

# Old Century Meats

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FROM THEIR FIELDS TO YOUR TABLE, THE HERITAGE GROWN ANIMALS FROM THIS SHELBY COUNTY FARM HAVE NO ADDED HORMONES, STEROIDS, ANTIBIOTICS OR GMO'S

The blades of an old windmill turn slowly as cows graze in the green pastureland underneath. The animals roam freely in the wide-open country, grazing in unspoiled fields that might seem a world away. They're actually just a few miles south of Birmingham and the surrounding farm provides locals with premium-quality meats. Old Century Meats spares no effort to produce beef, pork and poultry a cut above the typical store-bought fare.

"For us, it's not about dollars, it's about quality," says Tony Colafrancesco, who handles duties on the farm along with his wife, Erin. "We're not buying cheap feed or cutting corners." The

operation began 30 years ago when the Colafrancesco family decided to leave the modern city bustle behind and embrace an agrarian way of life. With faith at the center of their labors, the family operation keeps them connected to the earth and the animals. "It's living off the sweat of your brow, like in Genesis," says Tony. "It's a passion that the pursuit of money can't create and it does something for your soul."

The return to the land began after the family patriarch had spent considerable time exploring Europe, where the provincial lifestyle made a lasting impression. "He saw people living on the land and growing their own food,"

says Tony. "Generations would work the same plot of land. He saw beauty in that way of life." Now the family tends more than 300 acres of farmland where they raise cattle, pigs and chickens in clean, open environments.

"These are all slow-growing animals," says Erin. "We don't push them and they're free to roam." The meat derived from the farm's stock is free from antibiotics, steroids, hormones and GMOs. It is also USDA-inspected and trusted to masterful butchers for quality cuts and sausages. "That quality is unsustainable at a wholesale level," says Tony. "We're able to go the extra mile."



AS THE SEASONS ALLOW, ANIMALS ARE RAISED IN THE OPEN PASTURE.  
IN THE COLDER, WET MONTHS, ANIMALS ARE GIVEN DEEPLY BEDDED SHELTERS.

While exploring Italy, the Colaf-rancescos observed how distinctive cuisine could be from one community to the next. “Every town has a church with a belltower over there,” says Erin. “There’s a belief that the food grown and cooked within the sound of one belltower should be unique.” The beef, chicken and pork raised on Southern soil represent Alabama’s own terroir, and they can be used in a boundless array of recipes old and new.

Steaks like filet mignon and ribeye come scarlet and crimson red and beautifully marbled, while pork spare

ribs make for wonderful grilling. Chickens contribute hearty tenders, plump quarters and even farm-fresh eggs as well. Old Century Meats also provides bone-in pieces like beef shank, which is perfect for an Italian favorite like slow-cooked osso buco. If you want to make your own stock or stew, you can also order marrow bones, pork neck and other collagen-rich cuts.

As they work with the whole animal, Old Century Meats also has access to less-common cuts and even organ meat like beef heart or liver. “In the old days, these parts were more common at

dinner,” says Tony. “They have a lot of nutritional value, and they’re great for a GAPS diet and gut health.” If you’re interested in trying these vitamin-rich ingredients, consider a classic French preparation like rognons à la moutarde, which complements beef kidney with a sauce of wine and mustard.

While some cows are raised for beef, a separate variety serves in the farm’s upcoming dairy production. “Dairy is going to be a big part of what we do,” says Tony. Once upgrades to their facilities are complete, the team is preparing to release rich





cream-like milk and other premium dairy products. Their milk will also be used to make gelato and Old Century Meats is partnering with a prominent gelateria in Rome to open their own gelato and espresso shop on Highway 280.

Once you've made your order, you can retrieve it during their Saturday pickup periods. The team handles pickups at the location of their upcoming gelato shop each weekend, and the meat will come frozen to allow plenty of time to safely travel from the pickup point to your fridge. The pickup point and future gelato shop is located at 3600 Cedar Lane in Birmingham. For more information about the meat and other products, visit [oldcenturymeats.com](http://oldcenturymeats.com).

