

## [ChopLocal: Making Markets Accessible](#)

In the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, livestock producers were hit hard by processing disruptions, consolidation, and a lack of markets to sell to. That's when ChopLocal, an Iowa-based online marketplace for niche meat producers, was born. Founders Jared Achens and Katie Olthoff realized a disconnect between Iowa farmers and their customers, not only on their own family farms, but across the industry.



"We knew so many farmers processing their meat locally and selling it direct-to-consumer, and we wanted to help them with their technology and marketing needs," said Olthoff, director of marketing and vendor relations.

The unique way Achens and Olthoff found to help was creating an online storefront that allows every size of producer and vendor to market their livestock and meat products. The e-commerce model simplifies the marketing process while helping consumers find high-quality products close to them.

ChopLocal received a Choose Iowa grant in 2022, used towards a needs assessment and software development.

"We love Choose Iowa's emphasis on local food," Olthoff said. "We're grateful to be recipients of the first Choose Iowa grant, and several farmers we've worked with have also received grant funding."

Dedicated to building a more resilient supply chain for meat that benefits everyone involved, ChopLocal lets users enter their location, shop each farmer or butcher store or search by favorite products, and then choose from pick-up and delivery options. The goal is to help farmers be more profitable and bring value back to their rural communities while getting high quality meat on the plates of consumers across the country.

"There are many reasons people buy local food, but our focus has always been on the positive impacts to the farmers involved and their communities," Olthoff said. "We believe that local food strengthens Iowa's rural areas."

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