# Quality, Service and Innovation

Leona Meat Plant, based in Troy, (Bradford Co.) Pennsylvania, has been serving the needs of livestock producers around the region for 44 years. It was established in 1963, when Charles Debach fulfilled his dream of operating a business of his own. From its humble beginning as a two-room facility, the business expanded in 1967 to offer custom processing and boneless beef to "mom and pop" grocery stores and wholesale markets. In 1972 a retail store was added, which remains a popular stop for customers looking for a wide assortment of meat products and other goods such as dairy products, frozen seafood, fruits, and vegetables, bread, spaghetti sauces and more.

Charles passed on his invaluable knowledge and butchering skills to his sons Mike and Charles II (Chick) while building his business. Today, the two sons operate Leona Meat Plant with eight employees. With business growing and manufacturing increasing yearly, Leona has expanded its services by preparing and packaging for private labels and has become a certified organic meat handler.

Mike Debach, co-owner of Leona Meat Plant, says, "About 70 percent of our business is vacuum packaging, which includes a lot of private labeling. We are beginning to see more customers being conscious of where their food comes from and how it is raised — the whole Buy Fresh, Buy Local idea."

One farmer who has been working with the Leona Meat Plant for over a year now is Bill Callahan, owner of Cow-a-Hen Farm in Mifflinburg, (Union Co) Pennsylvania. Bill's 100-acre operation includes beef, pork, turkey, ducks, and geese. "I learned about Leona from Kim Seeley (PASA board president and dairy farmer), who highly recommended them," Bill says.

LEONA MEAT PLANT, INC.

***"Let us Cut Your Meat For You"***

We are a USDA Inspected Plant & Certified Organic Handler
Set to do your Custom Meat Cutting, Wrapping & Freezing
Beef * Pork * Lamb & Deer
Select Cuts of Certified Organic Meat Now Available
Now Taking Orders for All Natural Grass Finished Beef!
All meat cut to your specifications. Choice front, hind or halves.
Offering Smoking of all Cuts!
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At Prices You Can Afford!

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***"Quality is Why We Are Here"***
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About 60 percent of Bill's sales are through direct marketing. "I started working with Leona because they were willing to produce a high quality produce," says Bill. Leona Meats currently produces hot dogs and kielbasa for Callahan, which have no nitrates and are made with organic ingredients.

One of the unique aspects of Leona Meats is that they were willing to experiment — meaning they are willing to work with any farmer that comes in to create a customized, unique meat product. As Mike puts it, "In the end, if the experiment works, everyone ultimately benefits.

"Having Leona Meats is a tremendous asset," says Bill. "They have met all my expectations, are very timely with their production, and it would be very hard to find another processor to do a quality job like they do."

"It's nice to be needed," says Mike. "Working with the smaller/mid-sized farmers we do, we are thankful they see our business as a key to their survival. It is becoming more difficult to find USDA certified meat plants that will work with producers to create custom products that their buyers are looking for. Quality is why we are here. You can believe that you will never be disappointed." ■

*Leona Meat Plant also sells all natural, grass-finished beef raised on their rich, naturally managed grass and clover pastures without any growth hormones, antibiotics or chemicals — just as Mother Nature always intended.*