

About Meat Aging
From Snake River Farm

Updated 5/2/2024 Tom. tom@snakeriverfarmmn.com

Meat aging is frequently misunderstood.

NOTE: Pork does not benefit from aging longer than one to two days.

Aging, measured in days, refers to the time from when the animal is slaughtered to when the carcass is broken down into retail cuts.

Beef purchased directly from farmers or ranchers and processed by a local butcher will typically be “dry aged,” meaning the carcass will hang in a walk-in cooler while aging.

Dry aging beef or bison can do three things:

- 1. Improve meat tenderness*
- 2. Increases “beefy” flavor*
- 3. Causes meat to lose weight through evaporation*

“Wet aging” is a process used to age wholesale beef cuts in vacuum packaging and not often used by smaller-scale meat processors.

Typically, butchers will dry age a beef carcass for 7 to 10 days.

Carcasses with less fat cover, such as some grass-fed animals, should not be aged beyond seven to ten days.

For most people, aging beef 7 to 10 days will result in adequate tenderness, desirable flavor, and modest meat weight loss.

Generally, younger animals will be more tender than older animals and fatter animals will be more tender than leaner animals.

Aging beef beyond 10 days primarily results in stronger flavor and decreased product weight, with just a minimal increase in tenderness.

The desirability of the increased beefy flavor that develops through extended aging is purely personal preference.

NOTE: Since grass-fed beef is naturally more flavorful than grain fattened beef, it does not benefit from longer aging flavor

Beef that is “hanging” takes up the butcher’s limited cooler space, so you can expect to pay a fee for additional aging.