

Thursday, October 17, 2013

Put Mutton Back on the Menu

It is not often that Prince Charles and I have the same goals but I am right on side with his campaign to put mutton back on the menu. This tasty meat got a bad rap around WWII and never recovered. My parents' generation ate stringy, overcooked mutton and passed their culinary prejudices on to my generation without any of us ever having gone through that experience.

Think about it. The majority of North Americans only consider lamb. That is like only eating veal. It doesn't make sense with cattle nor does it make sense for sheep.

Let's talk terms. A lamb is an animal up to one year of age, a hogget is an animal from one to two years of age and mutton is from an animal over two years of age. A lamb will have a hanging weight of 30 to 60 lbs. A hogget will have a hanging weight of 70-100 lbs depending on the breed with mutton being about the same range. Cuts from each will be appropriate for the size of the animal.

For the first time this year we processed three adult ewes: two 6 year old Tunis ewes were made into ground meat and a three quarter Tunis hoggett was processed into chops and cubes.

And the verdict. The shepherd's pie made out of the ground mutton was fabulous. I would never consider making this dish with beef again. There is a reason it is called shepherd's pie. The chops from the hogget were indistinguishable from our lamb except for their size.

We are starting to learn about how to process and cook mutton. It seems that mutton should be hung for at least two weeks. That is going to be an education for our butcher as well.

The lambs are all weighed and we are ready to start processing. The first lot goes out next week with two more lots going out over November and December. There will be some lagging into the new year that had a slow start.

The weather is getting cooler. It is time to start eating lamb, hogget and mutton. With winter vegetables and a good glass of wine, it doesn't get any better.

TTFN
Laurie