

**Jerry Schultz and Nicole Harmel**  
Burton Sausage – Burton, Texas

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American Studies Department  
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Group Members:  
Marvin Bendele  
Andrew Busch

**[BEGIN INTERVIEW]**

**00:00:00**

**Marvin Bendele:** Hello, this is Marvin Bendele. I'm here with my colleague Andrew Busch, and we're at Burton, Texas, on July 11, 2007, at Burton Sausage and Processing, is that—Burton Sausage. And I'm here with Jerry Schultz and Nicole Harmel. What I want you to do is just say your name and spell the last name for us and give your date of birth just so we can test the levels on you guys also, okay. This is Mr. Jerry Schultz.

**Jerry Schultz:** S-c-h-u-l-t-z, Schultz, and born March 18, 1945.

**MB:** How does that look?

**Andrew Busch:** Sounds good.

**MB:** Okay, and Nicole.

**Nicole Harmel:** Harmel, H-a-r-m-e-l, four, seventeen, 1974.

**MB:** Sounds good? Okay. Well, let's get started here. Just generally, the first question and it's really general—I'll just let you guys go with it and we'll go from there. We want to kind of get an idea of where you guys came from, how the business got started, things like how long you've been in business, things like that. So, just give us a little bit on that.

**JS:** We started in 1972 with a slaughterhouse, and we started butchering cows for people down in Houston. And then in 1982, we started making sausage, and my daughter has come in business with us in—

**NH:** 1999

**JS:** 1999. And in 2000, we built this new place on [US Highway] 290, called Burton Sausage.

**MB:** And that's where—this is the place we're in right now? Okay. Did you guys—  
have you always been in Texas, or did you move here?

**JS:** We've always been in Texas. I was born and raised about fifteen miles from here.

**MB:** Did your family move here—when did your family get here?

**JS:** My family was born and raised here.

**MB:** I mean like your, your ancestors.

**JS:** Well, my grandma—my grandpa, my great—my grandma came from—her parents come from Czechoslovakia.

**MB:** Okay, okay. Well, can you give me a history of how you acquired the business?  
What—what—kind of some stories on how it started, things like that?

**JS:** Well, I—me and my wife got married, and I always wanted to go into business for myself, and I always liked the meat business. So, that's how we got started. We started in Brenham and we was in Brenham for about two and a half years. Then we left Brenham, sold out, and we moved to Burton and bought the plant and started slaughtering cattle at Burton.

**MB:** Did somebody else own and run something here before you got here?

**JS:** The slaughterhouse, a man Gilker from Burton, he runned it and we bought it from him and then we just kept adding on to it. It was a small operation and we kept adding on to it. In 1975 we butchered as high as 235 cows a day.

**MB:** That was the most you've done in 1975. So, what do you do today?

**JS:** Now, we do custom processing.

**MB:** Okay.

**JS:** We probably run maybe fifteen to twenty head a week only up there at the slaughterhouse. We just do custom processing. We don't butcher anything for the plant

down here. We sell quarters and halves that's butchered up there, but everything else that is run through here comes from other meat companies.

**MB:** Okay.

**JS:** Like Excel, IBP, and Seaboard.

**MB:** Okay, when you say custom processing, do you mean if somebody wants to slaughter one of their own cows?

**JS:** Right, people bring their calves in, and then we cut them the way they want them cut, to their specification.

**00:04:05**

**MB:** Okay. Do you also do wild game?

**JS:** Yes, we do a lot of deer. We probably do anywhere from probably 1,200 to 1,500 deer a year. We make sausage out of them when deer season opens up.

**MB:** Well, so the stuff you make here is done through other commercial meat companies, I guess—

**JS:** Right.

**MB:** But is that also the sausage, you're making that with meat you buy from other companies.

**JS:** Yeah, the sausage meat comes boneless. We used to bone all our pork out, but the labor got so bad, so we buy all our pork as boneless picnics, a lean pork picnic. And that's what we make our sausage out of, and we also make a beef sausage and it comes in boneless.

**MB:** I noticed that you have—we were just looking at your meat counter over there and the dried area where you have the jerky, and it looked like you had some turkey jerky, maybe, and then some really thicker jerky that almost looked like chicken. Can you tell me what that's about?

**JS:** Well, we make a turkey jerky, then we make a dried—dried sliced jerky, then we make stick jerky—a thick stick jerky. It's probably one inch in diameter stick jerky.

**MB:** How long does that stuff take to dry out?

**JS:** It takes approximately—on the thick jerky, we smoke it probably about thirty six hours, and the thin jerky runs about eighteen hours.

**MB:** Do you have that in a—is it just set out in the air to dry and smoke or do you have a machine?

**JS:** Yes, we have a smokehouse.

**MB:** Okay.

**JS:** And we put it in there and smoke it, and then we put it in another room with no humidity and dry the rest in there.

**MB:** Okay, so it's kind of like a dehydrator or something like that? Okay, well back to kind of the history of the place. You said you opened in 1972. Did you run it by yourself, or did you have family members helping? Did your current—your daughter, I think you mention two—

**JS:** Yes, daughters. My wife and I opened the place and we had six employees when we went to work.

**MB:** Sixteen?

**JS:** Six, six. And then like in 19—well, my daughters went to school and graduated from A&M. My son went to A& M and graduated. And then in 1999 the daughters decided to come back to work for us. That's when we built this building up here on 290, because the building up there got too small. We had to get it bigger because of the inspection, and—

**MB:** Well, were you all just doing so much business that you needed a larger place?

**JS:** That's true, we needed—we'd done so much business, we needed a larger place.

**MB:** And you said because of the inspection. Was that one of the, I guess, laws or rules for the—

**JS:** Yeah, the inspection. They like all your meat to go from—see, when your fresh meat comes in it goes—you're making the sausage and it goes—makes a circle. They don't want the smoked product touch with the fresh meat. That's what we got up here now—it makes a circle and goes back out.

**MB:** The—where is the other—the slaughterhouse part of it right now?

**JS:** It's probably about two and half miles from here.

**MB:** In Burton proper?

**JS:** In Burton, yes.

**MB:** How long has that—has that building been there for a really long time? Is it an old building?



**JS:** Yes, it's an older building. It was built in 1965, and I bought it in 1972. And I just kept adding on until we built this up here.

**MB:** Before you bought the place here in Burton, even when you were working in Brenham, what did you do for a living? And what did your parents do around here?

**JS:** Yes, they were farm and ranchers. We ran a lot of livestock. And did a lot of planting corn and cotton and that's what I grewed up on.

**MB:** Did you guys slaughter your own animals back then for food?

**JS:** Yes, we slaughtered all our own animals when I was at home.

**MB:** Well, let me see here.

**AB:** I was actually wondering, how do you butcher and process things for people? Is it mostly sausage that you do or just cutting up animals?

**JS:** No, it's cut into steaks. We got a card that we give to the people and we go over them—they like round steak, you get T-bone, sirloins, rib-eyes; and short ribs if you want soup bones and hamburger. However they want it cut, we got a cutting card.

**AB:** How's about for deer?

**JS:** Deer is the same way—whatever people want. And they have to have like a twenty-five minimum weight to make a sausage.

**00:09:03**

**MB:** Now the deer you can only do—if it's wild game, you can only sell that to the person that brought it in right?

**JS:** Right, the wild—you can get deer inspected and we make a venison sausage, but it's got to be inspected. But all the wild game that's brought in by the customer is made after hours and not under inspection.

**MB:** So, the inspected—is it actually game that is raised on a certain ranch or something like that—that is inspected there and then brought here?

**JS:** Right, it's inspected there, slaughtered, boned—it comes boneless.

**MB:** Okay. Well, do you—you were saying that you get your meat from other companies, and I was wondering what you are—I see what you're selling out here, and you have some sausage packaged. Where does that sausage go?

**JS:** Well, we go to Houston with it and we go to Austin and San Antonio. And we're in warehouses like in Lufkin, the Brookshire Brothers. We're in a warehouse in H-E-B in Houston, and then we go to grocery supply with a big product.

**MB:** Do any of the barbecue houses in and around Austin or anywhere even around Houston use your sausage for their particular product?

**JS:** We have a few, not a whole lot. It mostly goes to grocery stores. We have a few that use our stuff for barbecuing.

**MB:** Well, what—I noticed you have about eight different styles of sausage out there. What is the biggest seller, and I guess, what's the process of creating these different types of sausages?

**JS:** Well, the pork and beef is the biggest seller.

**MB:** Just the plain, straight up—

**JS:** Overall, the pork and—salt and pepper, pork and beef is the biggest seller. And then comes your beef.

**MB:** Is this what is called kind of a Polish sausage—is there a style?

**JS:** No, it's more like a German sausage.

**00:11:09**

**MB:** Can you kind of go through the process of making the sausage for us?

**JS:** Well, we take it out of the cooler and it goes to a grinder, and we coarse grind it. And then it goes into a mixer-grinder, where we throw our seasoning in and we let it mix. Then it goes from the grinder—out of the grinder into a stuffer and the stuffer stuffs it automatically. It makes the link—you press the buttons and it makes the link the size you want.

**MB:** Wow. Okay, so is it one of those water pressure stuffers?

**JS:** No, it's a vacuum stuffer, there's no water. It's a vacuum stuffer.

**MB:** Okay, yeah the one—it's fine—the one I interviewed in Castroville, they had one of the water and he was talking about the vacuum stuffers as the latest technology. So do you have—this guy had a guy operating it where the sausage came out to just keep the casing moving? Do you have to do that here?

**JS:** Right, right, you got a guy to put the casing on the horn and then once the sausage comes out and that casing is off he puts another one on.

**MB:** Okay, and then you also mentioned you have the coarse-grinder and then the mixer-grinder. What are the subtle differences between those and why do you need to do that?

**JS:** Well, we coarse grind—grind our sausage through what we call a chili plate, and then fine grind it to mix it better. A lot of the companies are fine grind, and **we of course grind** our sausage because we can't compete with the big companies. We sell quality not quantity.

**MB:** The mixer grinder, is that actually where you put in the salt and other ingredients you might?

**JS:** Yeah, in the mix grind, we put all of our seasonings in.

**MB:** And it grinds it a little bit as well?

**JS:** Right.

**AB:** Have you guys always had the vacuum grinder or did you guys do it by hand?

**MB:** Stuffer?

**JS:** Stuffer.

**AB:** Stuffer, I'm sorry.

**JS:** When we started at the other place we had a water stuffer, and we tied all of our sausage, which there's a lot of labor involved. And then we bought a vacuum stuffer up there, and we have two stuffers here, and we can—three men can run approximately say nine- to ten-thousand pounds a day through one stuffer.

**AB:** How long would it take to do that without this stuffer?

**JS:** Without the stuffer? It would take a long time [*Laughter*]. It probably would take—I'd say it probably take three days to do what one of them stuffers do with a water stuffer.

**AB:** Really, in just a couple of hours.

**MB:** Do you guys make sausage just for yourself? And, I'm sure you do, but do you use the same stuffers here and everything for that?

**JS:** Right, we use the same stuffers for all the products.

**MB:** Well, I guess my main question there is, have you done this all your life like your family made sausage? The reason—where I'm going with this question is, I've seen—well seasoning, but also I've seen these old crank stuffers. Did you guys ever use those?

**JS:** Yes, when I was home we used them [*Laughs*], but I haven't use any here.

**MB:** That was with your father and grandfather?

**JS:** Right, with my father and them, we used those little gallon hand stuffers. And on our sausage up here, the seasoning that we do, we'll get together and make up a sample batch. We'll make it and we'll sample it, and if we don't think it's right, we try something else with the seasoning. You know, if we got too much salt, we'll cut back on the salt a little bit until we get to our flavor. And all the flavors, we make ourselves. We don't have any other seasoning company, you know, we put our own salt and pepper together.

**MB:** How important is the quality of the meat and when it—with different batches of meat that you get in? Does the taste change at all of the sausage?

**JS:** The quality of the meat means a whole lot. And that's the reason we stick with a lean pork picnic trimming, because it's consistent. You can get some trimmings that there not going to be consistent, but the reason we stick with a pork trimming picnic because it's real consistent.

**MB:** Do—and this comes from the companies that I guess they're shipping it to you?

**JS:** Right, they ship it to us. They ship it to us in what they call a combo, like a 2,000 pound combo is what it comes in just all in one big ball.

**MB:** Okay, well let's see here. Yeah, what kind of clientele do you have come into the store? Is it—do you have like local shoppers that come here on a regular basis, or is it a lot of people just coming by and stopping?

**00:15:54**

**JS:** We have a lot of locals coming in to trade with us and we have a lot people stopping off of 290 and coming in and trading. Everyday we've got new shoppers come in that are looking, you know, because we can tell when they come in, and we don't know them and never seen them and they look around *[Laughter]*.

**MB:** Do you have people that stop in once a year when they're coming through maybe on a vacation or something?

**JS:** Oh yeah, we have a lot of them on vacation and everything.

**MB:** Do you recognize them when they come in, too?

**JS:** A few we recognize because we talk to a few them, and then some we don't recognize. But a few we recognize that are coming through and said they've been before we start talking to them.

**MB:** Can you tell me some of the barbecue restaurants that use your sausage, or is it—and is it regular occurrence that they get the sausage here or meat or whatever, and, or does it just kind of fluctuate pretty much?



**JS:** It fluctuates a whole lot. I mean, sometimes—most of the barbecue places, they shop for prices and it fluctuates with which ones you go to.

**MB:** Well, I guess—well Nicole, let's get some questions from you here. When did you get started working here and what do you do *[Laughter]*?

**NH:** *[Laughs]* Well—

**MB:** Jerry's pointing at the desk *[Laughter]*.

**NH:** I came back in 1999, and basically I do most of the book work. My sister Jennifer helps me with that, and a lot of—you've got a lot of inspection programs that you—you know have to write. And we kind of handle those with the inspection personnel and make sure all of our inspections, you know, paper—you've got HACCP [Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point] programs that you have and paperwork that you have to do every day. So, we kind of take care of that.

**00:17:44**

**MB:** Are you in touch with—I guess, who would be the major entity that would do the—well, first off, who is the entity that does the inspection?

**NH:** The USDA, the FSIS branch of the USDA. We have an inspector here every day when we're making inspected product. And he comes, and he checks you, and looks at your paperwork.

**AB:** What's FSIS?

**NH:** Food Safety Inspection Service, I think. Something like that.

**MB:** And that's a part of the—

**NH:** USDA.

**MB:** USDA, okay. Well, do you guys—are you guys hands-on or do you guys have employees that—well, I know what you're doing, but do you get in there and work now, or do you have guys that can take care of it all?

**JS:** Well, I have guys take care of it, but I get in there with them and work with them.

**MB:** And you said they can do like 9,000 pounds?

**JS:** They can do 9,000 with one stuffer.

**MB:** Per day?

**JS:** Per day.

**MB:** And you have three staffers?

**JS:** I have two staffers.

**MB:** Well, do you also have a son that works here?

**JS:** No.

**MB:** No?

**JS:** He's going to college.

**MB:** Is he at Texas A&M as well?

**JS:** No he graduated from A&M, and he's going to be a lawyer.

**MB:** So, he's studying—he's got a few years probably?

**JS:** *[Laughs]* Right now he's in Miami going to school.

**MB:** Will he become involved like the rest of the family with the business?

**JS:** I don't think so. I don't think he likes the meat business [*Laughs*].

**MB:** If y'all ever get into trouble, he may have to come help you out with—

**JS:** [*Laughs*] Right. If we're in trouble, we'll call him.

**MB:** Well, so you—I guess, you deal with the USDA, FDA guys on a regular basis. What else do you have to do around here?

**NH:** [*Laughs*]

**MB:** Keep the books?

**NH:** Yes, basically, yeah.

**MB:** Okay. Well, how many employees do you guys have?

**NH:** Around twenty.

**JS:** Twenty, twenty-one.

**MB:** Does that include people behind the counter and making the sausage? And does that also include the slaughterhouse?

**JS:** No, that's not including the slaughterhouse. We've got three people at the slaughterhouse.

**MB:** Okay.

**JS:** And we've got twenty-one here. We've got two truck drivers.

**MB:** I think we saw one of them leaving just a second ago, maybe.

**JS:** Yeah. We've got two truck drivers, five people making—making the product, and we've got three of them back in packing back there—four of them back in packing running a roll-stock machine.

**MB:** I think you mentioned that you guys didn't have the slaughterhouse for awhile, or somebody was—give me the history...

**JS:** I tried—I tried to sell it, but it didn't work. So, I got it back.

**MB:** Was somebody else running it while—

**JS:** Yeah, he was supposed to buy it, and he was running it for about approximately two and a half years.

**MB:** And you had—you had the slaughterhouse—well, I guess you had the slaughterhouse and the sausage business all in that one spot the whole time. And when—and you moved out here?

**JS:** In 2000.

**MB:** In 2000. Did you try to sell it starting in 2000 over there?

**JS:** Yeah, we tried to sell it because I slaughtered all my life, and I wanted to get out of it  
*[Laughter]*.

**MB:** Well, I guess the main reason we're doing this is for barbecue, and I'll ask you a couple of questions about that. Do you have a history—I guess what's your relationship with barbecue? Do you do that a lot, personally, at the house, things like that?

**JS:** Yeah, I do some barbecuing at the house, and then we help these organizations, like on the Fourth of July, we help them barbecue and serve. And I also make a barbecue brisket up here at the plant, and we sell barbecue sandwiches.

**MB:** Oh really, I didn't know that. So you guys are barbecuing out behind the—

**JS:** No, I do it in my smokehouse. A lot of people say you can't do it, but I use my smokehouse to do it and it turns out real good.

**MB:** How does that work? Can you explain?

**JS:** Well, I put in on a temperature, like 200 degrees, and I leave it in there for eight hours and when it comes out it'll be just as tender as it can be.

**00:21:43**

**MB:** Wow. I think that's the first time I've heard of that.

**JS:** They told me I couldn't do it, but it's working [*Laughs*].

**MB:** We're going to have to go try that [*Laughs*]. Well, you mentioned the Fourth of July. What kind of organizations do you work with to do stuff like that?

**JS:** Well, like the American Legion down here in Burton. Fourth of July was—they have a celebration on the Fourth of July, and we go down there and help them barbecue and cut it up, and they serve probably around 800 to 900 people.

**MB:** Do you supply the meat or do you just go down there and help—not *just*, but you go down there and help cook?

**JS:** No, we supply the meat—we supply the meat to them and we also supply the meat to like the Round Top [Texas] Fourth of July and all of their functions and like fire departments and all that. We supply the meat at Round Top.

**MB:** Do you—I guess, what’s your opinion on the best way to cook one of your sausages?

**JS:** Well, it depends on—we’ve got a fresh sausage, and it’s great for grilling. It’s just fresh pure pork sausage. And the other sausage, I would say the best way for the smoked sausage is just boiling water. The fresh I think would be the best for barbecuing.

**MB:** Now, when you say “grilling” are you talking about putting it on indirect heat for like the barbecue or just—

**JS:** Right—

**MB:** Right on—

**JS:** Yeah, putting it on for barbecuing, indirect heat.

**AB:** I was just wondering—I think it’s great that you came back to work here. What do you think the future plans are for Burton Sausage?



**JS:** We plan on growing. That's what we want to do [*Laughter*].

**AB:** That sounds good.

**00:23:22**

**JS:** We want to try to get into the Dallas/Fort Worth area. That's our next step. I don't know if it will work, but we're going to try to get it up in there.

**AB:** How is it working with your daughter?

**JS:** Great. Great [*Laughter*]. No complaints.

**AB:** What brought you back to the industry, I guess.

**NH:** I don't know. I worked out on my own and drove back and forth to Houston, and that just wasn't for me, and I just wanted to come back and work with mom and dad. Just emotion—more emotional I guess.

**AB:** That's great. We've actually met a lot of people who sort of went off and then came back. That's wonderful.

**MB:** Well, when—if and when you do retire, do you envision your daughters of family taking over for you?

**JS:** I think they will. I'm ready to retire now. I'd like to take care of my cattle

*[Laughter]*.

**MB:** Do you think you'll take over?

**NH:** *[Laughs]* I don't know. You know, with help from the family I think we'll be able to carry on.

**MB:** Well, you mentioned Fort Worth. Are you talking about just getting your product into those areas or actually opening something there?

**JS:** No, just getting our product into the areas—get a distributor or something—a distributor up there for us.

**MB:** Where do you distribute the most?

**JS:** The Houston area.

**MB:** Well, let's see here. I guess we can get back to—I'm kind of interested about the history of Burton a little bit, and not that you *[Laughter]*—just some general questions, but I think also in relation to your family and how long they've been here. We noticed when we were coming into—was it—is it Washington County, is that—

**JS:** Yes.

**MB:** It said it's the birthplace of Texas or something like that. What do they mean by that?

**JS:** Well, I really don't—*[Laughter]*

**MB:** Don't know? Because I mean—we probably should have done a little research on this, but—

**JS:** Washington on the Brazos is down here.

**MB:** Oh.

**JS:** It's down—it's probably twenty miles from here or so. And they have celebrations there. And that's where—that's where—I think, that's where they birthed it at.

**MB:** Okay, so basically, I guess it's probably one of the original settlements—

**JS:** Right.

**MB:** For like when Stephen F. Austin and them came over.

**JS:** Right, right.

**MB:** Well, how long has your family been in this area? I guess, how far back do you go?

**JS:** Well, they've been, I mean, my parents been here all their life. They was born and raised I'd say fifteen miles from here and—

**MB:** Was that on a farm somewhere or a community somewhere else?

**JS:** No, it was on a farm.

**MB:** But I mean, I guess, even further back. When did your family get into the area? Do you know?

**JS:** No, I really don't. I really don't know.

**00:26:19**

**MB:** I know that the area is—well actually, what is your heritage? Is it German?

**JS:** *[Laughs]* Well, it's about three quarters German and one quarter Bohemian I guess

*[Laughter].*

**MB:** Well—

**JS:** My daddy was half Czech half Bohemian. And my momma was German.

**MB:** Both those heritages have been around here for awhile, so...

**JS:** Yes, they've been around. They lived neighbors—my daddy and my momma lived right across the road.

**MB:** Oh, okay. Do you have any brothers and sisters?

**JS:** I have one brother and two sisters. My sister passed away—

**MB:** Oh, I'm so sorry. I'm sorry. Well, let's talk about—that's okay—talk about—let's talk about sausage. Let's take a break for a second.

*[Pause briefly for Mr. Schultz to compose himself. His sister had just recently passed away.]*

**MB:** Okay, so your dry sausage. I just want to kind of get an idea, you know, you talked about how you prepare the sausage. What happens after that to dry it?

**JS:** To dry? It takes roughly about three weeks to dry, and it's made out of pork and beef, and we put it in the smokehouse. Four—we give it four smokings and then we put it in

the room with no humidity and dry it in there. And it—it takes approximately—depends on the humidity in the air too—I mean, it takes about approximately three weeks to dry.

**MB:** When you say four smokings, what does one entail? What does that mean?

**JS:** Well, we put it in and—see, nowadays you've got to heat your temp—your sausage up to 156 degrees. And we got to—we'll put like three smokings on it and the last smoking we'll heat it to 156 degrees. Otherwise, you've got to go under all kinds of other specifications if you don't heat it to 156 degrees.

**MB:** So, does that basically cook the sausage, or does it—

**JS:** It's pre-cooked.

**MB:** It is? I know in some areas when people just do it on their own it just gets dried raw—

**JS:** Right, right.

**MB:** But you can't do that?

**JS:** No, we cannot do that.

**MB:** So, do you dry all of your different styles of sausage or just the pork and—

**JS:** Just the pork and beef.

**MB:** Can you dry the rest of the stuff, or would it—how would that taste?

**JS:** You could dry all of it, but we just make a pork and beef here and dry it.

**MB:** Have you done it before on your own, and I guess—I guess my question is, is it not economically feasible to do it?

**JS:** Well, no—well, a lot of people don't know what dry sausage is. I mean we have calls all the time, "How do you fix dry sausage?" Dry sausage is ready to eat. It's a ready to eat product. We've got it on there "ready to eat," but people don't look at that, and a lot of people will cook it, and you can't cook it. I mean you cook the flavor away when you cook it.

**MB:** Even from around here people will—

**JS:** Well, not right around here, but people that stop by, you know and stuff like that.

**MB:** Yeah.

**JS:** They'll call and say, "Hey, how do you fix this," you know, and we'll tell them, "Well, just cut it off and eat it."

**MB:** Well, in talking about people around here, they probably know what dry sausage is.

**JS:** Right.

**MB:** Do a lot of people around here make their own?

**JS:** Not too many people no more. We make a lot of deer dry sausage for people, when people bring their own deer in. We make a lot of that. But around here, very few people make their own.

**00:30:01**

**MB:** Yeah, it seems like you'd probably have to compete with their little special family recipes.

**JS:** Right.

**MB:** Yeah, when I was interviewing the guy in Castroville, he was talking about how pretty much everybody there still does it, and they—he's always having to compete with them and what—they always will come in and say that ours is better. And it's hard to please them.



**JS:** That's true. And you can put the same seasoning side by side, and you take it out, and one man mixes it and the next man mixes it. They're going to swear it's not the same sausage *[Laughter]*.

**MB:** Do you think it has anything to do with the grind or anything like?

**JS:** Do what?

**MB:** Do you think it has anything to do with—I mean, I realize what you're saying, but does that have anything to do with the way it might be ground or are you talking about making it exactly the same?

**JS:** Making it exactly the same.

**MB:** Does the grind matter, though? The way you do grind it, and the mixer, the grinding mixer.

**JS:** On the dry it does. It's real important because you can have it too coarse and it will be real stringy when you cut it and when you chew it. And you've got to have it just right or otherwise it will be real stringy-like.

**MB:** How about on the fresh sausage?

**JS:** No, I mean we just run it through a regular grind—it's something different when you cook it like that, but when you dry it, it just forms a—it's real dry and it's hard to, you know, to chew like that when it's, you know, not ground right.

**MB:** Okay, the turkey—going over to the jerky part of it—I think probably jerky is a pretty—I think it's popular around here and most people know in all of Texas what jerky is. But I don't think I've ever seen turkey jerky until I got into central Texas. I'm wondering how popular that is and if it's the same process that you go through with beef jerky?

**JS:** It's the same process as beef jerky. And you cannot cut turkey jerky real thin like you do beef because it will get real crisp, real dry. And that's the reason we leave it in a—a chunk-like.

**MB:** Yeah, I was going to say it kind of looked like—that's the one we thought probably looked like chicken when we were in there, and it's thicker. But it dries out just the same?

**JS:** Right. Yeah, it dries out just the same.

**MB:** Is it pretty popular?

**JS:** We sell quite a bit of it, but it's not real popular like the beef. The beef sells the best.

**MB:** Well, do you have anything else you'd like to talk about, any good stories from people coming in—I know that's putting you on the spot, but—

**JS:** No. Not really.

**MB:** I guess—well, can we pause it for one second?

*[Pauses to look at notes]*

**MB:** Okay, well I think that's going to sum up everything—I think we've got it taken care of. I really appreciate you guys letting us talk to you for a few minutes, and we'll get this up online so you can see it as soon as possible *[Laughter]*.

**JS:** I don't want to see it *[Laughter]*.

**MB:** All right, thank you.

**[END]**

**00:33:12**