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Local meats

Durham food hub continues to thrive

Jun 7, 2019, 7:00am EDT

Tina Prevatte Levy and Jennifer Curtis expect the phrase “food hub” to start to catch on.

They started Firsthand Foods almost 10 years ago as a meat company that sells pasture-raised pork, beef and lamb from North Carolina farmers to local restaurants, grocery stores and food-delivery services.

A food hub is a business that manages the gathering, marketing and distribution of meat.

“Food hubs help small farms thrive by providing critical regional



DATHAN KAZSUK

Jennifer Curtis and Tina Prevatte Levy of Durham's Firsthand Foods.

infrastructure, including a combination of aggregation, distribution and marketing services,” Curtis says.

Firsthand currently works with close to 50 restaurants, including such popular establishments as Garland, Saint Jacques, Bull City Burger and Brewery, Lantern and the Saxapahaw General Store.

Based in Durham, Firsthand serves 22 restaurants in the Bull City alone.

“All our beef and pork are all third-party, certified approved, so in addition to us visiting our farms every year, they go out and audit their practices,” Levy says. This includes hogs having outdoor pastures.

“They also get a lot of exercise in the outdoor environment, and don’t need antibiotics or hormones – so the whole process goes a lot more naturally, and that’s what humane means to us,” Levy says.

Firsthand Foods will showcase some of its meats in the Tour de Pork in Durham from June 3 to July 31. There, 15 Durham restaurants will be creating a plate using various parts of the local hogs. Whether it be the loin, ham, tail or ears, you’ll find it all in a passport – or “passpork,” as they call it – which will award points for all the restaurants a participant goes to. Those “piggy points” will get you items such as Firsthand Foods socks, or a sausage or deluxe steak box, depending on how much you consume.

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