

LAMB | THE OTHER RED MEAT

WINTER 2012

Growing Sustainably on the Central Coast



Looking out over a California vineyard during the winter months is a pretty dull scene, where the vines are concerned at least. No bright leaves or full ripe grapes. Brown dry leaves and freshly trimmed bare vines lying on the bright green annual grasses pushing up through the cold soil.

It's a different story at Lindquist, one of Edna Valley Winery's vineyards. Nestled in the rolling hills of California's Central Coast, Lindquist Vineyard is home to more than just the field mice and wild rabbits that inhabit it. Here a hundred Dorper and Dorper crossbred ewes make their home along with just as many of their lambs (See Breed Highlight on page 2).

Gold Coast Meats is a product of two Cal Poly alumni with a responsible farming philosophy. Not only do they strive to produce the best quality grass fed lamb, but work hard to improve the quality of the land and pastures that they graze. "We are concentrated on environmentally friendly inputs, and helping the

environment where we graze," says Dan Dinova of Gold Coast Meats when asked about his sustainable farming practices. "I think we can always do better though. It is important to remember that the decisions we make today affect the land, animals and people around us." This is why they take the time to respect the environments and land they use.

Being organic or sustainable is often used as a marketing tool for many brands. However, it is more than just a way to get consumers to buy products. "I think everyone should be concerned about a secure, healthy, sustainable food system," says Dinova. "We need to feed the world, but we need to look at how to improve the environment while doing it. We cannot just keep using up the environment and not put anything back."

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For years, Gold Coast Meats have been grazing sheep in local vineyards on the central coast. Their main services are vineyard and property grazing: an alternative holistic source for the control of unwanted weeds, grasses, and other vegetation that may detract from the growth of vineyards and overall look of landscapes. They also sell whole and half processed lamb for special events and dinners.

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Lamb: A Healthy Choice

Sheep is one of the oldest domesticated meat species. Humans have been raising sheep for their meat and wool for nearly 9,000 years, starting in the Middle East. In many countries, lamb (a young sheep) is the major source of protein. It also provides a good source of many other nutrients. Although lamb is a popular meat all over the world, it has never been a staple in the U.S.

In the U.S., per capita consumption of lamb (and mutton) is very low, less than one pound per person, compared to 57 pounds in New Zealand. However, many of today's immigrants to the U.S. originate from regions of the world where lamb (and goat) are commonly consumed. Thus, the U.S. continues to import lamb to meet consumer demand. There is a growing demand for lamb in the U.S., especially among people of specific ethnic backgrounds.

Even though lamb is featured in the top restaurants, it is hardly a part of everyday meals in the U.S (See graph on page 2). Whatever the reason for low consumption; lamb should not be overlooked when cooking at home. Lamb is not only the most tender and mild of all red meats, it's also healthy, with just eight grams of fat per three-ounce serving (compared to 16 grams in the same amount of beef).

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Irish Lamb Stew

This hearty and traditional Irish lamb stew is perfect on a cold winter day. It's even better refrigerated overnight and reheated the next day for. This soup 'ages' well!

See Recipe on Page 3 -->



BREED HIGHLIGHT

- Dorper -

The Dorper is a South African mutton breed developed in the 1930's for its arid extensive regions. The Dorper breed was developed through the crossing of the Blackhead Persian ewe with the Dorset Horn. This resulted in all white lambs and black-headed lambs. The difference in



color is there for merely a matter of preference for each breeder.

The Dorper is well adapted to a variety of climatic and grazing conditions. Originally this breed was developed for the more arid areas of the Republic but today they are widely spread throughout all the provinces and the world. The Dorper does well in various range and feeding conditions and reacts very favorably under intensive feeding conditions.

The Dorper is hardy and can thrive under range conditions where other breeds can barely exist and the ewe can raise a lamb of reasonable quality under fairly severe conditions. As a strong and non-selective grazer, the Dorper can easily be incorporated into a well-planned range management system.

The Dorper is an easy care breed which requires a minimum of labor. Its skin covering which is a mixture of hair and wool, will drop off if not shorn to keep it tidy. The Dorper has a thick skin which is highly prized and protects the sheep under harsh climatic conditions.



The Dorper skin is the most sought after sheep-skin in the world and is marketed under the name of Cape Glovers. The skin comprises a high percentage of the income (20%) of the total carcass value. ☞

For more information visit: <http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/sheep/dorper/>

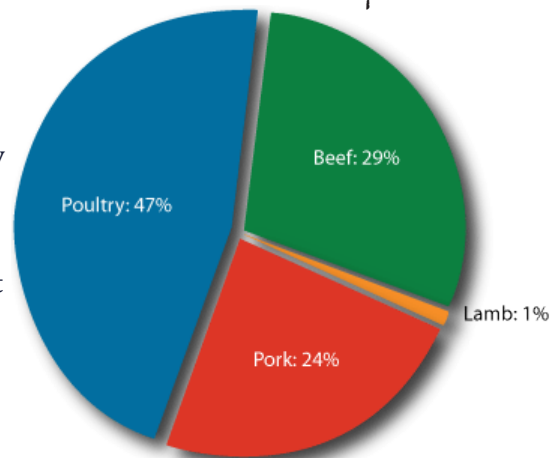
Lamb: A Healthy Choice Continued

- Lamb is a good source of high quality protein and supplies the body with 60.3% of the daily requirement for protein.
- It is a good source of selenium, a mineral whose deficiency can lead to asthma attacks.
- Lamb is an ideal source of iron. An average portion can provide twenty percent of the recommended daily intake for men and twelve percent for women. The iron found in lamb and other red meat is in a form that is easily absorbed by the body.
- Lamb meat contains a high amount of zinc (45% of the daily requirement), which is required by every living cell in the body for healthy immune function, cell division and overall growth. It also is in an easily absorbed form in red meat.
- It is a good source of vitamin B12, necessary to prevent a dangerous molecule called homocysteine from harming the body. It also promotes a healthy nervous system, supports the formation of red blood cells and prevents anemia. Moreover, vitamin B12 is found naturally only in animal foods.

- The niacin (vitamin B3) present in lamb provides protection against Alzheimer's disease, promotes healthy skin and keeps age-related cognitive decline at bay. Moreover, it retards the risk of developing osteoarthritis by as much as half.

- As a result of improved breeding practices, feeding practices, and butchery and trimming methods, the fat in lamb has been greatly reduced over the past twenty years (See table below). For example, lamb leg steaks may contain as little as 5.1 percent fat.

US Meat Consumption



Source: FAO 2009

- Half of the fat in lamb is unsaturated, which is good for you. Most of the unsaturated fat is monounsaturated, commonly found in the healthy "Mediterranean-type diet."

Fat content (grams) per 100 grams

| | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Snapper, baked | 3.4 |
| Lean beef topside, roasted | 5.3 |
| Lean lamb leg, roasted | 7.0 |
| Lean beef fillet, grilled | 7.4 |
| Lamb leg steak, grilled | 7.8 |
| Chicken leg, grilled | 11.1 |
| Lean pork shoulder, roasted | 12.4 |
| Quiche Lorraine | 24.8 |
| Cheese, cheddar | 35.2 |

Reference: The Concise New Zealand Food Composition Tables, 6th edition, 2003, ISBN 0-478-10833-8.

- Lamb also contains trace elements such as copper, manganese, and selenium, which the body needs. ☞

For more information visit:

- <http://lifestyle.iloveindia.com/lounge/benefits-of-lamb-6426.html>
- <http://www.sheep101.info/lamb.html>
- http://www.madbutcher.co.nz/health_benefits/index.cfm

Fast Facts: The American Lamb Industry at a Glance

- A Lamb in Time* - American sheep production peaked during the 1940's and 50's at more than 55 million head.
- A Family Affair* - There are over 82,000 sheep operations in the US, a majority of them family owned and operated.
- Lambs Across America* - Sheep are produced in nearly every state, making fresh American Lamb available year-round. The top 5 sheep producing states are Texas, CA, CO, WY and South Dakota.
- Caring for the Animals* - American Lamb producers care about the health and welfare of the animals they raise. Producers provide a healthy, comfortable existence for their animals. Shepherds tend their flock with the utmost care and employ guard animals to help protect the sheep from predators like coyotes, bears, and mountain lions.
- Lambing Season* - Because of the diversity in geography, climate and management systems used in sheep husbandry, lambing season vary considerable. The goal is to raise succulent, tender meat with spring-lamb flavor any time of year.
- Flock Size* - While many producers have small farm flocks between 50-300 animals, others have large operations ranging from 1,000 to 10,000 sheep.
- Breeds* - There are now over 200 breeds that were developed to serve diverse purposes.
- Fresh, Naturally* - American Lamb is available in grocery stores and restaurants within days of harvesting, so the meat is fresh. American Lamb is up to 10,000 miles fresher than imported lamb.
- Wholesome from the Ground Up* - American Sheep are reared on

high quality natural forage diets. Depending on the quality of the range, some lambs are marketed directly from the range or pasture while others are grain-finished for a short period of time to supplement the nutrition for the best care of the animals. Sheep are exclusively herbivores. Their ideal pasture is not lawn-like grass, but an array of grasses, legumes, and forbes.



Photo courtesy of the American Lamb Board

- A Healthy Choice* - with the growing numbers of consumers focusing on nutrition, healthy lifestyles and accountability in food production,

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Irish Lamb Stew

Prep Time: 20 Min
Cook Time:
2 Hrs 25 Min
Serves: 10

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds thickly sliced bacon, diced
- 6 pounds boneless lamb shoulder, cut into 2 inch pieces
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup water
- 4 cups beef stock
- 2 teaspoons white sugar
- 4 cups diced carrots
- 2 large onions, cut into bite-size pieces



- 3 potatoes
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 cup white wine

Directions

1. Place bacon in a large, deep skillet. Cook over medium high heat until evenly brown. Drain, crumble, and set aside.

2. Put lamb, salt, pepper, and flour in large mixing bowl. Toss to coat meat evenly. Brown meat in frying pan with bacon fat.

3. Place meat into stock pot (leave 1/4 cup of fat in frying pan). Add the garlic and yellow onion and sauté till onion begins to become golden. Deglaze frying pan with 1/2 cup water and add the garlic-onion mixture to the stock pot with bacon pieces, beef stock, and sugar. Cover and simmer for 1 1/2 hours.

4. Add carrots, onions, potatoes, thyme, bay leaves, and wine to pot. Reduce heat, and simmer covered for 20 minutes until vegetables are tender.

Nutritional Information Amount Per Serving Calories: 672 | Total Fat: 39.3g | Cholesterol: 163mg

Adapted from allrecipes.com

Fast Facts: The American Lamb Industry at a Glance *Continued*

American Lamb is a lean, nutrient rich choice. All American Lamb is hormone free and American Lamb can be offered as all-natural products that are antibiotic free.

- **Little Lamb, Big Advantage** – Sheep are an ideal tool for controlling undergrowth in forests and other wooded areas. American sheep are used to prevent forest fires and to graze weeds naturally in vineyards across the country.
- **A Sustainable Resource** – Producers use great care in shepherding their flocks to protect water and avoid overgrazing. Sheep in the US contribute to the environmental balance by grazing vegetation in a way that creates healthier land and



Ewes with lambs at Lindquist Vineyard

ensure that you, the consumer, get the safest, freshest, most flavorful and natural lamb meat possible. ☞

For more information visit:

<http://www.americanlamb.com/lamb101/fast-facts.aspx>

helps control invasive weeds without the use of herbicides.

- **American Lamb. From American Land** – Across the industry, American Lamb producers take pride in having control of their lambs from birth to finishing to fabrication, to

Growing Sustainably on the Central Coast *Continued*

Lamb has never been a staple in American diets. It is hardly served more than the traditional leg of lamb on Easter day. “I think fear of the unknown keeps people from eating lamb,” says Dinova.

“Most real cooks enjoy lamb, and everyone I ever have fed lamb becomes a believer. It is a very versatile and flavorful meat.” Lamb is both healthy and adds variety to the dinner table.

Not only is Gold Coast Meats producing a quality product, but it’s sustainable farming practices improve the land they use and ensure it’s quality for future years. This idea of giving back to the land is not revolutionary. Many other producers feel and farm the same way. Universities such as Chico State and Cal Poly, in California

both have grass fed flocks. Ranchers have worked by this philosophy for ages, that low stress on both the animals and the environments they use produce the best quality product. ☞

Lamb Shoulder: The lamb shoulder is often roasted — in which case it is usually boned and rolled; it can be stuffed, as well. Lamb shoulder is also sometimes cut into chops, though these chops are not as desirable as rib or loin chops.

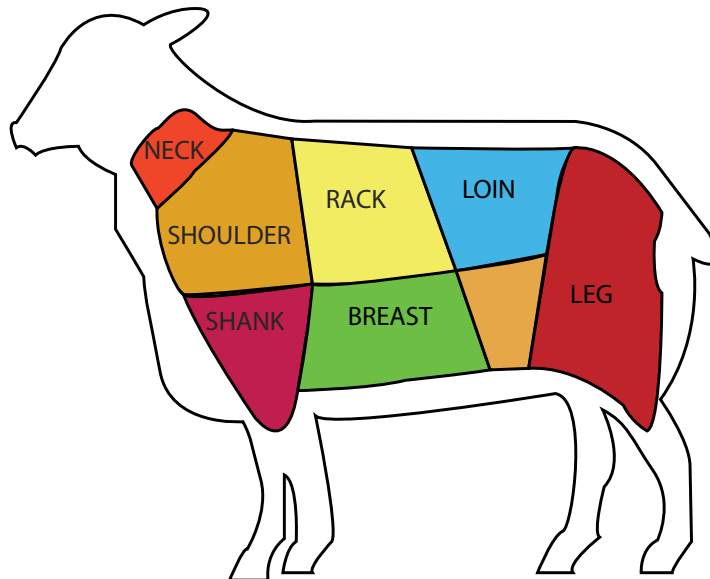
Lamb Neck: A tough cut with a lot of cartilage, the lamb neck is best used for making lamb stew.

Lab Rack: Sometimes called the hotel rack, the lamb rib primal cut is where we get lamb rib chops, lamb crown roast and rack of lamb. Depending on the size of the ribs, a lamb chop may actually have two ribs on it.

Lamb Loin: The lamb loin is where we get the lamb loin roast and lamb loin chops, both tender cuts that are best prepared using dry-heat. The entire lamb loin can also be cooked on the grill.

Lamb Leg: The leg of lamb can be cut into leg chops, though more frequently it is prepared whole. Roasted leg of lamb is one of the most common preparations, although braised leg of lamb is also popular in some cuisines.

Basic Cuts of Lamb



Lamb Breast: Lamb breast contains a lot of cartilage and other connective tissues, making it one of the few lamb primal cuts that need to be cooked with moist heat. Lamb breast can also be used for making ground lamb.

-These are the most common cuts that you will be able to find at your local retailer:

- Stew Meat
- Shoulder
- Loin Roast
- Rack
- Arm Chop
- Boneless Leg
- Rack Roast
- Blade Chop
- Fore shank/Breast shank
- Rib Chops
- Loin
- Loin Chop

-These are some wonderful cuts that you may need to special order from your butcher:

- Shoulder
- Shoulder Roast
- Rack
- Crown Roast
- Loin
- Boneless Loin
- Leg
- Sirloin
- Top Round
- Ribs

For more information visit: <http://www.americanlamb.com/lamb101/cuts.aspx>
<http://culinaryarts.about.com/od/beef-porkothermeats/ss/cutsoflamb.htm>