

# Redefining buying meat in bulk has nothing to do with big box store

By Blair Anthony Robertson, Sacramento Bee

Joshua Lurie-Terrell and his wife, Jineui Hong, often buy their meat in bulk. So do some of their friends and neighbors.

A caravan to the local big-box superstore? Hardly.

Part of a growing movement nationwide, they're doing their shopping the old-fashioned way, albeit with some newfangled twists sending out emails to friends, pooling their money, logging onto an area farm's website to size up the product and then placing the order.

They've had success going this route with Jenny Cavaliere, a college-educated, first-generation farmer who owns and operates High Sierra Beef, a 63-acre farm in Oregon House, about 65 miles north of Sacramento.

"She's very honest and upfront about the prices," said Lurie-Terrell, who lives in midtown Sacramento. "I really like the idea of buying totally organic, grass-fed beef and getting it in exactly the cut that I want at a fair price." He said it pencils out to \$7 or \$8 a pound.

Folks like Lurie-Terrell and his circle of friends are going this route, pooling money to buy large quantities of locally sourced meat.

Their motivations are varied. Folks want to buy locally. They demand high quality. They seek a personal connection with the farmers and they want to know the animals are treated humanely. They also see the environmental ramifications: Small, ethically minded farms tend to pollute less than

massive corporate entities, and animals raised and sold locally have fewer miles on them.

“It was like this in communities 100 years ago. I truly believe that people want a connection. They’re realizing that the larger, corporate food systems are not the total solution,” said Cavaliere, whose farm is considered minuscule by factory-farm standards. California’s largest beef producer, Harris Ranch, for instance, has thousands of acres and manages a herd of about 100,000 cattle.

What’s new is the convenience of it all. With a phone call or an online transaction, the meat is butchered, packaged and made ready for pick-up or delivery. A simple Internet search reveals whose beef is grass-fed, which farms are organic. Some farms routinely update prices and product availability on their websites.

Cavaliere said that at least two distinct groups are leading this meat-buying movement: young and middle-aged adults who are knowledgeable about quality food and the politics of corporate farming, and parents seeking healthier, more natural meat for their children.

**Read the whole story**