

## **THE TASTE CONTROVERSY ENDS FROM THE UNITED STATES VENISON COUNCIL**

Controversy has long raged about the relative quality and taste of venison and beef as gourmet foods. Some people say that venison is tough, with a strong "wild" taste. Others insist that venison's flavor is delicate. An independent food research group was retained by the Venison Council to conduct a taste test to determine the truth of these conflicting assertions once and for all.

First a Grade A Choice Holstein steer was chased into a swamp a mile and a half from a road and shot several times. After some of the entrails were removed, the carcass was dragged back over rocks and logs, and through mud and dust to the road. It was then thrown into the back of a pickup truck and driven through rain and snow for 100 miles before being hung out in the sun for a day.

After that it was lugged into a garage, where it was skinned and rolled around on the floor for a while. Strict sanitary precautions were observed throughout the test, within the limitations of the butchering environment. For instance, dogs and cats were allowed to sniff and lick the steer carcass, but were chased away when they attempted to bite chunks out of it.

Next a sheet of plywood left from last year's butchering was set up in the basement on two saw horses. The pieces of dried blood, hair and fat left from last year were scraped off with a wire brush last used to clean out the grass stuck under the lawn mower.

The skinned carcass was then dragged down the steps into the basement where a half dozen inexperienced but enthusiastic and intoxicated men worked on it with meat saws, cleavers and dull knives. The result was 375 pounds of soup bones, four bushel

baskets of meat scraps, and a couple of steaks that were an eighth of an inch thick on one edge and an inch and a half thick on the other.

The steaks were seared on a glowing red hot cast iron skillet to lock in the flavor. When the smoke cleared, rancid bacon grease was added along with three pounds of onions, and the whole conglomeration was fried for two hours.

The meat was gently teased from the frying pan and served to three blindfolded taste panel volunteers. Every one of the members of the panel thought it was venison. One of the volunteers even said it tasted exactly like the venison he had eaten in hunting camps for the past 27 years. The results of this scientific test show conclusively that there is no difference between the taste of beef and venison.