

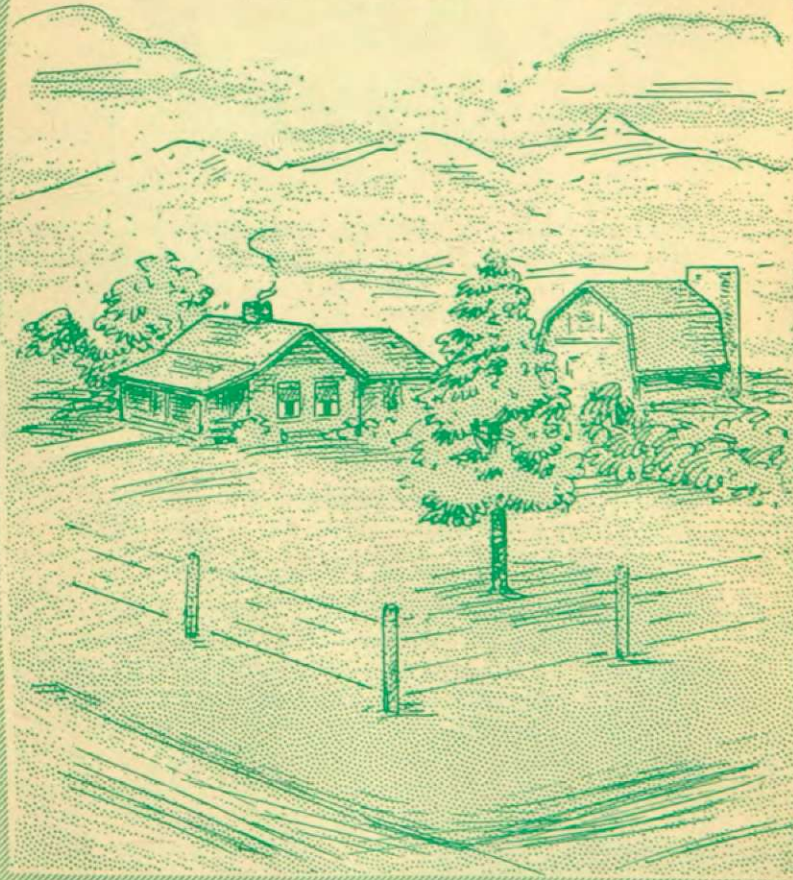
STATE AGRICULTURE COLLEGE  
FORT COLLINS, COLO.

EXAMINED AND CHECKLISTED

Bulletin 317-A

April, 1932

## Killing and Cutting Lamb for Farm Use



### Some Things to Remember

1. The small size of a lamb carcass makes it desirable for farm usage. Lambs that are suckling their mothers and are in good flesh may be used as a source of fresh meat for summer. Because of the small size of the carcass, lamb will furnish a better source of fresh summer meat than hogs or cattle.

2. In dressing a lamb it is absolutely necessary to have clean hands at all times if a clean, attractive carcass of good flavor is to be had.

3. Dress lambs in the shortest time consistent with good work. Gases form in the digestive system rather rapidly after death and if dressing is too long delayed a portion of this gas may escape thru the walls of the digestive tract, giving the meat the characteristic "wooly" taste.

4. **The fell is a protective tissue over the meat. It should always be removed just prior to cooking the meat.**

5. Lamb is a wholesome meat and more should be used on Colorado farms.

COLORADO AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE  
EXTENSION SERVICE F. A. ANDERSON, DIRECTOR  
FORT COLLINS

---

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, Colorado Agricultural College and the United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating. Distributed in Furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914.

# KILLING AND CUTTING LAMB FOR FARM USE

BY FRED H. LEINBACH

---

The production of lambs in Colorado is a major industry. According to the 1930 Colorado Year Book, the farm and range sheep were estimated at 1,460,000 head on January 1, 1930; and there were 1,990,000 sheep and lambs on feed at the same time.

But in spite of the size and importance of the industry, very little lamb is eaten in the state in proportion to the amounts of other meats consumed. This is probably due to one or more of several reasons. (1) One must cultivate a taste for lamb; (2) methods of slaughter that have been used on the farm have sometimes resulted in a poor product, the meat tasting "wooly;" (3) a lack of knowledge as to easy methods of slaughter has discouraged others from killing and consuming any of the lambs they produce.

It is the purpose of this bulletin to show a method of slaughter, dressing and cutting that can be readily used on the farm.

## **Kinds of Animals to Use**

The lambs selected for slaughter must be healthy. Lambs 8 to 10 weeks of age or older, if they are gaining and have a good covering of flesh over the back, will furnish good meat. The breeding of the lambs has a direct relationship to the kind of carcasses they will produce. The blocky, low-set type of lambs will have the highest percentage of loin and leg—the most desirable and valuable cuts of the lamb carcass.

## **The Slaughter and Dressing of Sheep**

The lamb to be killed should be penned up under cover 24 hours previous to slaughter in order that the fleece will be dry when slaughtered. It is almost impossible to keep the wool from touching the carcass at times during dressing, and the drier the fleece the less soiled the carcass becomes. During this period prior to slaughter the lamb should have water to drink but no food, as a lamb with a full paunch is harder to dress than one which has been shrunk.

**The necessary equipment** consists of a narrow-bladed, sharp butcher knife; a piece of stout cord with which the hind legs are tied when the carcass is hung; a stout box or a pair of saw horses covered with short planks upon which the sheep is laid for sticking and for partial dressing; a bucket of clean water.

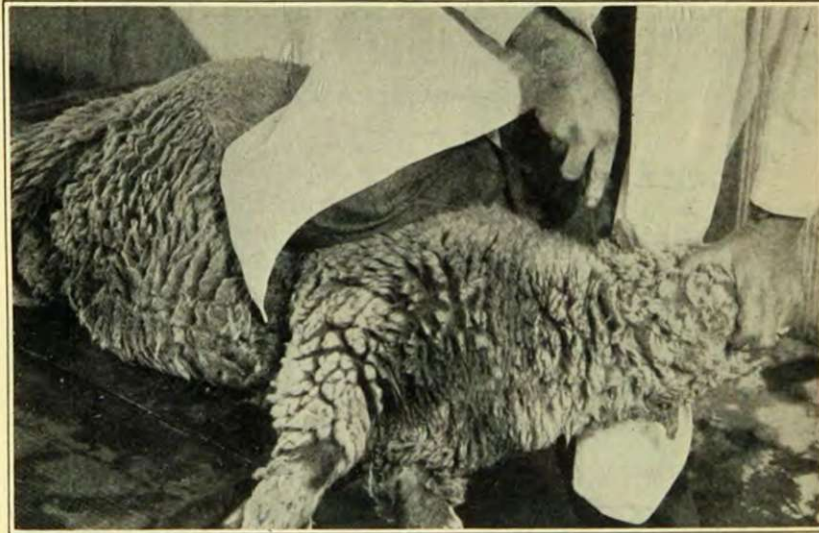


Fig. 1.—Sticking the lamb.

### Figure 1



Fig. 2.—Remove a strip of pelt from knee to pastern.

**Killing Procedure.**—A right-handed person should throw the sheep on its left side on the box or table provided. Care should be exercised that in so doing no wool is grabbed, as bruised meat will result. Standing along the back of the lamb, place the right knee just back of the lamb's shoulder pulling the head backward and allowing it to rest against the left knee. With the left hand grasping the lower jaw, insert knife just back of the jaw bone at the base of the ear, cutting thru the pelt on both sides.

Cut the blood vessels by cutting from this point to the back bone. Give the head a quick jerk against the left knee to break the neck.

### Figure 2

**Removing the Pelt.**—As soon as



the sheep has been thoroly bled out, roll it over on its back. With either front foot held between the knees remove a strip of the pelt from the knee to the pastern joint.

### Figure 3

Next make a cut thru the pelt from the knee to a point about 6 inches in front of the breast bone.

The knife should be held flat so as not to cut thru the fell (the white tissue-like membrane that lies between the pelt and the meat). Repeat the process on the other leg.

Remove a strip of pelt on the hind legs from the hocks to the pastern and skin out this portion of the shanks. The toes should be cut off at the pastern joint.

Grasp the triangular piece of pelt in front of the breast bone with the left hand and "fist" the pelt loose on either side and in front of the breast bone with the right. ("Fisting" is the separation of the pelt from the meat and its protecting tissue of fell by making use of the closed fist with the thumb next to the pelt. This is possible with sheep because of the pelt being rather loosely attached.) If the hands are not clean during the fisting process, a dirty carcass is the result.



Fig. 3.—Cut the pelt from knee to a point in front of breast.



Fig. 4.—Pull pelt from off breast.

#### Figure 4

Next, place the left foot on the jaw of the sheep and grasp the triangular piece of pelt in front of the breast with the right hand, pulling it upward and loosening it from the brisket.

If the meat starts to tear, it will be necessary to use the knife to loosen the pelt from the brisket.

#### Figure 5

Fist thru the midline as far back as possible to the rear, then open along the midline the part of the pelt that has been loosened, being careful that the outside of the pelt does not touch the carcass.

Fist back to rectum and up the inside of rear legs to the hocks.

Cut thru the part of the pelt that has been loosened on the hind legs to a point just in front of the rectum.



Fig. 5.—Open pelt along midline after "fisting."



**Figure 6**

Tie the hind legs together and hang the carcass on a hook.

**Figure 7**

Begin fisting from the middle of the underline upward and over the rear flanks and legs, leaving the pelt attached

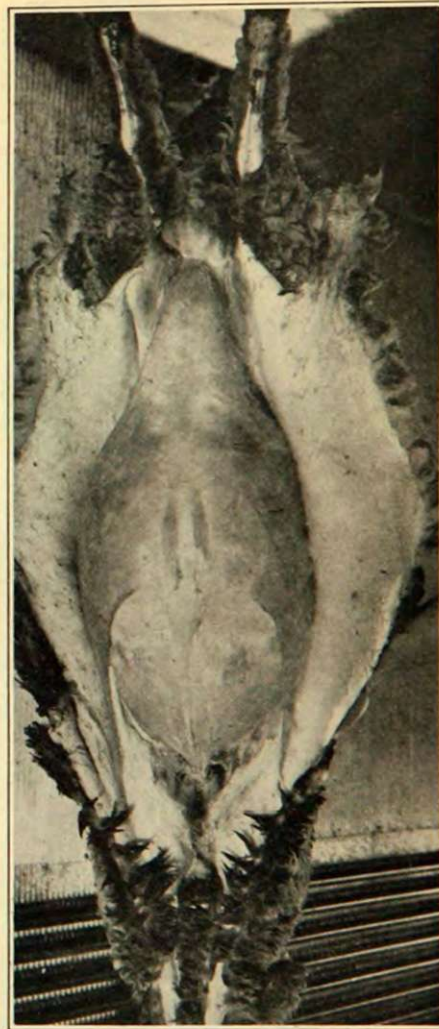


Fig. 6.—Carcass with pelt loosened along midline and to the hocks.

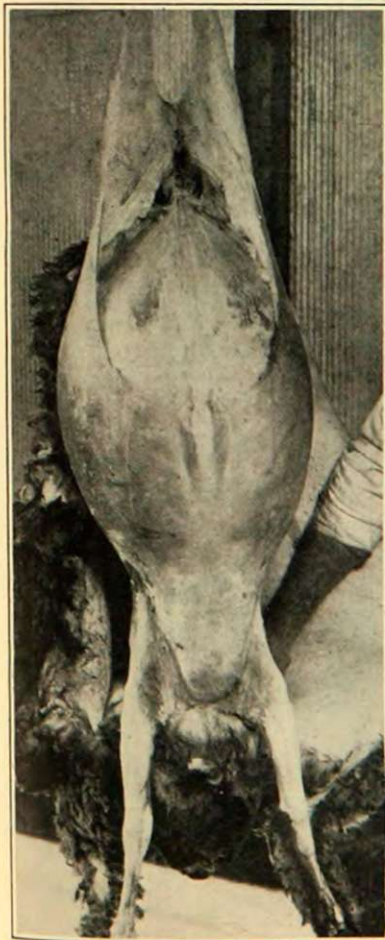


Fig. 7.—“Fist” down over forelegs.

to the tail and the middle of the back. Begin at the middle and fist around and down over the forelegs.

In case of lambs, remove the toes at the break joint, which is just above the pastern joint, and



Fig. 8.—Open carcass to breast bone.

#### Figures 8 and 9

**Opening the Abdominal Cavity.**—Loosen the bung by cutting around rectum, and tie. Open from cod or udder along the midline to the breast bone. Remove the fat covering the intestines (caul fat). Pull

in sheep over a year old, remove toes at the round joint.

Loosen the pelt from around the tail (a knife may be necessary) and strip pelt down the back to the head, removing the head at the atlas joint (a joint just back of the head and about in line with the cut made in sticking). Loosen the windpipe and gullet in front of the breast bone and tie the gullet so that none of the contents of the stomach escape. Wipe off any soiled parts of the carcass with a clean rag, that has been moistened in warm water and squeezed dry.

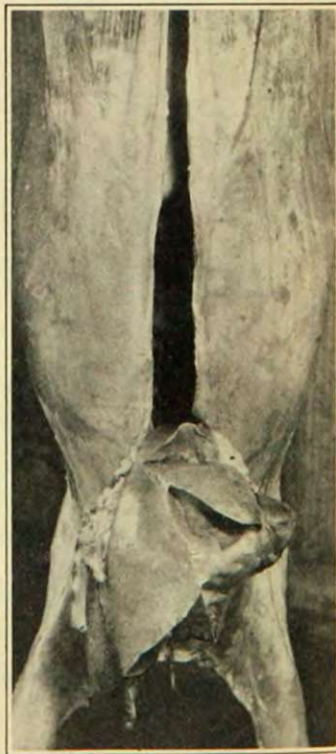


Fig. 9.—Remove lungs, heart, windpipe and gullet.



the bung down, making sure that the bladder is brought too, but leaving the fat covering over the kidneys. Pull out the intestines, stomach and liver thru the opening along the midline.

Separate the gall bladder from the liver and place liver in a pan of clean, cold water.

Cut the diaphragm where the white connective tissue and the muscle joins and pull out lungs, heart, windpipe and gullet thru the opening used in removing the contents of the abdominal cavity.

Wipe out any soiled places inside the carcass. Bend the forelegs at the knee and pin them up with sharpened sticks (skewers).

Separate the heart from the lungs, remove the tongue from the head and scrape and put both in a pan of clean, cold water. Allow the carcass to cool 24 hours before cutting.

#### Cutting the Carcass

There are many different ways of cutting lamb. Since most people desire roasts and chops, the writer has tried to show a system of cutting the lamb carcass that utilizes it in this manner.

#### Figures 10 and 11

**Neck.** — Cut off flush with the top of shoulder and in line with the back.

Slice into chops of three-fourth to 1-inch thickness.



Fig. 10.—Remove neck flush with top of shoulder.

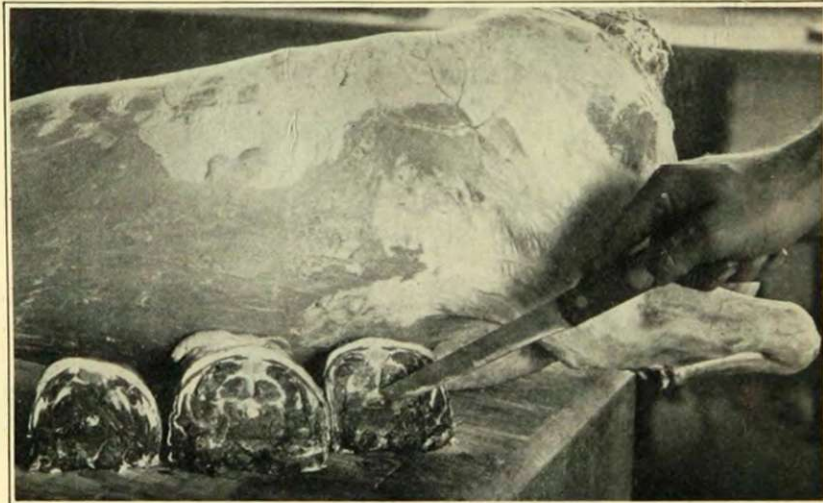


Fig. 11.—Neck chops.

Remove bone from center of each chop and fill the cavity with sausage made from the scraps of lean meat. (If desired, the neck may be left on the shoulder and the whole used as a roast).

#### Figure 12

**Breast.**—With the carcass turned on its side and with the legs toward the operator, remove breast by cutting from the

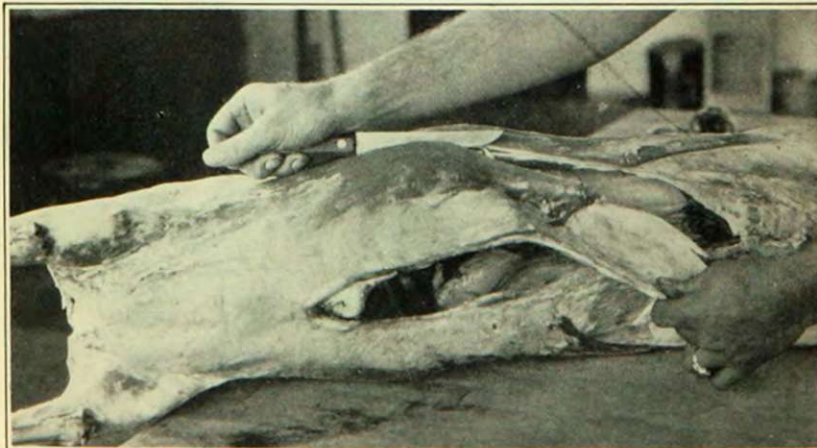


Fig. 12.—Remove breast, cutting from cod forward.





Fig. 13.—Remove ribs from breast.

cod forward over the ribs and foreleg. The cut should attain a width of 4 to 6 inches when the rib is reached, and extend forward over the ribs, taking off the shank about 2 inches above the elbow joint.

#### Figure 13

With the bone side up, remove ribs running knife just underneath and close to them. Cut out shank bone.

Turn the piece of meat so that the part that was to the outside is next to the table, and roll from front to rear.

#### Figure 14

Tie or hold together by making use of the skirt. (A muscle on the inside which will adhere to the flank end).

Make a breast roll from the other side of the carcass in the same manner.

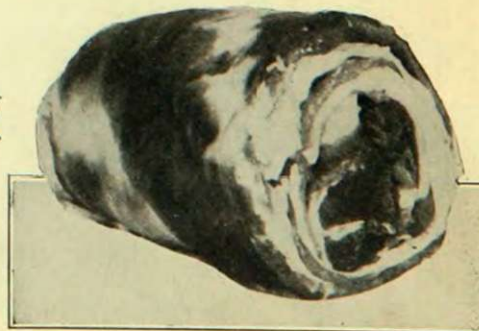


Fig. 14.—Completed breast roll.



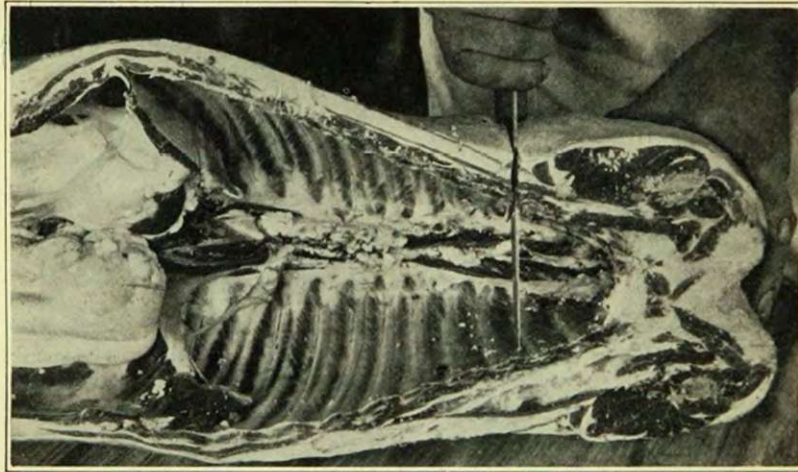


Fig. 15.—Remove shoulder between third and fourth ribs.

#### Figure 15

**Shoulder.**—The next step is to remove the shoulder. Cut between the third and fourth ribs on both sides of carcass and separate the right and left shoulder by sawing thru the back bone.

#### Figure 16

Chops may be cut from the rib and arm side if desired, or the shoulder may be used as roast, either boned or not.

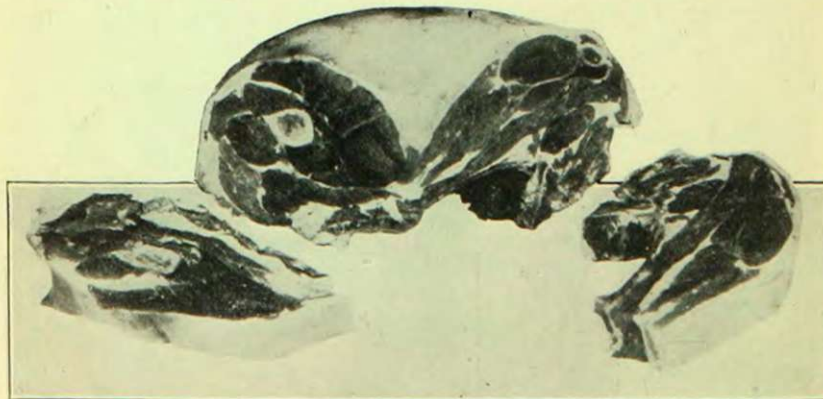


Fig. 16.—Chops from shoulder.

**Figure 17**

**Ribs.**—The ribs are next removed, leaving one on each side of the hind quarter. It is possible to use them as rib chops, or by leaving both sides together and by removing the back bone, the whole piece may be used as a crown rib roast.



Fig. 17.—Remove backbone in making crown rib roast.



Fig. 18.—Completed crown rib roast.

**Figure 18**

The procedure to follow in making the crown rib roast is to first cut out the back bone, leaving the meat intact on the under side.

Remove an inch or more of the meat on outer end of ribs. Roll ribs into shape and sew up at ends.



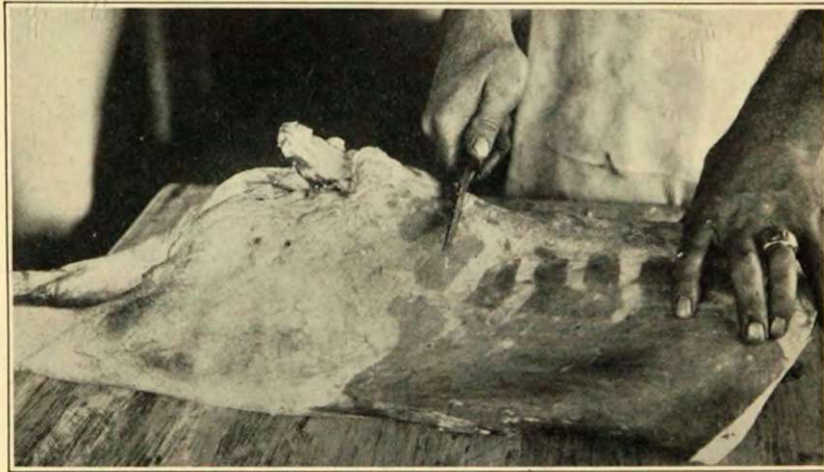


Fig. 19.—Separate loin from legs.

#### Figures 19 and 20

**Loin.**—Separate the loin from legs just ahead of or just behind the hip bones. Separate right and left sides by sawing thru the back bone. Cut into chops.



Fig. 20.—Loin chops.



**Figures 21 and 22**

**Leg.**—Cut thru the vertebrae and separate right and left leg. If desired, the legs can be used as chops or as a roast. If left as roasts they are prepared either American or French style. In the American style the bone is removed to the stifle joint and the meat sewed back to the main part of the leg.



Fig. 21.—Remove bone to stifle joint.

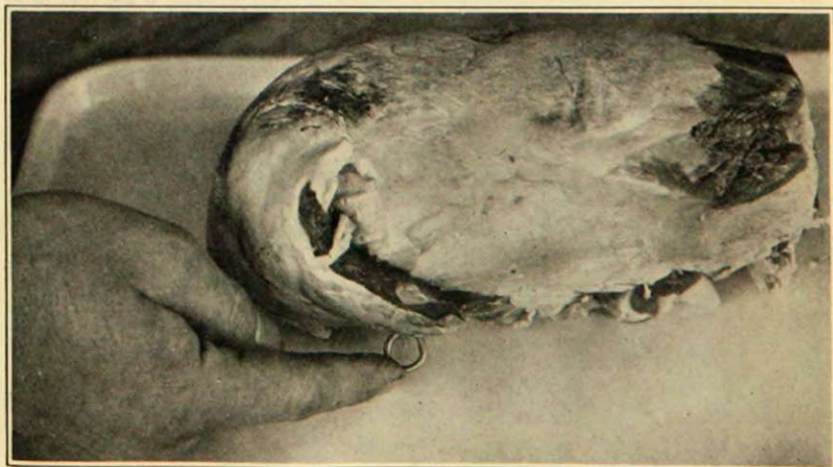


Fig. 22.—Completed American leg of lamb.

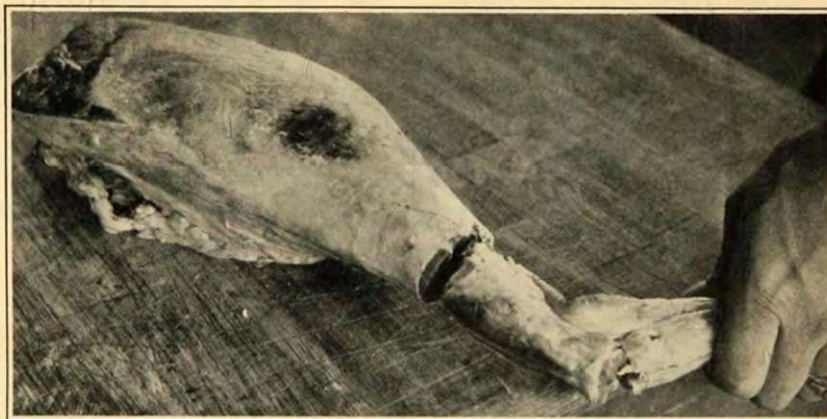


Fig. 23.—Remove shank at break joint.

#### Figures 23, 24 and 25

With the Frenched leg, cut flesh around and to the bone about 2 inches above the hock. Next, locate the break joint which is at the upper side of the hock and is indicated by a jagged line. Draw knife across inside of break joint. With the main portion of the leg on the table and that portion of the shank from the break joint extending over the edge, give a quick jerk down.



Fig. 24.—Clear bone of meat by twisting.

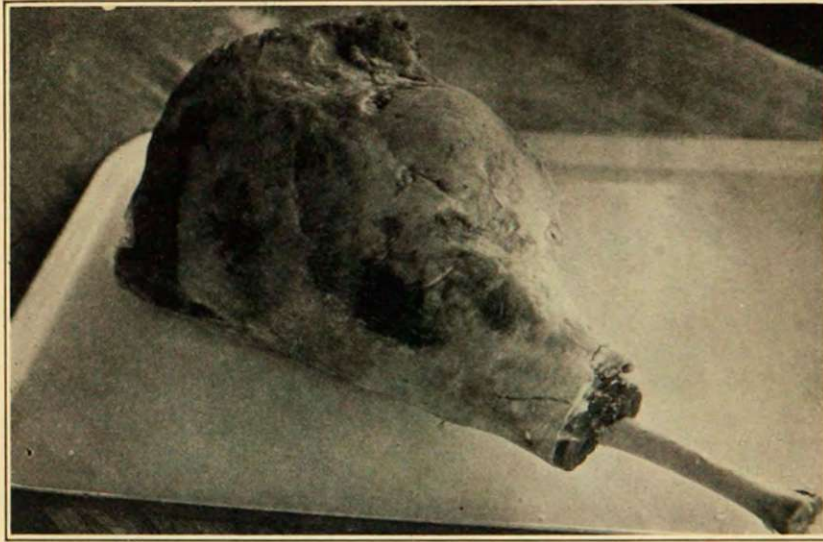


Fig. 25.—Completed French leg of lamb.

This will break the shank. Twist shank around to clear bone of meat.

**Scraps.**—All scraps of lean meat should be seasoned and ground. Mold the ground meat into round patties and fasten a strip of bacon around the edge of each, securing the same by the use of a tooth pick.