

Open.....

A letter to the editor of the Times-Standard caught my eye the other day. The person, probably a vegetarian or vegan, and I have no problem with that- was concerned about the meat industry in the United States. He was concerned, and in some cases, rightfully so, about the treatment of animals in the process of being used for production of their bodies for being put on the market for consumption. He also blamed the industry for exploiting workers, especially undocumented ones, and farmers and ranchers, by controlling meat prices. He also blamed the industry for damaging our health by what we eat in meat products.// I was a meat cutter for thirty years, and am no scientist nor do I know that much about what the person blames the industry for. I have heard about crowded conditions for poultry especially, and probably some other factions, but I don't know if that is a majority issue. I have seen articles on TV about beef ranches where animals are in large corrals, where they are finished off, so to speak before being slaughtered.// I do know that fat and bone is what gives meat, especially beef and pork, flavor, so feeding them at the end of their cycle is what makes them taste good and cook to their best flavor. We hear many ads about local beef, which is usually just grass-fed and has less fat than beef that is feed-lot fed. I have sold both kinds, and what you are used to eating is usually what you like the best. I know some ranchers who only eat animals, especially cows, who have lived out their productivity, and they are happy with that meat.//The person also blames the meat industry for damaging our bodies and digestive systems by our eating meat. Eating too much of anything is not good for us, but I think his

*vegan leanings might cause him to overreact to this faction.//Another item he brought up was the greenhouse gas issue. I'm sure there may be something to this, according to what I have read, but when I think of all the area not affected by the greenhouse gasses-doesn't that offset the problem some?//He also blamed the industry for destroying wildlife habitat. I might be blind, but I don't see that, because most commercial meat industry operations are in pastures or contained areas already operating for many years.//The gentleman wrote that there are plenty of non-meat items in our local grocery stores, and he is correct in that statement. There is also Tofu- which many people use to make things that look like, or taste like meat, which confuses me, because if you don't like meat, why do you want to eat something that looks or tastes like meat? //*As I said before, I have many friends, some very close friends, who are vegetarians, or perhaps just eat fish, and good for them-that leaves more for the rest of us. I eat less meat than I used to, but I enjoy every bite!//*So, next time you hit your favorite store, say hi to the butcher, or should I say meat cutter? I know how much I enjoyed talking to, and teaching my customers about meat, and I learned from them, too. I have found out that you are never too old to learn something, so grab every chance!*

Sign off.....