

USDA puts chill on consumers getting local meat

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

The demand for locally grown food is ballooning, but it turns out that local meat is almost a misnomer.

Small ranchers in El Dorado County gathered at a Local Meat Summit in Placerville last week to beef, if you will, about how hard it is to sell to local consumers.

Ranchers who want to sell an individual tri-tip or tenderloin at a farmers market or store have to have it harvested – the current word for slaughtered – at a facility approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

There aren't many of those.

Consequently, that can mean a 500-mile journey, round trip, for locally raised meats, said Fred Hunt, who organized last week's summit on behalf of the Resource Conservation Districts of El Dorado County and the Georgetown Divide.

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