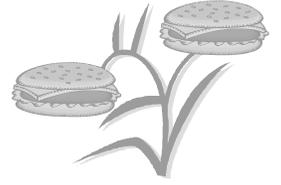


# Did You Know We Grow Cheeseburgers in Kansas?



**BUN** – Buns and bread are made from wheat, which has traveled through many processes before we take a bite from our cheeseburger.

- The farmer plants wheat kernels in the ground. When the wheat is ready to harvest, the farmer combines the wheat in the field then loads it into trucks to haul to the elevator.
- The wheat is taken from the elevator to a terminal where it is put through a cleaning process.
- Next the wheat is sold to the various industries that use it to make food or feed.
- If the wheat will be used for food, it is shipped to a mill where it is processed to become flour.
- Wheat flour contains a protein called gluten. To make bread, active yeast, warm water and other ingredients are added to the flour. The gluten traps the air bubbles the yeast releases and causes the bread to rise.

**BEEF** – You only need a few minutes to eat a cheeseburger, but do you know it takes about 2 ½ years from the time a cow is bred to produce a 1,000 pound animal ready for processing?

- Often a farmer has many cows in his care and depends on these cows to produce calves for his income. Therefore, it is in the farmer’s best interest to have healthy well-cared for animals.
- Cattle may be sold at an auction market or sale barn, or may be bought directly by a cattle buyer who comes to the feedlot. The “finished” cattle are then trucked to a processing plant.
- Meat inspectors employed by the United States Department of Agriculture inspect live cattle, beef carcasses and the entire packing plant to make sure that beef is safe to eat.
- About half of the beef produced in the United States is sold in supermarkets. The remaining beef is consumed in restaurants, hospitals, schools and business cafeterias.

**CHEESE** – Cheese is a healthy food made from milk. Farmers used to milk their cows by hand but today use milking machines that use vacuum to pull the milk from the cow’s udder. The process of making cheese involves these basic steps:

- Processing the milk. The milk is heated and quickly cooled, a process called pasteurizing. This kills any harmful bacteria.
- Separating the curd. After the milk has been processed, it is treated to form a soft, custard-like substance called curd. Curd contains a liquid called whey which must be taken through a special process before cheese can be made.
- Treating the curd. Curd is broken up into small pieces for pressing. During pressing, more whey drains and the curd is shaped into blocks or wheels.
- Ripening. Cheese is aged in storage rooms or warehouses (this helps give cheese its flavor). Aging times vary for different types of cheese. The longer the aging period, the sharper the cheese’s flavor.
- Packaging. After being aged, cheese is packaged in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. Some cheeses are sliced at the factory and sealed in foil or plastic.

**TOMATO** – Tomatoes were once thought to be poisonous. Classified as a member of the nightshade family, people were afraid to eat them. Tomatoes were first grown as ornamental plants and were called the “love apple.” Toward the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century this notion was dispelled and the tomato finally took its place as one of our most popular vegetables. It’s the fourth most popular vegetable (potatoes, lettuce and onions precede it).

**LETTUCE** – Most varieties of lettuce have large, green leaves and grow close to the ground on extremely short stems. Many commercial lettuce growers plant their crops directly in the field, but some transplant seedlings that have been raised in greenhouses.

A farmer harvests lettuce by cutting off the heads just above the soil. Lettuce spoils quickly and must be packed, cooled and shipped immediately after being cut.

**ONION** – Onions were first cultivated in middle Asia and later became a favorite food of the Egyptians. Introduced to America by Spanish explorers, the onion was a mainstay of early colonists' diet.

Onions are a tasty vegetable that add flavor to our food. Onions are raised either from seed or from “sets.” Onion bulbs grow underground and have long green tops. Young onions, before the bulb develops, are called scallions. Onions are often picked by hand or machine, cleaned and sent just as they are to grocery stores or processing plants.

**PICKLE** – A pickle is actually a cucumber. Cucumbers can vary in size from one inch to 36 inches and they grow on long stringy vines which originate from a seed. Once a farmer harvests the cucumbers they are inspected and rinsed before being shipped to the market or processing plant. At the processing plant the cucumbers are sliced into a preservative solution in order to make pickles and to help them stay fresh longer.

**KETCHUP** – Ketchup is made from tomatoes, corn sweetener, vinegar, herbs, spices and preservatives. The mixture is thickened and put into containers to be sold to the consumer. Because there is corn sweetener in it, ketchup is a by-product of corn. As you probably know, corn is a major commodity of Kansas agriculture.

Corn is planted in the spring when the soil temperature reaches at least 50 degrees (April). The seed develops into a tall green plant (approximately 8 feet tall) with a tassel on top and one or two ears on the stalk. Around July the tassel drops tiny pollen particles onto the silk sticking out of the end of the ear. Each silk strand leads down to the kernel of corn. The pollen travels down the tassel to fertilize the kernel. In a few more weeks (September), the corn is ready to harvest.

**MUSTARD** – Mustard originated in northwest India. It is a heat tolerant, easily grown crop. The tiny seeds are planted in moderately rich, well-drained soil. Seeds are scattered thinly in the fall or spring, depending on the variety and cultivated after seedlings emerge. They are thinned and harvested when the leaves are young and tender.

