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Holding Ranch Meats Still Available in Lamorinda

By Susie Iventosch



Photo Susie Iventosch

If you enjoy lamb, you will really enjoy these lamb burgers made with fresh herbs and shallots, grilled and topped with feta cheese and olive tapenade. They are delicious and give a fancy flair to a burger dinner. Sometimes it can be difficult to find ground lamb in the store, but if you ask, they generally have a few pounds tucked away.

Holding Ranch, a regular vendor at the Moraga Farmers' Market, always sells ground lamb (\$6.99 per pound) as part of their regular organic meat offerings. Beginning in May, they will also be purveying their goods at the Orinda and Lafayette markets. Holding Ranch carries a wide assortment of meats- beef, chicken, lamb and pork- in a variety of cuts, from shanks and legs, to chops and stew meat, all free of antibiotics, synthetic pesticides or added growth hormones.

Formerly of Lafayette, Anne and Hunter Holding moved the ranch operation to Montague in the Shasta Valley when they outgrew the 20 acres in Lafayette. Holding Ranch animals are all grass-fed and given mineral supplements to provide vitamins and minerals that may be lacking in the grass feed. Their mission is to produce "clean, minimally processed foods from animals, which are treated humanely and raised in a sustainable manner."

"We lamb in the spring and harvest throughout the year, mostly in the fall," says Hunter. "Our meat is butchered, cut, wrapped and frozen all at the same time to yield a product that is both easy to transport and of the highest possible quality."

Holding Ranch raises Dorper and Katahdin sheep, which are specifically bred for their meat and not for their wool. These wool-less sheep produce less lanolin, rendering meat that is more delicate and mild in flavor.

When they lived in Lafayette, the Holdings operated a non-profit organization, Deer Hill Ranch, where they taught children mindful interaction with the earth and living creatures, including animals and humans, and communications skills. These skills were taught through the prism of sustainable farming and all that goes along with it, including care of animals and every day farm chores.

"We truly believe in 'clean' food," Anne emphasizes. "This means food that is minimally processed and non-GMO (non genetically modified)."

Besides working the ranch, Anne also works with special needs kids in the Shasta area, many of whom have autism or Asperger's Syndrome. She believes that processed foods, pesticides and chemical additives contribute to behavioral issues and some diseases.

"I think we need to be much more mindful of what we eat and how it is raised," she says.

HOLDING RANCH

Special orders can be placed ahead of time by emailing Holding Ranch at office@holdingranch.com. There is a minimum purchase of \$100 for special orders.

For more information please visit: www.holdingranch.com

Orinda Farmers' Market 2010 opening is scheduled for

Saturday, May 1 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Lafayette Farmers' Market 2010 opening is scheduled for

Thursday, May 6 from 4-8 p.m.

For more information on the Contra Costa Certified Farmers' Markets (Lafayette and Orinda markets) visit: <http://www.cccfm.org/>

Moraga Farmers' Market runs every week, year-round on

Sunday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For more information on the Farmers California Farmers' Market Association (Moraga market) please visit:

<http://www.cafarmersmkts.com>

DIABLO FOODS

Diablo Foods carries ground lamb on a regular basis for \$5.99 per pound, supplied by Superior Farms in Dixon.

"We grind our lamb daily," says butcher Ron Arp. "We use mostly the shoulder and breast meat, because it is very flavorful. Our lamb is lean, and customers can always call ahead to place special orders." Arp suggests adding ground lamb to beef to really "wake-up" the burger.

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