

Transportation Co-op Analysis (all prices are estimates)

After visiting J and R meats and learning that they do weekly pickups at Yosemite in Modesto, I began to wonder if they might be a short-term option for our group. While having a more local processor is the long-term goal, even in ideal circumstances that will take a few years. In the meantime, I decided to analyze the potential of a transportation co-op.

Possible processors are:

- Johansen's in the off season or with regularity and plenty of advance notice (\$75 slaughter, \$.75/lb cut and wrap)
- Yosemite Meats slaughter with J and R (Paso Robles) processing (\$50 slaughter, \$1.05/lb cut and wrap)
- Los Banos Abattoir slaughter with J and R (Paso Robles) processing (\$75 slaughter, \$1.05/lb cut and wrap)

Sacramento-based Joe hauls cattle full-time and charges \$2 per mile only when loaded (distance of travel from Sacramento to pick-up is negotiable, he said he wouldn't charge extra for Amador County, but maybe a bit for Calaveras). He is able to haul 1,200 lbs, or 9-10 cattle equivalents per trip.

We used Ryder truck rentals in Rocklin to get our refrigerated truck cost estimate.

Assumptions for this model are that livestock would be picked up by the hauler at the Calaveras County Fairgrounds. Assumed 500 miles for refrigerated truck to travel – probably usually an overestimate, but we don't know where cold storage will be or whether it will be delivered back to the fairgrounds.

To Johansen's – about \$112 per animal

- Hauler takes livestock to Orland: \$300
- Refrigerated truck rental (\$200)+500 miles(\$147)+gas(\$212): \$559
- Payment for driver of refrigerated truck: \$150
- Total=\$1009/9= \$112.11 per animal

To Yosemite Meats, Modesto and J and R, Paso Robles – about \$135 per animal

- Hauler takes livestock to Yosemite: \$150
- J and R picks up halves at Yosemite: \$300
- Refrigerated truck rental: \$559
- Payment for driver of refrigerated truck: \$200
- Total=\$1209/9= \$134.33

To Los Banos Abattoir, J and R, Paso Robles – about \$150 per animal

- Hauler takes livestock to Los Banos: \$300
- J and R picks up halves at Los Banos: \$300
- Refrigerated truck rental: \$559

- Refrigerated Truck Driver: \$200
- Total $\$1,359/9 = \151

Current Winterport Farm estimate per animal - \$125-\$157/animal

(taking loads of 4-5 animals to Johansen's once per month)

- Delivery to Johansen's (gas plus truck depreciation): \$225
- Pickup meat at Johansen's, van rental (\$100)+ gas (\$60): \$160
- Rancher's time (16 hours*\$15/hr): \$240
- Total: \$625 for 4-5 animals

Winterport estimate for J and R – \$145-\$185/animal

- Delivery to Yosemite: \$225
- Pickup meat at J and R, van rental (\$100) + gas (\$100): \$200
- Rancher's time (20 hours*\$15/hr): \$300
- Total: \$725 for 4-5 animals

Conclusions:

- It does not appear to be significantly cheaper to use a transportation co-op than to haul it up individually, IF individuals are hauling a full trailer load (4-5 beef) and going to Johansen's. A more distinct advantage would be for people who are currently hauling 1-2 animals to processing at a time. When meat pickup is further away (J and R) it also becomes more advantageous to use a co-op.
- All these estimates are related to beef. Adjustments would have to be made to account for other species. Could multiple species go in the same trailer? Unlikely, unless goats and lamb.
- There would be an advantage in being able to leverage the number of animals and regularity to be able to get in with processors who are currently turning people away. This would not likely work in the high season, but for the off-peak months would allow some producers who currently cannot get in to leverage their community pull. J and R has committed that they could take 10-15 beef per month from a transportation co-op, even in the high season.
- The ranchers' time under the transportation co-op options is not accounted for. Ranchers would still have to load and haul their animals to some common ground where the hauler would pick them up. This could be 2-4 hours per rancher.
- The logistics behind the co-op could turn into a nightmare if not fiercely organized. Arranging how many animals are coming from many different producers and what months, getting all the ranchers to be organized and drop off animals on time, keeping animals separate before loading, keeping track of whose animals are whose for the slaughter and processors, and concerns about disease transfer would all need to be considered.
- The lack of cold storage is not addressed here. So we all get our meat processed – where do we store it?