

What Causes Bad Flavor in Grass fed Beef or Bison

The basic problem with understanding “off” tastes, flavors or scents of any kind is that the detection and response to these tastes is highly personal and subjective.

Bad tastes or flavors are frequently termed “gamey” or “off”.

Some people detect and are offended by a “liver” flavor or scent in meat.

To further complicate all this, some people detect off tastes in meat while other people eating the same meat do not.

Liver flavor in beef is a complex phenomenon without a clear cause. It may or may not also be termed “**gamey**” or “off”. Several factors have been associated with it but additional research is needed to accurately pinpoint its cause. If that is even possible. In general, those who detect it, do not like it.

Taste is highly subjective.

Based on current knowledge the following are some possible causes and steps to minimize this condition:

1. The unique **taste of liver** and what most people may mean when they say something tastes like liver apparently comes from the high iron content of that organ. The hemoglobin in blood also has high iron content. Meat should be well drained of blood. Both liver and bloody meat will exhibit the “liver” flavor.

Tom’s Comment. The meat you receive from us is very carefully and thoroughly drained of blood. Blood in your meat is not a factor.

2. **Extended aging** can cause gamey or off flavors. Prolonged aging can accentuate flavor (or taste). It does this because aging is actually done to tenderize meat through partial decomposition. That will break down tissue fibers, making them more tender but can increase flavor toward gamey.

Toms Comment. Quality Meats hangs (dry ages) your meat about a week before processing. That is ideal for lean, young, grass fed beef. Extended aging is not needed and is probably more likely to be harmful overall.

3. **Overcooking** can cause poor taste.

4.

Toms Comment. Overcooking in my experience is the most frequent cause of “Gamey” meat. I believe that gamey is what people who do not like the game that they have been served in the past. Wild game, and especially venison is essentially lean meat. So is grass-fed meat. It is easily overcooked. The common result of overcooking is a gamey taste. Tough too.

Use recipes that include the use of herbs and spices (masking effect).

If possible, avoid cooking to a high degree of doneness.

Some muscles that are naturally high in iron due to their high myoglobin content are more susceptible to liver flavor (i.e., beef top blade, beef round tip bottom).