

CRYSTAL & DEREK NORWOOD
Hays Meat Company – Lexington, TN

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Interviewer: Rien Fertel for the Southern Foodways Alliance
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs
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Project: Southern Barbecue Trail – Tennessee

[Begin Crystal & Derek Norwood-Hays Interview]

00:00:00

Rien Fertel: Test; this is Rien Fertel for the Southern Foodways Alliance. It is just after 2 o'clock on July 22, 2008. I'm on the Barbecue Trail in Western Tennessee. I'm at Hays Meat Company with Crystal and Derek Norwood, the owners—new owners. I'm going to have them introduce themselves and give us their birth dates, please.

00:00:30

Crystal Norwood: I'm Crystal Norwood and my birthday is January 23, 1983.

00:00:35

Derek Norwood: I'm Derek Norwood—birthday is May 16, 1985.

00:00:39

RF: Okay; so how—how long have you—have you owned this business?

00:00:44

CN: August will be two years.

00:00:46

RF: So two years this August and I guess those familiar with the barbecue culture or restaurant industry in this part of Tennessee, we are in Lexington; we're just a little bit east on Highway 420 East just east of the main city of Lexington? Four-twelve? I'm sorry; 412 East Highway.

Those familiar with the barbecue industry here might know Mr. Hays who both had this slaughtering plant and a barbecue restaurant. Tell us—tell us about how you came into this business.

00:01:29

DN: Well we originally started looking; we wanted to get into the meat business and started looking around and just got on the internet and started looking around. I found two or three places in Tennessee and, just really, just looked at them and decided on this place and started—and we really liked the area and liked the businesses we'd be dealing with and it just went from there.

00:01:51

RF: So Mr. Dennis Hays had this place for sale?

00:01:55

CN: Yes.

00:01:55

DN: Yes.

00:01:58

RF: And you saw it online; did—did you drive up here to see it immediately?

00:02:01

CN: Actually my father did. He drove up here and checked it out and looked at a couple other places and kind of liked this one the best.

00:02:08

RF: What made y'all want to get into the—the meat industry?

00:02:14

CN: Just looking for something else to do, a different way of living, a new place to live—just wanted to try it out.

00:02:23

RF: Do you have any experience doing this before the past two years?

00:02:29

CN: No, not really.

00:02:29

RF: But—but do—so no slaughtering experience at all?

00:02:33

CN: No.

00:02:33

DN: Other than real small personal you know—one or two for the holidays and stuff like that; no.

00:02:40

RF: So did you grow up on a farm or around animals?

00:02:42

CN: Yes; we've always had animals.

00:02:46

RF: And where did each of you grow up?

00:02:47

CN: Florida.

00:02:49

RF: Both of you grew up in the same town?

00:02:51

CN: Yes.

00:02:52

RF: And what's the name of that town?

00:02:51

CN: Plant City, Florida.

00:02:53

RF: Can you describe where that is?

00:02:55

CN: It's about 30 miles near Tampa.

00:02:59

DN: In between Tampa and Orlando.

00:03:02

RF: And so you—you grew up on a farm. And—and you're married now?

00:03:08

CN: Yes; yes.

00:03:09

RF: And when did you get married?

00:03:12

CN: September of '03.

00:03:13

RF: Okay; and how did you meet, just for the interest of our audience? Then we'll—then we'll talk about what y'all do?

00:03:18

CN: We were just friends; we—met through friends. Yeah; we used to go riding four-wheelers and it just kind of went from there.

00:03:26

RF: So the farms you grew up on, they were family farms. What—what did each of your family farms grow?

00:03:31

CN: Um—

00:03:34

RF: Specialize in, if there was a certain crop or animal?

00:03:36

DN: About all we did—well we did hogs just like I said just for the holiday. We'd have two or three in the pen at the time—nothing special. And then we had the ranch beside us—I worked on the ranch you know with beef, cutting calves and fences and all that stuff—just around the animals a lot.

00:03:55

RF: Right; were there—was there growing plants too on your farm?

00:03:57

DN: There was ornamental trees like the Augustan trees and palm trees; that's what my dad did, but other than that—.

00:04:04

RF: And yourself?

00:04:07

CN: Kind of—both of ours was kind of—a lot related to hunting you know. When we'd go hunting you'd get you know whatever you harvested [*Laughs*]. You'd have that to—for your own consumption; that's about it.

00:04:22

RF: So what made you want to go into the—the meat slaughtering business? What—?

00:04:28

DN: I guess my dad always told us if we were going to do something to get into alcohol, sex, or meat 'cause it sells.

00:04:34

RF: [*Laughs*]

00:04:36

DN: And we didn't want to get into alcohol or sex so we went with meat.

00:04:40

RF: That makes sense; it's probably a good choice. And you—you're selling meat here in—in this—I guess the triangle, you know the whole hog triangle. There's a lot of barbecue here, Lexington, Henderson, and Jackson. Before we get into that what y'all do and who you sell it to—tell me exactly what the business does and is.

00:05:02

CN: I missed that question.

00:05:06

DN: We basically just bring—we do beef, goat, sheep, hogs and buffalo—a few buffalo and they come in live you know from either individuals or farmers that we buy them from where we slaughter them and we can either—we either sell them out whole to the barbecue restaurants; we—shoulders to the barbecue restaurants on the—on the pork or any—any other cuts are processed, you know quartered or all the way down to pork chops and steaks and whatever.

00:05:36

RF: So you—you slaughter; you—you cut meat for—to sell yourself and for individual wholesalers and restaurants?

00:05:45

DN: Wholesale and retail.

00:05:47

RF: Okay; well—we'll take me through a day. Today is—is Tuesday; take me through a day.
What time does a slaughter start, a slaughter—a pig slaughter?

00:05:59

DN: We normally start at 7 o'clock, depending on what time the back gets lit and how busy we are. Normally we start killing between 7:00 and 7:30 and depending on what we have to kill, obviously the bigger hogs take longer so we try to move them towards the beginning of the week. We do our big sausage hogs for mainly like the small grocery stores that make their own sausage and then we'll do the barbecue hogs say for like [Ricky] Parker [of Scott's] and any local restaurants and basically we have like whatever we—if we have something to process, you know say it was killed on Monday, let it hang overnight in the cooler. And then once it's chilled we'll process it you know Tuesday or the following day and get it ready to go out.

00:06:45

RF: Okay; and these hogs that—that you slaughter early in the morning are they normally here before hand a day or two?

00:06:50

CN: Yes; we try to get them here at least the night before.

00:06:54

DN: And let them settle down.

00:06:54

CN: Let them settle down and let them relax so they're not—the more tense they are the—you know the harder on them it is so we like to have them calm and relaxed before they—you know before anything happens the next day.

00:07:07

RF: Are—are they fed at all while they're here?

00:07:09

CN: They eat corn, yes; they're fed corn daily.

00:07:12

RF: And do—I mean I've heard this before. What happens to a pig or a cow when they're excited? What does it do to the—to the meat?

00:07:20

CN: Well it makes the meat a little tougher but—but also we don't like to do it when they're agitated because they're harder to kill just like if you have your adrenaline going you're—it's a lot harder to get you down. So we—we don't like to do that; we like to have them calmer where they have an easier kill where you know less—where it's less harmful to them.

00:07:40

RF: Right; and so you—you start the kill with actual—actually killing the animals? Is that where it starts? And—and how do you do that; can you take me through the beginnings of that process?

00:07:50

DN: Can you kind of rephrase; I'm not exactly sure—?

00:07:52

RF: Well how do you start the process? How—how—well how do you kill an animal?

00:07:55

DN: Oh okay; well I guess we pick like whatever hogs we're going to kill first, they go out and run. We run one hog in the shoot; we run one hog in the shoot at a time. That hog is shot and as soon as possible it's stuck and once I bleed it out it goes into the hog—into the scald vat and that water is 180-degrees and it's in there for just a minute or two and the hair starts loosening up. And when the hair gets loose then it's flipped into the de-hairer which takes the hair off and whatever is remaining is scraped off by hand and then the hog is—well the head is removed and the hog is gutted. And then the Inspector looks at it and it's either—released and stamped and it goes into a cooler.

00:08:37

RF: So and this is a similar process for cows with the hair removal?

00:08:43

DN: No; on the cows we skin them. They're not—they don't even go into a scald vat; they're just hung and skinned.

00:08:48

RF: So one animal at a time is—is pushed through the shoot. What kind of gun is used?

00:08:56

DN: Twenty-two Magnum.

00:08:56

RF: Just—just for interest, where is it shot exactly?

00:09:00

DN: Between the eyes.

00:09:01

RF: Between the eyes and you said it's—it's what word did you use? You said it's stuck?

00:09:05

DN: It's stunned.

00:09:06

RF: Oh it's stunned; okay you call that—shooting is stunned?

00:09:09

DN: Yeah; shooting is stunned—it's considered stunned. The animal is unconscious and then they're stuck and bled, you know cut—cut the artery.

00:09:16

RF: The throat is cut?

00:09:18

DN: The throat, yeah.

00:09:20

RF: How long is a pig bled for—a medium sized pig before it's—?

00:09:22

CN: A few seconds.

00:09:24

DN: Yeah; it's basically the hog is stunned and the heart is still beating is what it's—you know what's going on. You want to try to stick them while the heart is still beating and it pumps the blood out within a few seconds.

00:09:33

RF: I see; okay and so you—you put it in this device which I've taken pictures of which is— what's the temperature of the—?

00:09:42

DN: One hundred and eight degrees.

00:09:44

RF: And that's the scalding pit and it has a sort of lift that lifts it on a bed and tell me how that machine works—how it removes hair.

00:09:51

DN: The de-hairer has paddles that when the—the shaft—they're fastened to a metal shaft and when the motor turns that shaft then the paddle rotates the hog and scrapes the hair at the same time.

00:10:04

RF: And at that time is it hung on the railing?

00:10:06

DN: After—after it's laying down and after it comes off the de-hairer and it's—all the hair is removed and then it's hung.

00:10:14

RF: And it's hung—and how is it hung—from what part of the anatomy?

00:10:17

DN: It's hung by its rear, the rear tendon connecting the foot to the first joint.

00:10:22

RF: Okay; and that's strong enough and it never breaks? I've—I've seen it hung that way and it looks like just a little piece of tissue that it's hanging from.

00:10:27

DN: It's never broke in our experience.

00:10:29

RF: Wow; and how many people or men does it take to life a—a hog that's you know—?

00:10:39

CN: They usually will chain them while they're laying down so then they won't have to lift them themselves.

00:10:42

RF: So it's a pulley system you use?

00:10:45

CN: Yes; a hoist.

00:10:45

DN: Electric chain hoist.

00:10:47

RF: And what is the—the largest hogs you get and—that you're processing—at this point before gutting?

00:10:53

DN: The—we've had a 1,072-pounder.

00:10:58

CN: We had a 1,200 pounder in here.

00:11:04

DN: I think about 1,072 is the biggest and we don't have them very often. That was only—but the average—the average like a big sausage hog will be 700 pounds.

00:11:11

RF: Wow; so that—but that one that was over 1,000 pounds, something like that is it wild or is it farm-raised?

00:11:18

DN: No; it had been farm-raised and fed all it can eat.

00:11:19

RF: How—you keep bringing up sausage hogs. Sausage hogs it sounds like they—they're twice as big as a barbecue hog?

00:11:29

DN: Not necessarily; a lot of the—the local—the local stores that make their own sausage they prefer a big hog.

00:11:38

RF: The—why is that?

00:11:38

DN: I think because more of a turnout and more of a yield on their meat.

00:11:42

RF: Just more yield; does it—but is that hog that's a 700-pound hog is it—is it sized or is it fat?
How much fat—fatter is it than a—than a 250-pound hog?

00:11:54

DN: It depends. There's—if you're—like if you're looking at the fat—the inches on the back
say a—a 200-pound hog has an inch. One of those hogs may be up to four inches.

00:12:07

RF: Wow; okay and so I guess the barbecue hogs, the—the whole hogs I guess I should say—

00:12:17

CN: They get more meat. The barbecue hogs get more meat where the sausage has more fat,
you know or the sausage hogs.

00:12:23

RF: And how many pounds does a—a whole barbecue hog weigh about?

00:12:26

DN: It depends—three—live weight would be 315 average—300, 315 average.

00:12:34

RF: So let's get back to the process; so the—you use a chain and pulley to—to hoist the hog up onto a—a rail and that runs throughout the entire building?

00:12:48

CN: Yes.

00:12:48

RF: And what happens then once it's hoisted to the rail?

00:12:52

CN: It'll be moved down the line where it will be gutted and inspected and then it will go to where it's sprayed with vinegar and for sanitary conditions to prevent the e-coli and any bacteria to grow on it. Then it will be stamped, either USDA inspected or custom and then it's moved into the cooler.

00:13:14

RF: And what—tell me most of what is removed when it is gutted.

00:13:19

CN: All of the insides—just their whole intestines you know. We can keep the heart and we can keep the livers and then the whole head—we don't keep any of the head. We can keep the feet and then it's just outside.

00:13:33

RF: And the spine?

00:13:34

CN: We can keep the spine.

00:13:37

DN: When it's split the spinal cord is disposed of but when it's split it's not necessary—I mean it's not necessary but when we split it we'll remove the spinal cord and throw it away.

00:13:47

RF: Okay; whole hog people—where are they split, along which—?

00:13:52

DN: Split down the middle of the backbone.

00:13:53

RF: Oh okay.

00:13:54

DN: All the way from the top of the hams all the way down—split through the shoulders.

00:13:59

RF: Do you cut around the spinal cord and remove it or you cut right through the middle of the spinal cord?

00:14:03

DN: Through the middle.

00:14:04

RF: Wow; and it's—and you actually remove then two spinal cords?

00:14:08

DN: It's—it's a rubbery substance. A lot of time it won't cut; it's just kind of pushed to one side.

00:14:13

RF: Oh so it's—some of them keep it in there?

00:14:16

DN: Sometimes it stays whole and you just remove the whole thing.

00:14:19

RF: So it—we have it on the rail at this point. It's—it's been gutted; you—you keep the hearts and the livers and you sell those?

00:14:28

CN: Yes; if—if the USDA has approved them we are able to sell them.

00:14:30

RF: And what happens to all the other offal and all the waste?

00:14:35

DN: We have a company that comes and picks it up.

00:14:38

RF: And it's just disposed of?

00:14:40

DN: Just disposed of.

00:14:41

RF: And tell me about the USDA Inspector; are they an official employee here?

00:14:46

CN: She's employed by the government but she's here from 7:00 to 3:30 every day five days a week and she watches everything that we kill.

00:14:55

RF: And does she have a checklist or does she just look—how—how does she look at a—an animal hanging upside down? How does she do it?

00:15:01

DN: I'm sure they have a checklist, but she's been in it for a long time you know and she knows what to look for. She looks at very animal, the lungs, you know—

00:15:10

CN: The heads.

00:15:12

DN: —the hearts, everything—liver, everything there is to look for you know she'll look for it in that animal.

00:15:17

RF: So she even looks at the parts that you're throwing away?

00:15:21

DN: Yeah; she looks at everything.

00:15:21

RF: To—what does she check for?

00:15:24

DN: Making sure—see if that hog had a fever, see if there was any diseases, any—anything that would be wrong with it.

00:15:32

RF: And I was at Ricky Parker's—Scott's Barbecue earlier today and—and he made a big deal about the USDA stamp. Can you tell me the importance of that stamp and what it means?

00:15:42

CN: Well just for like his—he can't have you know an animal that's not been USDA inspected because he's serving it to people from a restaurant. So it's very important to him to have the inspected stamp on it 'cause that—that just shows that it's been inspected and everything is just fine for somebody to eat it.

00:16:01

RF: So—so tell me—I think—I believe from what I understanding talking to—to Ricky Parker and Chris Siler, who I guess are two of the more—more well known whole hog barbecue guys here or within half an hour of here, tell—I believe there's a difference in how they acquire their hogs. Can—can we talk about Ricky; how does he get his hogs?

00:16:24

CN: He has just a local farmer that he has to provide for him and his—he'll bring his hogs in whenever he wants to have them and we'll kill them the next day and he'll come to pick up every one of them.

00:16:40

RF: And someone like Mr. Siler? I believe he does it a bit differently; he doesn't have a farmer?

00:16:44

CN: He buys his from us.

00:16:46

RF: And so when does he come in the morning?

00:16:50

CN: Early. [*Laughs*] He likes his early—first thing.

00:16:54

RF: So those—those pigs have just been slaughtered or were they slaughtered the day before?

00:16:59

CN: The day before usually.

00:16:59

RF: The day before? Well I was—I was at Siler's two weeks ago and he had—he had picked up his hogs late that day. And they were fresh; they were still warm. I felt the. What does that do? Why is that a—do you think it's a better hog? Is it a better product to eat meat that warm and fresh?

00:17:19

DN: No; it's not a better product.

00:17:19

CN: No.

00:17:20

DN: It's just it'll take it less time to cook.

00:17:24

RF: Less time to cook?

00:17:26

DN: Less time—there's not; if you're transporting it, it makes it a little harder 'cause it'll obviously warm up on you but as—that's really the only difference.

00:17:33

CN: There's really no difference because they're still fresh because ours are never more than a couple days you know where they have been in the cooler, so they're still just as fresh. There's not much of a difference.

00:17:43

RF: So—so the hogs that you own, where do you get them from?

00:17:46

CN: We have a—some local farmers; we have a—you know a farm in Kentucky that's bringing us some now. We try and keep it local but with the prices and everything people are getting out of the business 'cause they just can't afford it anymore. And so we—but we try and keep everything local.

00:18:06

RF: Are they of one breed or are they a variety of breeds?

00:18:10

DN: They're all a variety; just basically we buy by size.

00:18:14

RF: You buy by size?

00:18:15

DN: Basically.

00:18:15

RF: What are the names of some of the breeds?

00:18:25

Chuck Hunt: You've got Duroc(s), you've got New Hampshire(s)—those are the two major breeds and you would then—they sometimes cross those and everything so you can have a cross between those but those are the two major breeds. And most of the barbecue houses prefer the Duroc(s).

00:18:37

RF: Okay; and can you just introduce yourself—give us your name?

00:18:42

CH: My name is Chuck Hunt. *[Laughs]*

00:18:43

RF: And—and your relation?

00:18:44

CH: Father and father-in-law.

00:18:47

RF: Okay; very good.

00:18:48

CN: Crystal's father; that's my dad. *[Laughs]*

00:18:51

RF: And what was the name of the barbecue hog again?

00:18:55

CH: Duroc.

00:18:57

RF: How do you spell that?

00:18:58

CH: D-u-r-o-c.

00:19:00

RF: D-u-r-o-c—and do you know where they're—where they're from? Are they an American hogs?

00:19:04

CH: The—most of the Duroc breeds came from Britain originally. The New Hampshire(s) are an American breed. They normally don't like the New Hampshire(s) because they're a longer and a leaner hog. They get more yield and a faster growth out of Duroc(s) so most of the farmers raise the Duroc(s).

00:19:20

RF: And—and why do barbecue guys prefer this hog?

00:19:23

CH: They—they want a more meaty hog with less fat so they like their hogs to be around the 240 pound range and everything. Most hogs go up to about 240 or 280—are what they call top hogs which are kind of the ideal size for cutting it for pork chops and things like that. After 280 pounds it takes a lot more grain to put meat and fat on them and they put more fat on them which most of the places don't like because that's not a marketable product you know. They lose that so they don't—but that's where you get the big sows where they keep those and they're having the pigs and after two or three years of having pigs they get where they're—what they call spent sows and they're not producing anymore so they—they sell those off and that's why the

barbecue houses like them because they like usually about 30-percent fat in the sausage, so you want more fat to—to grind into the sausage.

00:20:12

RF: Okay; and can I just ask you—how long does your experience go with—we know you're—you were a farmer in Florida. Did you have a long experience with hogs or animals?

00:20:23

CH: No; I was raised a farm boy in the Midwest in Illinois and so I—all my life I've been around farming and—.

00:20:28

RF: Do they have a hog culture in Illinois?

00:20:31

CH: Yeah; we used to raise about 500 in containment up there every year and so—.

00:20:37

RF: Were they—who are they—would you slaughter them also there?

00:20:38

CH: No; we took them to local slaughterhouses, local packing houses.

00:20:45

CN: He's the one that got us in this business. He's the one that looked—found it and—

00:20:47

RF: He encouraged you?

00:20:48

CN: —and thought it was a good idea.

00:20:49

RF: Well I want to ask about that; did—and then I want to ask some more about the other items that you sell. Did you—did you know what you were in for?

00:20:58

CN: No; I had no idea. [*Laughs*]

00:21:02

RF: What—what was—I've talked to a lot of barbecue guys who told me about their first year in business. What was that first year—two years now you're in business; what was that first year or first season like? How—how difficult or—or maybe easy was it?

00:21:18

CN: It was pretty difficult. It was a lot of learning that we had no idea with the USDA and the HACCP and the requirements of the testing and we thought you just came in and you killed them and you sold them. And it was—it's a lot different; you have a lot of regulations that you have to

follow and—and which that’s good ‘cause you want everything that you’re selling to be a good product.

00:21:39

RF: And—and you do a lot of the cutting. And tell me how long that took to—to learn and acquire that knowledge.

00:21:48

DN: It didn’t take long to learn it—maybe two weeks and I could learn it. It took probably six months to where I could get efficient at it you know where I was real fast but—it’s not—it’s basically just memory. Once you—once you do it you can remember it you know.

00:22:05

RF: And who taught you?

00:22:08

DN: Dennis Hays mostly; his son Chris helped a little bit.

00:22:10

RF: Okay; and what else do y’all sell? You—you have your own hogs; we’ve established that, so I think you slaughter some of those hogs for yourself also and what do you do with those hogs?

00:22:20

CN: We process them just for pork chops and sausage and shoulders, hams, bacon—or we don't do—we do fresh middlin'. We don't cure anything. Ribs, we—anything that's on the hog we'll cut it up and sell it.

00:22:35

RF: Is packaged middlin and packaged bacon different or the same thing?

00:22:38

CN: There's a difference; ours isn't cured. It's fresh.

00:22:41

RF: Oh so bacon is just cured middlin'?

00:22:44

CN: Yes; yes and it's pretty good.

00:22:46

RF: And—and anyone—anyone from—anyone can come in; the public can come in and buy?

00:22:53

CN: Yes; we sell to the public.

00:22:55

RF: And you sell by the pound and by the portion?

00:22:57

CN: They can come if they want steak we'll sell them one steak; if they want 10-pounds of steaks we'll sell them 10-pounds and they can even come in and tell us they want pork chops an inch thick, half an inch thick and we'll cut them to exactly how they want them.

00:23:10

RF: And tell me about the sausage. You make your own sausage; you grind and make your own sausage?

00:23:13

DN: Yeah; we do. Most of it's out of the—the big sow, the 600-pound sows and it's basically just a few recipes that I've tried and yeah we do a country sausage and I basically just made the recipe over messing with it for six months.

00:23:34

RF: But since you got here? It wasn't a Florida recipe?

00:23:36

DN: No; I made it since I was here.

00:23:38

RF: And you've got a mild and a hot?

00:23:37

DN: We've got a mild, medium, and a hot.

00:23:40

RF: Mild, medium, and hot and what do you use for the casing?

00:23:43

DN: We use—depending on—they're all poly-bags just like—but we'll do different sizes—one pound, two pounds, seven pounds, eight pounds and then we'll take—we'll do patties and those will be in flat packs you know. There will be 12—12 patties a pack or however many the customer wants.

00:24:01

RF: Do—and you grind meat for hamburgers and things like that?

00:24:04

CN: Yes—yes; we grind our own hamburger.

00:24:07

RF: And one more question about that; you—you cure your own bacon?

00:24:10

CN: No; we don't do any curing.

00:24:12

RF: Oh you don't do curing?

00:24:13

CN: We're no curing; we're all fresh.

00:24:14

RF: Where does the—but you sell bacon?

00:24:16

CN: Yes; we have local places around here—wholesale places that sell boxed meat.

00:24:22

RF: Okay; so you send someone middlin' and they send it back to you as bacon?

00:24:26

CN: No; we'll just buy their bacon.

00:24:28

RF: Oh you buy their bacon but is it made from your pigs?

00:24:31

CN: No; that's the only—bacon is the only thing that we don't make ourselves.

00:24:34

RF: Okay; so tell me—I've spoke to a couple businesses who—in this area, who five years ago were doing whole hogs, today are not doing whole hogs; they're doing shoulders, they're doing hams, ribs of course. Why do you think that is?

00:24:55

CN: Because the price of everything has gone up so high; the price of the hogs has doubled since we started because of the corn and the gas and everything. They just had to raise everything so we're—we're having to raise our prices and you just can't compete. You can actually buy a shoulder and you know hams and it be about the same price, so it's—it's hard to compete with you know the higher prices.

00:25:21

DN: You know the shoulders and hams and stuff that they'll cook will be delivered for the same price, so they're saving their gas and you can't hardly blame them for doing it.

00:25:30

RF: And—

00:25:30

CH: If I might interject, too; one of the big things when I've asked some of the—the ones that do that is when you cook a whole hog you're handling like a 200-pound carcass and you have to have a huge cooker and everything like that. If they don't sell all that meat then they have to do something with it where they find out that a lot of them are cooking within their store instead of an outside cooking area, so they can put on a ham if they need—or a shoulder and if they need more they just put another shoulder on and they can cook that in a smaller cooker inside. So if they don't want to cook too much they just—they can control their—their portions a lot—lot closer that way and it also makes it a lot better for them to have—to—storage. They can have a

bunch of hams or shoulders deliver and we can do hams and shoulders and everything which they can take 10 shoulders or 10 hams and put them in a cooler a lot easier than they can take two or three whole hogs and try to hang them on a rail system someplace and—. So it's a lot of convenience of handling it and everything; so—.

00:26:23

RF: Sounds like there's a lot of factors—waste and time and—and money. You were telling me there's not much of a barbecue culture where y'all come from in Florida.

00:26:34

CN: No; there's the little chain restaurants, but there's no family owned barbecue houses really in—in Florida—not that I'm aware of—not where we were.

00:26:44

RF: Can you tell me the first time you came here and you—I'm sure you visited these whole hog restaurants. What did you think about these—these guys doing the whole hogs? What was your first impressions about what they were doing—not taste but them and then we'll get into taste?

00:27:01

DN: The first thought was man they need to come up with some sweet sauce but—.

00:27:06

RF: So you don't think it's sweet here in this part of Tennessee?

00:27:08

CN: Their sauce is different; the sauce is a lot different—the barbecue sauce is more vinegary, where in Florida it's a lot sweeter and thicker and we're used to it but now we've gotten used to the sauce up here and we're starting to like it. *[Laughs]*

00:27:20

RF: And so this operation—had you ever heard of cooking an entire hog at one time?

00:27:25

DN: We cooked them for graduations and stuff every year down there but not—yeah, but not—not like they do up here really. We still used our same sauce and all that; we cooked them the same way. It was just—tasted a little different.

00:27:38

CN: We used to have—whenever I was little, I don't really remember much but we have videos where at my Gramp's house they did whole hog barbecues and it was a big party thing where everybody came over and they stayed up all night and cooked it and it's kind of—it was kind of a tradition yearly thing that they did.

00:27:56

CH: Like graduations when you'd want all the people together or certain holidays and all the farmers would get together and you'd have 200 or 300 people come and bring a covered dish and we'd always barbecue one or two hogs and—and you know and—.

00:28:07

RF: Maybe I should ask you a few questions 'cause I'm interested in—in whole hog around the country and not just here. Were there ever any restaurants or people who did that professionally where you're from?

00:28:20

CH: Not—not particularly where I'm from because I was raised in the Midwest which is mostly corn farming and stuff like that so most of the hogs were shipped out to—railed out to like Chicago or New York or anything and run through the processing houses there for the cities. Most of the cooking—or cut downs were done by the local locker plants up there just for the local people and everything. And when you got to Florida you didn't have a lot of whole hogs down there because with the heat they don't raise a lot of hogs in Florida and everything because it's too hot for them down there and their survival rate is bad. So they—they ship in a lot of shoulders and stuff where they could cook those and—the Midwest or the—Tennessee and Carolina area, it's kind of unique in the fact that it's ideal conditions for raising hogs and so therefore it makes it ideal to cook whole hogs and it's kind of a tradition here and kind of an old South thing that they take a lot of pride in. And it's—it's—it's neat to see the competitions between the different places that have their own secret sauces and their secret way of doing it and it's—it's very unique and very folksy you know to—lot of tradition.

00:29:20

RF: Well if—if your family was doing whole hogs in Florida for—for celebrations and—and parties, what—who taught you how to do it? What generation taught you?

00:29:32

CH: Well I—I—of course I learned it on the farm up there in Illinois when we were raising our hogs and we'd have them—about four times a year we'd have everybody out and have the big parties and everything and that; so I just learned from my dad and—.

00:29:42

RF: So even in Illinois they would do a whole hog occasionally?

00:29:44

CH: Right; so from my father and then my grandfather and everything just being raised on the farm with them I learned to cook the hogs and everything the way they did and—and do it.

00:29:53

RF: What kind of pit would you construct?

00:29:54

CH: We used a rotisserie on ours up there. We had a—a block pit and put them on a rotisserie and—and cooked them on the rotisserie where here they seem to lay them on a flat grate and then turn them and that and so—. I think looking back at it I think the flat grate system is a lot better because it holds the grease and that into them and I think it makes the hog a lot juicier and a lot more moist and everything where on the spit it has a tendency to drip out and—and be a little bit drier then.

00:30:18

RF: Right; and would you in Illinois, would you call it barbecue—was that the name for what you were doing?

00:30:24

CH: Yeah; we—we did because what we would do—we’d pull the meat like they do here and then some people liked it to put barbecue sauce on it and some people liked it to just some other type of sauce on it and some people just liked to like—cooked fresh you know and they liked the fresh hams or the fresh—fresh meat. So once you pulled it everybody could kind of have it the way they wanted. If they wanted to put the barbecue sauce on it they could; if they didn’t they—so it kind of left it open to everybody’s—kind of their own choice, you know what they wanted to do.

00:30:52

RF: Do people make their own sauces?

00:30:55

CH: Yeah; the people would bring their own sauces that they would have and you’d always have a little competition about well is Jimmy’s sauce better than Mike’s or is Mike’s better than Bill’s and Bill goes, “ah mine goes back for years.” And you always had that competition going and it was always fun to have a little taste-off, you know, where you would have a little committee that would do samples of everybody’s and say, “yeah, his sauce is better than this,” or we’d rate this one and that. So it was just kind of a fun get-together which seems to be more prevalent with people in this area or people in the Midwest that are farmers that are more family

oriented and everything than you are in the big cities. You don't seem to get that—that family type of organizations in the cities that you do out in the farms and that.

00:31:36

RF: Well how would you describe an Illinois sauce? Was it sweet or vinegary?

00:31:39

CH: Well an Illinois sauce I'd say is more like a honey and a sweet sauce and a lot of times they like to cook it right on the barbecue, like when her mother fixes ribs now she—she uses kind of like they do in the Midwest, where they—she cooks the sauce right on them and everything. Where down here they don't cook any sauce on the hogs; they—they pull the hog off and everything and then pull the meat and then they add the sauce and everything to it, so it's—it's a difference. I—myself I like the way her mother cooks [*Laughs*]—cooks everything but—.

00:32:10

CN: My mom is a good cook. [*Laughs*]

00:32:11

RF: So y'all barbecue a lot here?

00:32:12

CN: Yes; yeah we do a lot. We do—cook our own ribs and my mom is a good barbecuer, and steaks, we bring steaks home. We just had steaks last night.

00:32:23

RF: How many—how many nights or—or days a week do you have meat?

00:32:27

CN: Probably seven out of seven. [*Laughs*] Yeah; we're a meat-eating family.

00:32:35

RF: And have you attempted a whole hog in Tennessee since you've moved here?

00:32:38

CN: We've had some friends that we've sold them to and went to their—theirs when they cooked them but we haven't actually done it ourselves just because we don't have a setup to do our own. We don't have the cooker I guess—the pit to cook it in.

00:32:54

RF: Because I've only been speaking to restaurant owners and—and Pit Men can you tell me, how—how frequent do—do just ordinary people whole hog barbecue here in this area?

00:33:08

CN: It seems to be pretty regular; that seems to be a big thing around here, especially like Memorial Day and 4th of July which is totally different from Florida. You didn't see that at all, but up here they line up on the holidays to do whole hog barbecue.

00:33:23

RF: And do—really and—and many of these buy a hog from you or do they bring their own?

00:33:30

CN: Probably like 98-percent of them buy from us.

00:33:34

RF: And I want to go back to an original question I asked; what did you—your first visit, what did you think about these guys who cook for 24-hours? A lot of them stay up or have someone stay up for most of that time just watching the animal from what—you know from what I've seen; what did you think you know these guys that were doing this, which you know are some of you know your big customers I'm—I'm guessing?

00:33:59

CN: Better them than me [*Laughs*]; I couldn't do it. I'd fall asleep and then it would be burnt. So they do a good job; they—it's hard work just—just from seeing it from our point of view. It looks like hard work.

00:34:13

RF: Right; and can you say a word or two about Mr. Hays—where is he now and—and I mean he—he did both this and barbecuing whole hog so I think he retired. He was worn out; can—what does he do now?

00:34:25

CN: I think now he just relaxes and just piddles around and does whatever he wants. He has his honey-do list I'm sure and I think he's enjoying it. He's—he's a good man and he comes in and

visits us and sees how we're doing and if we have questions he's up for any—anything we have. He'll help us anyway he can.

00:34:43

RF: Right; I want to ask just a few more questions. We talked about the economy and what—the price of everything is going up and is you know the price of—of a hog is—is kind of drastically increasing. What do you think will happen in the next five—ten years—not with your business but with—? Well let's talk first about what do you think will happen with farmers because I know you—you have to have a relationship with a lot of small farmers and you already said that you're seeing a lot of them disappear. What do you think will happen to these small farmers? Maybe you should talk about that, sir.

00:35:16

CH: I—I don't think the situation is going to change for the farmers any more than it has over the last 40—50 years. I think the farmers are always going to be struggling because it seems like in the food chain he's the last one to get any type of increase for his product and everything. It seems like all the transportation and the processing and the marketing and everything that's where all the price increases come in there. And a lot of people are saying well you know the farmers right now are getting \$5.00 a bushel for corn or \$5.50—dollars a bushel for corn and two years ago they were only getting \$3.00 a bushel. They're making a killing. Well they don't realize the fertilizer has tripled; the fuel has gone up three times more than it's been. Taxes and insurance has gone up—the cost of equipment and everything. Their margin of profit really hasn't changed any so I think it's going to be a struggle. But I think one of the optimistic views they have is it seems like the States like Tennessee and that are doing a lot more programs right

now to help local producers and farmers and everything be able to stay in the market. And I think that's real important to keep a lot of these young farmers and that alive because it was getting to the point you were getting young people getting into the farming. They—it was dying out when the older people—when they died off the kids were selling the farms and selling to big conglomerates and that and I think with the Tennessee programs and pork producers and beef producers and all that they're going to bring a lot of that back and help the—the small farmer get in there, and I think that's—I don't say they got a real bright future but I think they got a better future than they've had before just because of that help.

00:36:51

RF: How—how many—since you've been here the past two years, how many farmers do you think have disappeared or stopped doing—not—not stopped coming here but stopped coming here because they stopped growing pigs and cows?

00:37:04

CH: We have probably have what—10 or 12 large hog producers that have got out of the business because of the cost. We—it used to be we never had to go further than about 10—15 miles to get any hogs. Now we're going to Kentucky and—

00:37:16

RF: Really? People from Kentucky are bringing their hogs here or you're—oh you buy them and pick them up?

00:37:19

CH: We buy them from livestock producers where big livestock companies will go out and buy them and then bring them to their yards and truck them out and you know they'll ship them to Smithfield and all the other plants and everything and that where they go to the sale barns and they go to the local farmers and they bring them there and collect them and then they distribute them out because most of the farmers you know it's hard for them to say well I got five hogs. Will somebody pick them out? Where with these distributors they can all bring them in there during the week and then they grade them by size and weight and everything and then they ship them out to the—the different markets and that. And you're—from our side of view; we're seeing a lot more local animals being brought in particularly on the beef where before they were shipping them out to Nebraska and everything else to have them slaughtered out there. Well with the price of freight and oil and everything going out there now it's—it's bringing them more to—the local processors to—to do that here now. You're also seeing a lot more though with the economy tightening up; beef and pork prices have gone up about 28-percent in the last two months in the grocery stores from our side. We've only gone up about three to four percent and so you're seeing a lot more of the local producers now saying instead of selling that cow and shipping him out west they'll bring him in here to have it killed and put back in their freezer. And—and so I think that's going to do more for the locals to—and I think it's going to be one the trends you're going to see where as these fuel prices and that go higher you're going to see more local things being produced and—and marketed in the area than you are being shipped out or freighted out or freighted in.

00:38:55

RF: Right; I want—I want to ask about localism and the consumer. Do you find that consumers are also wanting to buy here because it—it seems that a lot of the pigs and cows are coming from a you know are more local than I think what Wal-Mart down the road is selling?

00:39:15

CH: The largest trend by—if you read all the magazines and do all the research and everything on it right now is natural and organic foods. The—the people are becoming very, very conscious of the chemicals being put in the foods. They don't realize like you can go to Wal-Mart and you can buy a tray of meat and you say well it looks nice in that tray. And it used to be you could look at a piece of beef and say four or five days it's starting to get a little gray and turning bad. Well now when they package it they evacuate the air out of there and put a little shot of nitrogen there. That piece of meat could rot in that—that box in six months and it would be just as red and look just as pretty as the day they put it in the box you know. And it's like you were talking about bacon where we're having people going to the fresh side because they don't want the nitrates and the nitrites that are going into curing and everything in the bacon. They want those chemicals out of those foods and everything now and so I think you're seeing a lot more people saying look; if we know it's raised locally and we know that there's no—the growth hormones and everything aren't injected in these chips in the cattle in the feed lots out West which are just basically steroids to make them double their weight gain over normal, the public is becoming much more aware of that and—and it's making them be more conscious of buying locally where they can—they can go out to the field right now and see the farmer raising the cow and say yeah; it's—it's being raised in a gentle manner. It's a beautiful, grassier, pasture and grain and everything. We want to buy that cow or take it down here and have it processed and put it in our

freezer 'cause we know that—what we're getting and everything and that. And that trend is going to continue to grow.

00:40:46

RF: And did you—when did you start seeing that? Well is it very recent; was it when you first came in here?

00:40:53

CH: Coming on slowly for the last three or four years; people are becoming more and more—the consumer is getting much more aware of what he's buying in that than he used to be. And when they have these recalls it even brings it more to their attention that they're saying look. We don't want to get into these recalls where these big companies are calling these—these products back and everything. They're—you've just got a much smarter consumer now than you had three, four, five years ago and then.

00:41:16

RF: Right; are you changing your business at all to attract that consumer or do you not have to because it's already—?

00:41:21

CH: Yeah; because we don't use the injected products and everything and that and—and we buy our cattle locally that are—are processed here. We buy our—our pork and everything that we know where we're getting them and everything—that they're not being given the chemicals and steroids and that and so we—we haven't had to change our program and everything; so—.

00:41:37

RF: What's the farthest that you go for an animal, that—a—a farm?

00:41:41

CH: Right now probably Hopkinsville, Kentucky.

00:41:42

RF: How far by—by car?

00:41:43

CH: Thirty-eight miles.

00:41:47

RF: And you mentioned organic beef. Does anyone have organic cows or pigs that they bring here to slaughter?

00:41:54

CH: No because it—organic hasn't taken off so well, because right now the USDA says if you're going to raise organic cattle or beef you have to go have your field certified for three years that there's been no chemicals there. They have to go in for three years to see that—do soil testing to make sure you haven't put any chemicals and fertilizers on those grasses. You have to go back four generations of—of cows or hogs with no chemicals or antibiotics or anything in them before they could be certified that their offspring or—. So you're not seeing a lot of that but

you—you are seeing more where they want the natural and the natural means that they don't have the antibiotics and they don't have the growth hormones; they don't have the feed supplements that have the—the different antibiotics and everything in them and that and that's the fastest growing—and that's also the market of what the people—. They're willing to pay anywhere from 20 to 25-percent more for that where they're not willing to pay say 100-percent more for the organic and then again get it particularly. So there's—there's kind of that trade-off there of what—what we feel is healthy and what we can afford as opposed to what we would really like to have but we can't afford you know, so—.

00:43:03

RF: Do you think more farmers are going to—there's going to be more organically farmed animals in this—within 100 miles of here and—?

00:43:11

CH: I don't think the organic farming will ever really take off in this area but the natural farming is and the—almost all the farmers have gone to the natural farming now and everything and that—and that's a good thing. That's—again you know the—if the farmer could raise it and then ship it here and—and get a better product—price for it than he can bulk selling them and shipping them out because you know if he has to take it to a sale barn they put a markup on it to sell it and then the trucking company buys it and they—they got to get paid for their freight to haul it out to Nebraska. The feed lot out there has to get paid to hold it and then ship it then to the processing plant. The processing plant has to pay to ship it back here. You've got five and six people stepping on it where now the farmer can say look; instead of selling it for 90-cents at the sale barn here I can sell it to the public for \$1.30, take it down here to the local processing shop

and have it done. The people are buying it for 30—40-cents a pound cheaper on the market. He's making 40-cents a pound more profit on the thing and they're just eliminating all this transportation and—and—and usage of traveling on the highway.

00:44:14

RF: Is—is there a farmer's market around here that sells—that a farmer will sell at?

00:44:19

CH: There's not per se a farmer's market but if you go downtown into Lexington they've got little produce stands set up down there along the street where people can come buy fresh produce and that.

00:44:27

CN: They have a cattle auction. They have a cattle auction in Lexington where you can go and get hogs and your own beef if you want to.

00:44:35

RF: Oh okay.

00:44:38

CH: Yeah; and as more and more people know we're here we'll do several cows every—we probably average four to five head of beef a week just for people doing custom—want to buy it from their local farmers and bringing them in and that—that so we're seeing that increase. We had never seen that—that type of increase before. I mean when they first bought the plant they I

don't think ever killed a cow from February to September; now we've still got them coming in all year long now and everything where they're—they're doing more locally and everything, so—.

00:45:09

RF: Wow; so before you wouldn't slaughter a cow at all for those six months you're saying?

00:45:13

CN: You'd maybe get like one or two in or something you know if they'd feel like its leg is hurt or something and they want—. We've had them—we've had one come in that's had—a cow that had a baby that the baby is still born you know. They can't—they can't do much with them so they'll bring them in but not as many as we are now.

00:45:32

RF: Why do you think that is? Is it because you're just gaining a reputation?

00:45:37

CN: The cost of food; yeah, I mean you can't go to Wal-Mart and buy that much meat for that price so it's—it's a food deal but the—the money issue, you know people can get a lot more food for the price—same price.

00:45:49

RF: Do you find that families out here; I mean we're—we're in a part of Tennessee where I think people have more land than they do in other—than in urban areas. Maybe they still have a

family farm; maybe they just have a larger backyard. Do you think—are—are people buying animals again to have—to have one or two pigs or one cow?

00:46:08

CH: This again goes back to Tennessee; Tennessee with their Cattle Producers Association and Pork Producers Association is encouraging the small farms now to raise 10 or 15 head of beef or 20 head of beef you know. And now if you can make \$300 or \$400 a head for raising it you know it's—it brings back the small farmer again and he doesn't have to have a huge feed lot and raising 500—600 head of—or every two or three months and getting \$100 a head for them by doing the volume and that. So you're—you're going to see more of the small farmers coming back.

00:46:40

RF: And I was talking to—just one more question about that; I was talking to—and excuse me—Mr. Jim Neely at Interstate Barbecue which is in kind of South Memphis and he's lived in Memphis his whole life and he said that—that growing up it—he wasn't a farm family. His—his dad was—had a blue collar job but they always had two or three pigs in the backyard and then Memphis finally—Shelby County banned pigs. You couldn't have a pig on a residential property. Do you—do you think people out here who maybe got rid of their pigs a generation or two ago are going to bring pigs back because of this?

00:47:18

CH: I think you're going to see them start bringing some of them back as they—they get some of these costs under control with the—again the balance of the fuel and everything—shipping

and you're going to see where I think as the economy tightens up people get more creative how they're going to make a little money to supplement their income. And you're going to see the people start saying well like I can still have my job but I can feed 10 or 15 pigs out here and every three months take them to a packing house you know and sell them for 50—60 cents a pound and supplement my family's income that way and everything. And they can do that on a very small parcel of land; they don't have to have a large area for them to run and—and it's not a hard containment for them and everything. And it's—so I think you're going to see more and more people going with their gardens, raising a few head of cattle or raising some hogs you know that—just almost like a second income to utilize the land a little more now.

00:48:14

RF: When someone—can I ask a few more questions? Do we have time, just—just—?

00:48:17

CN: Yeah.

00:48:17

RF: When someone brings an animal here how is it—how is he charged? Is it by the pound of the animal that's the slaughtering fee?

00:48:23

CN: Yes; he's charged by the carcass weight which is the hanging weight.

00:48:27

RF: Carcass but not the live weight?

00:48:30

CN: He's charged—if it's his own animal he's charged the kill fee and then if we process it he's charged for every—the pound of the carcass weight. So I mean if it's ours he just pays you know—you kind of—you pay for the whole thing which is the carcass weight. You pay per pound.

00:48:49

RF: Okay.

00:48:50

CN: Which I kind of rambled that out. [*Laughs*]

00:48:53

RF: And what—what is the—I've discovered that the busiest time for a barbecue restaurant is of course July 4th. What is the busiest time for the slaughtering industry; is it the holidays, 4th or some other?

00:49:04

CN: July 4th is our biggest holiday; that's our biggest time.

00:49:07

RF: And how busy are the—the—the Christmas and Thanksgiving holidays?

00:49:12

CN: Not so busy; Memorial Day is pretty busy—not—Christmas not so much, but July 4th is really—our biggest.

00:49:24

DN: You see an increase every holiday but compared to July 4th, what—the next one would be what—Memorial Day I guess. And that's probably about half as big as July 4th.

00:49:37

RF: So two years—where do you think your business is going to go from here? What—what do you see happening?

00:49:45

CN: We're hoping to grow and get more local businesses and we're hoping that some more of the farmers can get back into having you know their own livestock so we can keep—we like to keep the local places. Just like us we're a small business so we want you know—we'd like to have the help just the same as they would so we try and help out the local people just as we hope they'd do the same for us.

00:50:08

DN: And we would like to—if possible maybe do get into some bigger chains, maybe supply chain barbecue and maybe even out of state or you know at least to the big cities.

00:50:22

RF: How big was the—the change from Florida to here? Have you adjusted yet?

00:50:26

CN: It's huge; it was a—a big change and it was a much better change.

00:50:32

RF: Oh okay.

00:50:32

CN: Yes.

00:50:34

RF: So you enjoy—you enjoy this part of Tennessee—the part of the South?

00:50:35

CN: We love it. It's a much better place to live. The—we love to hunt so it's you know it's kind of in our backyard now and it's a better—I think you know I feel it's a better place to raise your families. The people seem to be more friendly, laid back; it's more of a family-oriented place which is—that's what we want.

00:50:56

RF: What do you hunt for in this part of Tennessee or do you travel somewhere to hunt?

00:51:00

DN: No; we—we still travel but we go basically just hunt deer and turkey here. Just bow hunt and gun hunt; if it's hunting season I'm hunting.

00:51:10

RF: And once you've slaughtered one—one animal, one four-legged animal can you slaughter them all?

00:51:17

CN: No.

00:51:17

DN: No; I wouldn't say that. I still don't like doing goats and you know lambs and stuff like that. I don't—I don't care for it.

00:51:24

RF: When you're—when you're brought something like—like a lamb, do you have to consult a book or manual?

00:51:30

DN: When you're brought—?

00:51:32

RF: When someone brings you a lamb and it's not something that you do every day like you do a pig do you have to consult a manual?

00:51:39

DN: In order to process?

00:51:40

RF: Right.

00:51:41

DN: No.

00:51:41

RF: Yeah; I mean you could cut it? It just takes a bit longer?

00:51:44

DN: No; it's—they're real simple. Yeah; they're—they really don't take long at all.

00:51:48

RF: Okay; so but any new animal, if someone brings a—I don't know what—what's something you haven't—

00:51:52

CN: A buffalo?

00:51:53

RF: —a buffalo right; how did you slaughter—how did you cut your first buffalo, slaughter your first buffalo?

00:51:58

DN: I—

00:51:58

RF: How big was it? I mean that's—I imagine it's huge.

00:52:02

DN: Yeah; they were a couple thousand pounds but on them they're similar to a beef so I basically knew how to do it but I just looked at the book for different cuts.

00:52:12

RF: Okay; so there is a—a book that you can use?

00:52:15

DN: You can go buy it for every animal.

00:52:17

RF: Oh okay; where did these buffalo come from? Just that's interesting. [*Laughs*]

00:52:21

CN: It's a local—

00:52:23

CH: They come from the Plains out West and what they've done is a lot of the farmers have bought breeding stock out of Montana and Colorado and that where the buffalo herds are and then they—they sometimes some of them are raising pure buffalo, using a buffalo bull and—and a heifer you know and then raising buffalo calves. And then some of them now are crossing them with regular cattle and getting what they call a beefalo which is a—they're using the bull bison with the regular heifer and they're getting a kind of cross between them. Buffalo meat is a real high protein and real healthy meat to eat and everything but it's pretty expensive for the average—the average person.

00:53:02

RF: Just one more question and this is a question that I—I ask everyone and I want to—maybe it'll be good to get you your feelings because you're not from here, you're not from barbecue culture I guess, not from Tennessee. What do you—and maybe all three of y'all would like to answer; why do you think Tennessee and barbecue and pigs are so interconnected? Why—why does everyone eat and cook barbecue in Tennessee?

00:53:32

DN: I'd say tradition.

00:53:35

CN: Just it's something that was started probably years and years ago and with families sitting around and I guess hogs are a popular thing around here—because of the weather you can have

them and where other places they don't have the hogs and it just got to be a tradition where people like to do it and spend time with their families.

00:53:52

DN: I'd say they didn't have the I guess more country—more country people, not as many big cities and big restaurants to go to so people started—or you know people continued doing their own cooking and it's just a tradition that carried on.

00:54:09

CH: I got to pretty well agree. I think it's a lot of the—the general geography of the land and everything right here. If you go north of here you get into the big grain farms. If you go out West in Kansas you got the large grain farms and everything where it's—the land is too expensive to raise livestock on because you could make more money raising corn and wheat, soybeans or anything like that on it. Where like the western part of Tennessee you have more roughage on the lands; you don't have as much tillable land and everything so it's more produced—productive to raise livestock on there than it is some of the grains and everything. And you know if you go further north you go into the winters, and well that's hard on livestock for feeding them and everything. You go south it's too hot and that's hard on livestock. They die off and everything. So I think you've got an ideal condition where for the local people to say look; we can't use the land for much of anything else. Let's raise hogs on it and everything and—of course when you raise them then you want to eat them [*Laughs*], so it's just a kind of a natural progression of things I think for the area you know.

00:55:04

RF: Well just I want to ask one more question about whole hogs ‘cause that’s why I’m out here you know and that’s what Lexington is known for. And we talked about how I don't want to use the word *dying off*; that’s what others have used but there’s less people doing it than there were last year and the year before that—restaurants doing whole hogs. Talking to—to these restaurant owners and—and pit guys, what do you think is going to happen to them? Do you think there’s going to be always people doing whole hogs? Do you think it’s going to go away? I mean it used to be a lot more prevalent. There used to be many restaurants supposedly.

00:55:46

CH: I think you’re going to see a dying off of the old people that are doing—that are raising the hogs but I think you’re always going to see one or two of those places around because you’re always going to have the people that say I don't want to go get shoulders and I want whole hog barbecue and I want it done the old-fashioned way. And you know with a lot of the younger people coming in or a lot of the newer places and particularly chains and that they don't want somebody cooking out there 24 hours on a thing. They—they want a shoulder. They could put it in; two hours later it’s ready to come off and it’s ready to cut up and—and put out you know and everything. So it’s just a matter of expediency, but I think there’s always going to be the demand for the people that say, “look, I want good old Southern Tennessee barbecue and I’m going to go where I can get a good whole hog full of barbecue.” And you’re going to take guys like—like Scott’s down there. He’s always going to have a crowd at the front door because that’s what the people want and that’s what they’re going to go there and get and everything. And it’ll never—it’ll never get like—like McDonald’s where you can just drive up to the window and say give me **[Laughs]** quick barbecue you know. It’ll—

00:56:45

CN: It stays—it's just good food and as long as they keep cooking it like they do people are going to want to eat it. *[Laughs]*

00:56:54

CH: The thing is that they—they can always change around because they can make different sauces, so if somebody wants a little different taste well this time I'm going to have maybe the sweet sauce. Maybe next time I'm going to have the kind of sweet and sour sauce and maybe next time I'll try that—and so you know that's—.

00:57:07

CN: Or you can do it like Derek where you can make it so hot that you're sweating when you're done. *[Laughs]*

00:57:11

RF: How do you make it; how do you make your sauce? I mean without giving the recipe if it's a secret.

00:57:14

DN: As hot as possible.

00:57:15

RF: What do you use to make it hot?

00:57:17

DN: What I normally do is I'll get a gallon of mild sauce from one of the local restaurants. I got one—my favorite. And then I'll take—they have—make a little bottle of it's called Endorphin Rush and it's got—it's got a warning label on the bottle, but I'm telling you it's hot. And then I'll add that to a—I'll pour it in a separate bottle and add my Endorphin Rush to it and mix it up and it's—.

00:57:44

RF: This is a brand name—Endorphin Rush?

00:57:45

CN: Yeah.

00:57:45

RF: Where can I buy this? I like hot things and I never heard of it.

00:57:48

DN: Down past Siler's in Jack's Creek.

00:57:54

CN: The closest—it's in Jack's Creek.

00:57:57

DN: I can't remember the name of the place.

00:57:59

CN: It's a little barbecue house and he has a—quite a variety of different kinds and—.

00:58:05

CH: It's right at the corner of Alternate 22A and the—

00:58:09

RF: That's Jack's Creek, formerly Joyner's Jack's Creek.

00:58:12

CN: You've probably been there.

00:58:11

RF: Oh he serves the stuff—oh his row of barbecue sauces.

00:58:15

CN: Yeah; that's where we got it.

00:58:16

RF: Uh-huh; so it's like a Tabasco® type sauce but hotter?

00:58:19

CH: Well it's kind of like me taking a toothpick and dip in it and then dip back in the barbecue and then you throw the toothpick away. [*Laughs*]

00:58:24

CN: It is toothpick hot.

00:58:26

DN: It's made to cook with; it's not made—I mean you can take a toothpick and put a drop on your tongue and then it puts you on your knees.

00:58:31

CN: It's hot.

00:58:33

RF: Oh good; I'll try some. **[Laughs]** Okay; well this was very informative. I want to thank y'all. Do y'all have anything to add?

00:58:38

CN: I just want to add that I am an animal lover and I want everybody to know that I love the business and I love the people and I don't do it to be cruel. **[Laughs]**

00:58:49

RF: Well that brings up a question because I was—can I tell you all a short—I'll tell you a very short story and this will bring up a very good question. I'm glad you said this 'cause I should have asked this earlier. I was at a barbecue restaurant in Memphis the—earlier last week that—that was about 10 years ago was attacked by animal people let's call them. I don't know; but for half a year graffiti, broken stuff, glue in the locks—you know and threats against this family. Have—have that—have you incurred that?

00:59:25

CN: We haven't had anything so far. And we hope we never do because we've had a lot of people—like I've had people ask, “How do you do that? How can you do that? I can't believe you do that.” And I'll say, “Do you eat meat? Do you eat hamburgers?” And they'll say, “yes.” And I say, “well I know how mine was killed. I know exactly how mine was treated.” And I do it right; I do it you know where it's—they—they don't suffer. They don't you know—they are fed, they are watered, they lay back there and have a good time; you know they don't suffer at all and so I know it's going to be done and people are always going to eat meat and if I can step in and do my share of it—doing it humanely then that's what I'm going to do.

01:00:03

CH: I agree with her right there.

01:00:04

DN: I have nothing to add to that; that was pretty good.

01:00:07

RF: Okay; and then that's a very good note to end. So I want to thank y'all.

01:00:09

CH: You—you can go back there and if those hogs are scheduled to be killed tomorrow morning they're still given corn and everything—fed. They got water all the time and everything

and they've got corn and hay and everything, so I mean they're eating right up to the time they go in the—the gate. They're just—

01:00:23

CN: If anything—if anything cute comes in here it's going to go home to my house. I have a miniature bull at my house because it was brought in here to be slaughtered and I just couldn't let it happen. So he now walks around on my property at home.

01:00:37

RF: What's—there's a miniature bull? It won't grow?

01:00:40

CN: No; he's full grown and he's about four-foot tall. He's adorable; his name is Carl. We had a local farmer that bought him to raise and he wasn't producing so the only thing left he had—he had no choice but to you know to get his money back for him was to eat him. And he loaded him back in his trailer and took him to my house.

01:01:01

CH: He—

01:01:01

CN: He was a pet.

01:01:05

RF: Well he was a pet, okay; well that's amazing. I mean I—now we know—we—I—tell us—tell us one more thing; tell us why the American public should know where their meat comes from.

01:01:15

CN: Because it's a lot healthier and it's a lot safer. And you know what your kids are eating; I'll take my food home from this building and I'll take it and feed it to my three year-old and know that she's eating healthy and I don't have anything to worry about. Where you buy it from the chains and the big—the big stores around here you don't know what you're buying.

01:01:35

CH: They found out in the long run, I mean a lot of people are having headaches from the MSG; they're—the nitrogen is letting meat get older than it should get older and still looking good and you don't have any way to judge it anymore when you look at it. These growth hormones I mean if you take in the feed lots out there if you put a steer in a feed lot and just feed him normally and let him stand there and eat all he wants to eat he'll put on about two—two and a half pounds a day. They could put—inject a chip into his neck that's almost 100-percent steroids and everything. He'll put on six pounds a day and everything so they—they've—it just blows them up and so it's just like anything else. You're—you're putting these chemicals into these animals and everything else and when you eat that you're—you're ingesting those chemicals in that you know and it's just—

01:02:18

CN: It helps me sleep a lot better at night knowing that I know what I'm feeding to people around here and their families and I can trust that they're getting good quality product.

01:02:30

RF: Okay; well thank y'all very much.

01:02:32

CN: Thank you.

01:02:33

[End Crystal & Derek Norwood-Hay's Interview]