cutting list to the butcher. It is crucial to **'speak the same language as your butcher'** as there are different names for each cut and you need to make sure your butcher understands your cutting list. Ask the butcher to send you their standard list so you can use the same language on yours, if you decide to do your own list. **Ask the butcher when they need your cutting list** by, and make sure that they read and understand it.

If you are doing individual cuts, can you easily export what has been ordered by your customers into a cutting list format. For example if you have an online shop/ order form, can the purchases/submissions be directly exported into a list format which you can share with your butcher. This will save time; otherwise you might find yourself doing a lot of manual copy and pasting.

The more beasts you do the better idea you will have for the meat yield you get. It varies between different breeds and different management approaches.

Beef: Heifers will often have more fat than steers and so have a lesser meat yield. Your yield should be around 40-60%. If it is lower than this, do some further investigation.

See [AHDB Beef Yield Guide](#)
See [AHDB Lamb Yield Guide](#)

Try the [AHDB Meat Yield and Costings Calculator](#)

PFLA Forum Threads: [Beef Yield](#), [Beefy Direct Sellers](#), [Cull Cows, better to eat them at home?](#), [cow beef](#), [Ageing for meat post slaughter](#)

Example beef cutting list from Romshed Farm:

Romshed Farm Beef Butchery Form for Hereford UK266655 700140 –

Packaging: All steaks in 2s, all mince, braising and stewing in 0.5kg packs.

Please keep **SKIRT and ONGLET in 0.5kg steaks – do not dice, label as Skirt/Onglet**

Label **SHIN of BEEF** separately. **Please do a mix of joint sizes as indicated.** Please keep all **Marrow Bones. Put all bits etc into mince.**

		<u>Label As</u>
<u>Topside</u>	2 x 1kg, rest as 1.5- 2kg joints	Topside
<u>Silverside</u>	Can you split the salmon and the flat and put the flat into joints between 1kg and 2kg and the salmon into 0.5kg packs	Silverside Silverside salmon
<u>Top Rump</u>	A variety of joints – between 1kg and 2kg	Top Rump
<u>Rump</u>	½” – ¾” thick steaks, approx. 0.6kg per pack,	Rump
<u>Sirloin</u>	2kg b/r joint, 2kg b/in joint, rest ½” – ¾” thick steaks,	Sirloin
<u>Fillet</u>	1 x 1kg joint, rest as at least 1.5” thick steaks, approx. 0.25kg each	Fillet
<u>Forerib</u>	2 x 2 bone, 1x3 bone, 3x 1 bone joints	Rib on the Bone
<u>Chuck</u>	Braising steaks	Braising
<u>Feather Blade</u>	Flat iron steaks	Flat Iron Steaks
<u>Neck</u>	Diced	Stewing
<u>Clod</u>	Diced	Stewing
<u>Foreshin</u>	A few shin on the bone in rings, rest off the bone,	Shin
<u>LMC</u>	Slices	LMC
<u>Jacobs Ladder</u>	On the bone, two bones each pack,	Short Ribs
<u>Brisket</u>	A mix of joint sizes between 1kg and 1.5kg,	Brisket
<u>Skirt</u>	0.5kg steaks	Skirt
<u>Hind Flank</u>	mince both sides	No label
<u>Leg of Beef</u>	A few shin on the bone in rings, rest off the bone	Shin

Example lamb cutting list from Romshed Farm:

ROMSHED ORGANIC FARM BUTCHERING OPTIONS FOR HALF AND WHOLE LAMBS

Batch No: _____

Date of _____

Collection: _____

Please slice liver and pack so each half lamb has a pack of liver and a kidney. Keep hearts whole.
Please pack all chops, steaks etc in 2s.

There is one lamb that is significantly smaller than the rest – put that in for the Romshed order

I think that a b/r joint from the loin is best taken from the whole loin and not the half so on the first two, where I have put an *, can you make the whole loin b/r and cut it in half so they each have the same size.

Half lamb Customer Name	Leg	Loin, best end and chump	Breast	Shoulder	Neck Fillet	bones
Keith, half	B/in whole	B/r joint*	B/in whole	B/in whole	Keep separate	yes
Jane, half	B/in cut in 2	B/r joint*	B/in whole	B/in, cut in 2	Keep separate	yes
Leigh, whole	1 x butterfly 1 x B/in joint	B/r joint	B/in whole	B/in whole	Keep separate	yes
Robert, whole	Shanks plus 1 x b/in whole 1x b/in, cut in	Chops and cutlets	B/in, whole	B/in, whole	Keep separate	yes
Joanna, whole	Butterfly	Rack, chined chops and chump joint	B/r joint	B/out, no need to roll	Keep separate	yes
Fay, whole	B/in whole	Rack and chops	B/in whole	B/in whole	Keep separate	no
Ann, whole	B/in, cut in 2	Cutlets, chops	Mince	B/in, whole	Keep separate	yes
John, whole	B/r joints	B/r joints	B/r joints	B/r joints	Keeps separate	yes
Fiona, half	Butterfly	Cutlets, chops	Breast chops	B/r joint	Keep separate	yes
Christine, half	B/in, cut in 2	Cutlets, chops	Breast chops	B/in, cut in 2	Keep separate	yes
Shona, half	B/in whole	Chops, cutlets	B/r joint	B/in whole	Keep separate	yes
Monica, half	B/in, cut in 2	Cutlets, chops	B/r joint	Mince	Keep separate	yes
Nick, whole	Shanks, 1 leg b/in, cut in 2, other 1 x b/r joint	Barnsley chops Chump, Rack	Mince	Shanks, b/in joints for 1 person	On the bone	yes
Romshed, whole	Butterfly	Barnsley chops Chump, Rack	b/in, whole	B/in, whole	Keep separate	yes

BEEF		
FOREQUARTER		
Cut Name	Weight kg	% of carcass
FORE RIB	7.11	9%
CHUCK	7.04	9%
BLADE AND FEATHER	4.22	5%
LMC	5.08	6%

BRISKET	8.79	11%
FLAT RIBS	3.59	5%
NECK	5.32	7%
CLOD	5.62	7%
SHIN	2.85	4%
DICED BEEF		0%
MINCE	9.09	11%
		0%
FAT	0.83	1%
		0%
HINDQUARTER		
Cut Name	Weight kg	% of carcass
SIRLOIN	7.67	8%
WHOLE FILLET	3.25	3%
RUMP	8.81	9%
TOPSIDE	12.04	12%
SILVERSIDE	13.35	13%
THICK FLANK	7.22	7%
LEG	3.56	4%
THIN FLANK	9.22	9%
BRAISING	2.67	3%
DICED BEEF	3.29	3%
MINCE	7.45	7%
		0%
FAT	5.90	6%
		0%
		0%
		0%
BONE & WASTE	15.53	16%

LAMB SIDE TRADITIONAL		
Cut Name	Weight kg	% of carcass
LEG FILLET	1.16	13%
LEG SHANK	1.24	13%
B/LESS CHUMP STKS	0.49	5%
LOIN CHOPS	0.74	8%
BEST ENDS / CUTLETS	0.76	8%
SHOULDER BLADE	1.59	17%
SHOULDER SHANK	1.33	14%
DICE	0.08	1%
BREAST	0.85	9%
MINCE	0.04	0%
KIDNEY	0.06	1%

SCRAG	0.18	2%
FAT / KKCF	0.48	5%
BONE & WASTE	0.26	3%

9.8. Packaging

Your meat needs to be packaged to stop contamination and ensure it can be transported, stored and handled easily. **Labels need to stick on easily, be freezer proof and clearly visible.**

Packaging will affect shelf life; the amount of air that meat is exposed to affects how quickly it degrades. The less air exposure, the longer the shelf life.

- **Vacuum packs:** are cost effective, safe and have the longest shelf life (13 days). Some are non recyclable because they have a nylon coating, see if you can advise your customers on how to recycle them.
- **Trays wrapped in plastic**
- **Trays with sealed lids**
- **Paper and string:** looks really nice but it takes longer to do and it must be done properly to ensure that the meat doesn't get freezer burn.
- **Polythene bags:** with a tape closure, which doesn't look as good as vac packs and is a higher risk of contamination.
- **Compostable packaging:** ask your butcher if they offer this. If you decide to pack at home this would give you a wider range of options for compostable packaging.

Try [Newton Print](#), [3R Sustainable Products](#), [DL Packaging](#), [Scobies Direct](#), [Grouned Packaging](#), [Vegware](#), [Dalzeil](#), [RH Packaging](#)

If you find it is very cheap and they do not specify, you may end up getting your meat back in large bin bags!

There is a debate around **plastic vs compostable packaging**. Biodegradable packaging is not always better, in terms of how it is made, it can be fossil fuel intensive. Vacuum packs are sometimes lined with nylon which make them non-recyclable. When it comes to packaging, listen to what your customers want and do your research. The status quo is changing constantly so if reducing waste and using sustainable materials are important to your business, stay on top of the latest research.

"My standard vac packs are fully recyclable locally. Tesco in Cirencester has recycling bins for film and plastic bags and normal vac packs can go in there. One of my customers did the hard work for me and contacted Tesco's and the recyclers. I believe (but I may be wrong) that it's made into a liquid oil product. I would like to go away from plastic, however meat is high value and reducing waste at the consumer end has got to be paramount. Vac packs are excellent at protecting your valuable product in an unknown fridge or freezer." - Andy Rumming (from PFLA forum)

PFLA Forum Threads: [Soil Association & Biodegradable Packaging](#), [Meat Product Packaging Supplier Recommendations](#), [Grouned Packaging](#)



Deersbrook vacuum packs
Source: PFLA



Ardross Farm
Source: Our Isles



J Hill
Source: PFLA



The Ethical Butcher paper and string packaging
Source: PFLA



Romshed Farm
Source: PFLA



Horton Grounds Farm vacuum packs
Source: PFLA



Brightleigh Beef

Source: PFLA

9.9. Labelling

Ask your local Environmental Health Officer what legally needs to go on your labels. It is helpful if the butcher can do as much of the necessary labelling as possible, as then you will have less to do yourself. Check what level of detail the butcher can put on labels, and if they cannot include everything you need make provisions to do your own labels i.e. purchase a label maker, labels, ink and scales if necessary.

Note that if you are PFLA or Organic certified your butcher will not include these logos on their labels and you will need to find another solution for adding them.

If you do burgers you need to put allergens on the label.

Labels are a good advert for your produce, so if you do embark on making your own be sure to add your logo and certification stamps. It is an opportunity to share your traceability. For Pfl certified farms there is the opportunity to use QR codes to share more about where the meat has come from and how it was processed.

Try a [Brother q1700 label printer](#) for making your own labels.



Bowhouse Butchery labels

Source: Our Isles



Ardross Farm Labels
Source: Our Isles



Cotswold Beef Mince
Source: PFLA



Andy Rumming label with brother printer
weight written on
Source: PFLA Forum



Chess Valley
Source: PFLA



Hornton Grounds Farm
Source: PFLA



Romshed Farm Labelling
Source: PFLA



Ready Meal Packaging
Source: PFLA

9.10. List of questions to ask butcher

- How does the carcass get from the abattoir to the cutting plant - is there an extra charge for this?
- What is their standard cutting list?
 - This will help you understand what language they speak - each butcher may have different terms for different cuts!
 - Check the cuts and weights
 - Are the weights right for your customers e.g. what size are the mince packs, how big are the joints
- When is the latest date you can send your cutting list
- Give them really, really clear instructions on cutting - speak their language, say what size - more detail the better
- Make sure they have read and checked your cutting list - that they are happy to do it
- Will they package as well? What packaging do they use?
- What do they put on the labels? Don't assume this will be good enough!
- Will they deliver the meat back to you OR do you need to pick it up and when does this happen?

9.11. Getting your meat back

9.11.1. Transportation

Keeping meat at a safe temperature in transport is important to prevent bacterial growth and retain quality. If the journey from your abattoir or butcher is less than 2 hours away from your destination (where you can refrigerate your meat) you will not need refrigerated transport. See the [FSA policy on transporting warm meat](#) and check with your Environmental Health Officer about the regulations for transporting meat back from the abattoir.

“Different environmental health officers may have different requirements for safe meat transportation. You will need to prove that the quality of your meat is not compromised in transit and it is kept to a certain temperature.” - Zeki Ismail, Abraham’s

Make sure you ask your butcher about when you can pick meat up and how it will be packaged. Will they box it? Should you bring ice packs and boxes yourself? You could try [Igloo cold chest boxes](#), these sit nicely in the back of a car with the seats folded down.

Always record exactly what you get back from a carcass when you get it back. This will help you start to understand how much meat you can expect from deadweights/grades, and from this you can work out how many boxes/cuts you will have and how much you can presell.

“For 3 years I collected from my butchers (30 miles away - 50 minutes) in my estate car. I could just fit two beef animals boxed. Had to take the child seats out, and the passenger seat was full, but worked and legally allowed to do this. The boxes were cardboard full sized euro boxes. You do not want to buy or store insulated boxes for this part of the job.” - Andy Rumming (PFLA Forum)

PFLA Forum Threads: [Transportation and Refrigeration](#)

9.11.2. Shelf life

Meat that is exposed to air starts to degrade; and so the amount of air that packaging lets in affects its shelf life. Meat changes colour from purple red, to bright red, to brown as it reaches the limits of its fresh shelf life. Vacuum packing does the best job at preserving meat quality and prolonging fresh shelf life. Make sure the shelf life is obvious on your labels.

Packaging	Fresh Shelf Life
Unwrapped on chilled counter/ controlled humidity counter	1-2 days
Overwrapped in trays (permeable film)	1-2 days
Trays with sealed lids (impermeable)	7-10 days
Vacuum packed	10-13 days (Extended from 10 to 13 days by FSA in 2020)

9.11.3. Labelling

Check what labels the butcher has put on and add your own label with any extra details which are necessary. Butchers will not add organic or PFLA logos so you will need to have a solution to add these separately. Check with your local Environmental Health Officer about what needs to be on your labels.

Government guidance on labelling [products containing meat](#).

FSA guidance on [food labelling](#).

FSA & DEFRA [Food labelling e-learning course](#).

9.11.4. Freezing

If you decide to freeze your meat, make sure you have enough space to do this. If you haven't pre-sold and will sell all of your carcass frozen, when you get your meat back is the time to update your stock levels and start marketing your meat.

9.11.5. Packing orders

At the minimum you need a clean place to pack your orders and some refrigerated space for those that are not picked up right away. Keep your packing process simple and make sure you have enough space. If you can pack in a walk-in chiller it will help keep the meat cool. It can be time consuming.

9.11.6. Quality control

When you get your meat back take the time to check all the cuts and ensure they look good; the colour is red, reasonable fat covering; if there are any bits you are unsure about don't sell them. Do try your own meat to see how it tastes.

See the [AHDB Guide to meat quality and shelf life](#) for more tips.



Lamb from Conygree Farm
Source: PFLA

9.12. Processing

Further down the line, if you find a glut of certain cuts or would like to extend the shelf life of your meat, processing and creating new products might work for you.

Pies and pasties are a fantastic and tasty way to use up certain cuts and add value. Find a local caterer or cook who you can work with to create these; it will be easier than doing this yourself to start off with.

Making **charcuterie** is a good way to extend shelf life and reduce waste. It is complicated to make and you will need training. Ideally you need to make it in a unit with controlled humidity and temperature. If you find you have a good market for charcuterie you can scale up production and make a charcuterie plant. Peelham Farm have had great success with this, and spent a lot of time training in making charcuterie.



Peelham Farm Organic Charcuterie and Salami

[Source: peelham.co.uk](http://peelham.co.uk)

If you have a market for selling **hides and fleeces** this is an interesting area to explore. However, the infrastructure of tanneries is not well developed in the UK and it is challenging to find one which will take small batches.

Check out [Exploring the potential of the fifth quarter](#) - Nuffield Report by Ben Stanley and [Grady + Robinson](#) - a project supplying traceable british leather.

Forum threads: [Hides](#), [Animal Hides](#), [Animal skin tanning](#)

Tanneries: [Organic Sheepskins](#), [JF & FJ Baker](#), [Welsh Organic Tannery](#), [Hayley Hanson](#), [Skye Skyns](#)

Wool also makes a good mulch for hedgerows and plants; it is full of nitrogen, and covers and protects the soil around the new planting helping it retain moisture.

10. Dairy

10.1. Liquid milk bottling

When you're starting out, speak to your local Environmental Health Officer at first to get information on how to bottle milk safely. At the minimum you need to invest in a bulk tank if you don't have one already, a pasteurizer and a clean, dry area to bottle milk. If you want to buy a small bulk tank look for something second hand; ice cream equipment can be good. Maintaining the temperature of the milk is absolutely key to food safety and milk quality. You can feasibly bottle milk using a jug, in a certified kitchen. This is the lowest cost option; bottling plants are very expensive. Where possible ask your customers to bring/send bottles back and wash them; either in a sink with plenty of soap and hot water or invest in a commercial dishwasher which goes above 85 degrees. Make sure you store bottles in plastic boxes to keep them clean. Discuss what requirements there are for food safety when bottling milk with your Environmental Health Officer.

"We bottle our milk using a jug; bottling plants are very expensive and can be difficult to clean. My bucket, jug and bottles are easy to clean thoroughly. If I'm using 1L bottles I can bottle 80L an hour, if I'm using 2L bottles I can bottle 140L an hour." - Rebecca Mayhew, Old Hall Farm



Old Hall Farm Milk and Butter
Source: Rebecca Mayhew

See [FSA Milk Producing Guidelines](#) for guidance on milk production and processing.

10.2. Ice cream, cheese, yoghurt, butter processing

To create a processing plant you need a clean, dry area. Rebecca Mayhew from Old Hall Farm used an old brick and tile building with a decent roof and false ceiling. She used a white damp proof membrane and stapled it to the walls and ceiling so you can see the dirt. The floors are concrete making them very easy to clean. If you lay a new floor, put it on a slight slant towards a drain so it's easy to hose down.



Source: PFLA

If you decide to process your milk, consider what products your customers actually want to buy, what you would like to make and what resources you have. Do you know someone with an ice cream processing plant you can rent to make your ice cream, which you can then sell on? It is a great milk product to start with because it has a longer shelf life, making it easier to manage supply and demand. Cheesemaking requires expertise, you could try taking a course yourself or shadowing a cheesemaker, or outsource the cheesemaking until you feel confident this is a product your customers will buy and then invest in your own kit. Dalton's Dairy works with a local cheesemaker, they sell them the milk and buy some of the cheese back, and sell it in their honesty shop.

Product	Equipment
Ice cream	Pasteurizer
Cheese	Pasteurizer, milk separator, cheese vat, drainage container, cheese mould, cheese press
Butter	Pasteurizer, milk separator, butter churn
Yoghurt	Pasteurizer, fermentation vessel, milk separator,

Cream	Pasteurizer, milk separator
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Check out the [Specialist Cheesemakers Association website](#) for cheesemaking equipment.



Old Hall Farm yoghurt
Source: Rebecca Mayhew

10.3. Packaging

Your milk and processed products need to be packaged to stop contamination and ensure it can be transported, stored and handled safely and easily.

Liquid milk: glass bottles, plastic bottles, cartons, tetra packs, pouches

Which packaging will suit your business and customers best? Glass bottles are expensive but if you can easily reuse them it keeps costs down. Customers may like glass bottles and be happy to make sure they get back to you to reduce waste. How about biodegradable pouches?



Dalton's Dairy Milk and Cheese in their Honesty Shop

[Source: Dalton's Dairy Facebook](#)

10.4. Labelling

Ask your local Environmental Health Officer about what needs to be on your labels and follow the most up to date guidelines on labelling your products. For milk bottled in glass you could have some branding and details printed directly onto the glass. For everything else you need good quality labels which will stick well to your products, freezer proof is best, make sure they do not degrade if they get wet.

Government guidance on labeling [milk products](#).

FSA guidance on [food labelling](#).

FSA & DEFRA [Food labelling e-learning course](#).



Source: PFLA

Raw milk: There are specific requirements for labelling raw milk. If it is bottled and sold it must have the following written on the packaging, and if it is sold in a cafe/ b&b on the farm unpackaged the same must be written on an attached label or notice which is obvious to the consumer. In England: "This milk has not been heat-treated and may therefore contain organisms harmful to health." In Wales: "This milk has not been heat-treated and may therefore contain organisms harmful to health. The Food Standards Agency strongly advises that it should not be consumed by children, pregnant women, older people or those who are unwell or have chronic illness."

10.5. Shelf life

The shelf life of milk / raw milk needs to be determined based on a number of factors; mainly the temperature it is stored at and a study of how long it will take bacteria to grow beyond harmful limits. This is something you need to discuss with your local Environmental Health Officer. See [Raw Milk Guidance](#) and [How to estimate the shelf life of fluid milk](#).

11. Standards and regulations

Register your direct selling operation as a food business with your local authority at least 28 days before trading begins. This is free to do and your registration cannot be refused, it is easy to do online or on a printed form. Your premises, food safety and labelling must meet the necessary regulations. Your local Environmental Health Officer will visit and give the business a hygiene rating and confirmation of registration. Find out more about [how to set up a food business on the FSA website](#).

Before starting the process **contact your Environmental Health Officer to discuss your food business** and what the specific requirements are for your set up. If you establish this relationship from the get go they will stay informed, and you will know what to expect when they come to inspect your business further down the line.

Check with your Environmental Health Officer what food safety qualifications you need. If you handle any fresh produce at your site you will need to do Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point ([HACCP](#)) training and create a solid HACCP plan. You will need to follow the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health ([COSHH](#)) principles and do a health and safety/ risk assessment for food production, storage, transport, farmers markets and any other relevant activities. All these plans will need to be available for any staff to read over, and in particular you will need to cover every base in case of an accident at work or complaint from a customer. For already packaged produce (meat packed by butchers or cheese packed by cheesemakers) you may not need a food safety qualification, although it is helpful to understand what is required.

It might be helpful to do an online food hygiene course, your Environmental Health Officer will probably like this. Try [High Speed Training: Level 2 Food Hygiene and Safety](#).

Take yourself through this free [FSA & DEFRA Food labelling e-learning course](#) to get a better idea of what is required for your labels.

Dairy: Depending on what products you decide to sell it may affect the regularity of your [inspections](#). If you are selling raw milk directly to customers you will be inspected by a Dairy Hygiene Officer every 6 months and will be expected to keep detailed records. See example of a Dairy Diary record keeping format in the [FSA Milk Producer Guide](#). Pasteurized milk needs to be tested regularly for [antibiotic residues](#).

PFLA Forum Threads: [Selling meat direct - standards and regulations](#)

11.1. Questions to ask your Environmental Health Officer

- What do I need to put on my labels?
- What do I need to do to transport my meat back from the abattoir safely?
- What do I need to do to store produce safely?
- What is the process for registering my business and inspections?
- What health and safety qualifications do I need?
- Can you advise me on the shelf life of my products?

12. Collection vs delivery

12.1. Collections

If your customers are local the easiest way for customers to get their produce is if they come and collect it from the farm. This cuts out delivery logistics and lowers your costs.

“Make your customers collect from you. People who visit the farm buy more and more often. You are more in control and it is much cheaper and most importantly better use of your time. At the moment people are especially seeing farm collections as the highlight of the week! In horrific wind, rain and flooding yesterday we had 62 folk turn up which effectively sold 2 large steers.” - Andy Rumming (PFLA Forum)

12.1.1. Handover collections

Set a date and time window for people to come to the farm to pick up. This gives your customers the chance to meet you and visit the farm. Build your personal relationship with them and convince them to come back. Focusing on a local market is helpful when you're starting out.

- Organise a short window for collections - two hours should do
- If a customer can't come then that's ok! Arrange another time
- Make sure you have help, it can get busy
- Put your orders into an alphabetized spreadsheet and tick off customers as they pick up
- Take payment by cash or card: this saves time on checking your account for cheques/bacs
- Have you got an event or a farm tour coming up? If you don't have time to chat to everyone you could invite them to come to the next farm tour and share the date

When customers come to the farm to pick up, make sure their orders are ready, tag everyone's box/ bag/ order with their name so when they arrive it is easy to find it and hand it to them. If your customers have not yet paid, ensure you have printed off an invoice for each customer, and add this into the bag or alternatively ensure that it is emailed. If they are going to pay on the day, have your card machine ready, and if they are paying by bacs, make sure the instructions for how to pay are on the invoice. Print off a list of your orders (or have it on your smartphone/ tablet) so you can tick people off as they come to pick up. If you've got extra bits you can upsell, add these to the existing invoices and give your customers the new total.



Branded bags at Ardross Farm

Source: *Our Isles*

You could take your collection days to another level like Hampton Estate; customers come to the farm for 'Beef Days' where they can pick up their orders and enjoy a cup of coffee and slice of cake at the same time.

"People come for the experience, it's friendly and personal, they can catch up with the local community. Our local shops closed a few years ago now, and a lot of people love to come and catch up, most of our customers come from within 20 miles." - Bill Bidell, Hampton Estate

12.1.2. Drive Thru Collections

A 'drive thru' model also works well, customers can come in their cars, you can put their order straight in the boot and they can pay on card through the window. No need to even get out of the car! You can't upsell with this model, but you can already email the invoices the day before, so they can pay in advance if they choose.



[Hampton Estate Beef Day Drive Thru](#)

12.1.3. Unmanned Collection Point / Honesty Shop

For lower value products, in particular milk, it may make more sense to offer a collection point which doesn't require you to be there all the time. People want to buy milk and eggs regularly, so it works well to offer these in an honesty shop. Think about what else people may want to buy. Can you source honey from a local hive for example? All these products help to increase the basket spend of customers.

When you are starting out it is cheap to invest in a second hand glass fronted catering fridge and place milk bottles in there for pick up. Dalton's Dairy bought a garden shed, installed a catering fridge, and enabled customers to come and go when they like to collect their orders, without having to see anyone. This is less of a drain on your time, and during the covid pandemic enabled customers to come and collect safely without any social contact. It is a model that might not suit all produce or farms, but it is definitely worth trying. If a simple collection point works well try scaling it up into an honesty shop; include extra products and leave a cash box or iPad set up with iZettle for card payments.

"During the pandemic the honesty shop has been perfect, they can come, pick up their milk, browse other produce, and they don't even have to see anyone. It is all about making it easy and safe for the customers, so they feel comfortable." - Angus Dalton, Dalton's Dairy



Dalton's Dairy Honesty Shop

[Source: daltonsdairy.co.uk](http://daltonsdairy.co.uk)

12.1.4. Vending Machines

Vending machines are a great way to ensure your produce stays at a safe temperature and is paid for and delivered to the customer smoothly without you even having to be there. However, they are a big investment and it is advisable to wait until you know your customers would use it before you invest in one.



Milk Vending Machine at Hope Cottage Farm Shop

[Source: The Daily Post](#)

They work well for milk; customers can bring their own bottles and buy their milk from the machine, which takes card payments. Look into carousel and rotary vending machines. They are quite an expensive investment but you might be able to pick something up second hand. Rotary vending machines are good because if the milk goes above 8 degrees (unsafe temperature) it will stop dispensing milk.



Meat Vending Machine at Hope Cottage Farm Shop

[Source: The Daily Post](#)

Vending machines work for other produce, including meat, something which is appearing more at the farm gate. [Hope Cottage Farm Shop has one of the first vending machines of its kind in the UK in their unmanned shop.](#) It is worth noting they do not have a website; they use facebook to share information and stay in touch with customers.



Vending Machine at Hope Cottage Farm Shop

[Source: The Daily Post](#)

12.2. Couriers

If you have customers further afield they may want their products delivered. Think carefully about whether you want to do deliveries or courier when you are getting started and testing out your setup. Logistics costs and packaging for deliveries can be expensive. Make sure you charge your customers extra for delivery costs, including delivery packaging and the delivery itself, if they want their order delivered. Look into negotiating a deal with the courier service you decide to use, to try and reduce the cost of delivery. If delivery costs are prohibitively high it could put customers off. There might be a minimum number of deliveries you need to fulfil in order to partner with a courier.

If you decide to use a courier, do your research, it is hard to find reliable couriers. If there are problems with delivery, for example if it arrives late and the meat or dairy is spoiled, always refund your customer or send a replacement product. If you don't do this, it is likely that this customer will not place another order. You could also stress to the customer that they can request postage at their own risk, but if something goes wrong you will offer a discount on their next order. It is better to retain your customers so they purchase again and again, finding new customers every time is a lot more work.

When something goes wrong with a delivery 99% of the time it is caused by the courier and not the customer and there is very little you can do about this. When you're sending your first orders by courier, track them closely, if you see there is a delay, be proactive, contact your customers to let them know - this works well for Graham at Hayes Meadow. If you have problems with your courier, be ready to adapt a new one into your system. It is important to find one which works for you and it is not always a safe bet to stick with the same providers in this case.



Old Hall Farm Box of Milk packed for delivery

[Source: Rebecca Mayhew's Instagram](#)

Dairy: Few couriers will take perishable liquids like milk. APC will take them but they will not insure the packages. DPD do insure perishables, and although previously have not sent liquids, but are revising their guidelines on this. Courierier liquid milk while retaining product and packaging quality can be a challenge. Courierier processed dairy products such as cheese and butter which don't require so much chilling is easier

Try [DPD](#), [DHL](#), [APC](#), [Parcelforce](#)

"Your courier is only as good as the local franchise to the customer. We regularly send packages to the other end of the country which arrive on time the next day, whereas packages sent just an hour away often arrive a day late." - Rebecca Mayhew, Old Hall Farm



Orders waiting to be picked up by a courier at Old Hall Farm
Source: Rebecca Mayhew

12.3. Local deliveries

If you are doing local deliveries you might want to invest in a fridge van or trailer or see if someone locally has one you can borrow (perhaps in exchange for free products or promoting their business).



Model Farm Shop Van
Source: PFLA Website



Deersbrook van
Source: PFLA

Meat: Consider when you will deliver; if it is not possible to deliver fresh orders the same day they come back from the butcher you will need to have cold storage to keep them overnight. Remember to charge for delivery, or if you offer free delivery create a route and share this with customers.



Mossgiel Dairy Delivery Vans

[Source: Mossgiel Facebook](#)

12.4. Delivery packaging

Use decent and where possible reusable/ recyclable packing materials which do the job and do not cost the earth. You will need insulated boxes and ice packs to keep your produce at a safe temperature in transit. Look at the pros and cons of polystyrene boxes vs insulated cardboard boxes. Wool is a great way to insulate chilled and frozen produce, as it can be reused and is compostable. Make sure you add the packaging costs into the price of delivery for each order.

Keep packaging materials to a minimum without compromising quality. Incentivise customers to send their packaging back, try offering a discount on future purchases if they do.

“Test out your delivery packaging. I boxed up 6 bottles of milk with ice packs and insulation and left it in my car for 24 hours. I felt this would be a similar environment to a van and warehouse! When I went to get the package out I checked the temperature & quality of the milk. I knew if I was happy with it customers would be too - and I was.” - Rebecca Mayhew, Old Hall Farm



Ethical Butcher Box
Source: PFLA

Meat: Frozen meat needs ice packs which freeze down at -18 and fresh meat needs ice packs which freeze down at -21. Generally you can order ice packs already filled which you put straight in the freezer, or you can order them flat, these take up less room BUT need to be soaked before they are frozen which can be a hassle..

Try [Woolcool](#), [Puffin](#), [Hydropac](#), [3R Sustainable Products](#)

12.5. Farmers Markets

Decide on whether you have the time and logistics set up to attend farmers markets. It can help to have a more diverse range of outlets which you sell to as you grow, so it might be worth trying a farmers market if there is a good one in your area. They can be a good place for customers to collect pre-orders and can be used as a sales launchpad. They give you exposure and people the chance to try your produce; chefs often visit farmers markets too.

They are a great way to find customers in the local area, but it is best to commit to a couple at the most, as they are tough work and mostly on weekends. You will probably shift a good amount of your produce but will always be left with some to take home.

Another great benefit of farmers markets is that they are a good way to network with other food producers. This is helpful for finding producers you might want to collaborate with in the future; you might resell each other's produce and/ or come together around optimising your supply chain.

Meat: With farmers markets you need to time your slaughter so you get the meat back fresh a day or two before the market, and it is all packed and labelled ready to go. You need to invest in decent cold storage for the meat on the stand, options include boxes and ice packs or a table top chiller. Speak to your local Environmental Health Officer about their recommendations.

13. Legal, Financials & Insurance

13.1. Company structure

Will this be part of your existing farm business or will you set up a separate company?
See the [differences between setting up as a sole trader or a limited company](#).

PFLA Forum Threads: [Ltd vs Sole Trader as farm business](#)

13.2. Accounting

Keeping good records is really important. Track your time and costs thoroughly; this will ensure you establish your true costs of production, gross margin and gross profit. Remember to write all your admin fees into your costs, for example website fees, payment fees etc.

Accounting Software: [Clearbooks](#), [Farmplan](#), [Quickbooks](#), [Xero](#), [Sum-it](#), [Kashflow](#) + [AutoEntry](#)
Make sure your software complies with making tax digital requirements for gov (important for VAT returns). [Software suppliers with connect with HMRC](#).

13.3. Cashflow

Financial forecasting is helpful; look at all your costs, and what you expect to make from each carcass. What is your gross margin? Make sure it will be profitable, and if it isn't at first, you need an idea of when you will reach profitability. Put together a cash flow forecast.

13.4. VAT

A lot of what you buy will have VAT, however what you sell will not. If you are VAT registered you can claim the VAT back providing extra income for your business. This will bring extra work but could be worthwhile.

13.5. Insurance

- **Public Liability Insurance:** Protect the business if a person is injured when visiting the premises.
- **Product Liability Insurance:** Protect the business if a person is injured by a product, for example, if a customer gets food poisoning.
- **Business Contents Insurance:** Protect the business if there is theft, loss or damage of owned equipment; would need to set up a new policy.
- **Stock Insurance:** Protect the business if there is theft, loss or damage of stock, which in our case would be packaged cuts of beef; would need to set up a new policy.

"Check your insurance cover - don't rely on any issue being covered by the butchery that packed your meat." - Andy Rumming (PFLA Forum)

14. Ongoing

As you start to sell on a regular basis you might find that some times of the year are easier to sell than others. August tends to be a quiet month when people go away, and January/February are always slow as everyone recovers from Christmas. Busy times tend to be Easter, Summer BBQs, Back to school Autumn and Christmas. You can start to plan for these peaks and troughs as you get to grips with your project.



Source: PFLA

14.1. Feedback

Getting regular feedback from your customers will help you understand what you are doing well and where you need to improve - all feedback is useful. If you have personal relationships with your customers it is likely you will find it easy to get feedback. Doing a survey is helpful, try using an online tool and make it anonymous so your customers can be honest.

Online survey tools: [Survey Monkey](#), [Typeform](#), [Google Forms](#)

If things don't go well, what is your backup plan? Have ideas for how you can pivot, think about a short-term back up plan (1 year), long-term back up plan (3-5 years) and a plan B.

15. References

Producer/Shop websites:

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