

May 2026

# Community Profiles

“Community is about more than belonging; it’s about doing something together that matters.”

— Brian Solis



## Offally Good Tacos

Just in time for Cinco de Mayo, Luis Guerra, owner of the El Chapin Food Truck, teamed up with local food writer Matthew Schniper to promote a quick, easy recipe for street-style liver-and-onion tacos. (Recipe follows on next page.) Luis has been integral to Ranch Foods Direct for many years, filling the role of head meat cutter before launching two food trucks adjacent to the Fillmore store. He still helps out with transporting meat, repairing equipment and assisting the slaughter crew as needed. That’s in addition to prepping food for his own business and providing catering services. He says he’ll do anything he can to support the success of a business that’s been so good to him and his family.

### TELL US ABOUT MAKING TACOS WITH ORGAN MEATS. YOU’VE BEEN DOING IT YOUR WHOLE LIFE?

Yes, since I was like ten years old. Liver, tongue, heart, all that good stuff.

### WAS IT SOMETHING YOUR MOTHER TAUGHT YOU?

Exactly right. My mom used to cook liver for us every Sunday. That was our meal. In the little town where I grew up — on the border of Honduras and El Salvador — someone would butcher one cow every Sunday to sell to the community. Everybody knew it would be ready that day. My mother used to send me to the house where it was slaughtered. It was a house that was like a little store, a mini-market, with just a few things like limes, onions, cilantro. We would buy two or three pounds of liver to make tacos. That whole beef would be gone by noon.

### WHAT WAS THAT AREA LIKE? DID LOTS OF DIFFERENT CROPS GROW THERE?

It was a little town in a valley surrounded by mountains on all sides, a little like Colorado Springs. There were a lot of ranchers and a lot of farming — goats, pigs, cows, and a lot of tomatoes, peppers, corn, and beans.

### IN THE AMERICAN DIET, WE PROBABLY DON’T EAT ENOUGH ORGAN MEAT, RIGHT?

Unfortunately, no. I would love to see people start feeding their kids by making it at least once a week. I think it’s a really good healthy source of nutrition. Our bodies need it. At the food truck, we do a beef tongue taco, or lengua taco. People might order three or four tacos, but then add one tongue taco. That’s a way to mix it up and get the health benefits of several different meats in one meal.

### WHAT’S THE TRICK TO MAKING LIVER TENDER?

I treat it like filet mignon, like someone would treat a very unique and expensive piece of meat. Especially with Callicrate liver, you don’t need to add anything to make it tender. Just simple ingredients like garlic, salt, pepper and a little bit of lime juice for a big and delicious meal. The trick is you want to cook it over medium heat, 8 to 10 minutes per side, and it’s done. Then you can slice it and put it off to the side of the pan while you warm up your tortilla and start building your taco.

### GIVE US AN UPDATE ON THE EL CHAPIN FOOD TRAILERS. HOW’S BUSINESS GOING?

A lot of Ranch Foods Direct customers eat with us and tell us they are so thankful we are partners. I’m very happy and very blessed to be associated with Ranch Foods Direct. We’re creating something unique here, where people can buy their meat and have a taco or hamburger at the same time. Everybody likes what we’re doing, and we get a lot of compliments. We want to keep it that way.

# Featured Recipe

## Higado Encebollado (Latin American-Style Liver and Onions)



Recipe by Chef Luis Guerra  
Owner of El Chapin Food Truck

“Anyone on the keto or carnivore diet will eat this up,” exclaims Ranch Foods Direct owner and founder Mike Callicrate of this dish. “Liver is a nutrient-dense superfood. All predators in the wild know organ meats are the most highly prized part of the carcass.” Liver contains highly absorbable Vitamin B12 as well as Vitamin A, roboflavin, niacin and copper, plus choline for brain health. It boosts the immune system, improves muscle mass and enhances fertility.



### HOW TO MAKE LIVER AND ONIONS

- 2 lbs. Callicrate Beef liver (available pre-sliced)
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. pepper
- 1 tsp. garlic powder (or use fresh chopped garlic if you prefer)
- 2 limes, 1 juiced and 1 cut into segments for squeezing onto tacos
- 1 large onion
- 1 small red bell pepper
- 1 small green bell pepper
- 2 jalapeños (optional)
- cilantro for garnish
- Callicrate Beef tallow (for pan searing)
- Tortillas and salsa for serving

Thaw the liver overnight in the fridge. When ready to prep, wash it off and strain or pat dry with paper towels. Add lime juice and salt, pepper and garlic powder. Let sit for 30 minutes.

While it marinates, sauté onions and bell peppers and whole jalapeños in Callicrate beef tallow. Set aside. Pan sear the liver at medium heat in melted beef tallow — roughly 8-10 minutes per side (a bit less for liver cut to a thinner slice).

Pull liver from the pan once fully cooked, and using tongs and a knife, slice into strips the right size for serving on tacos.

Chop cilantro for garnish and slice the jalapeño into coins. Warm the tortillas as preferred. (Chef Luis likes to cook them with the leftover tallow in the pan for more flavor.) Add all ingredients to a large service tray for a family-style presentation. Build tacos and dress with the salsa and squeezes of fresh lime juice.

# Where Past Meets Future



**T**he award-winning documentary begins at daybreak in the slums of India and ends on a prairie road near Callicrate Cattle Company. What's the common thread between these two scenes, more than 8,000 miles apart? It's the erosion of independence and self-reliance due to corporate acquisition. "Rarely do you find a situation where one country's past illuminates another country's future," says filmmaker Bedabrata Pain in explaining the title "Deja Vu," a reference to Reagan-era free trade policies being pressed on India's farmers.

In the film, American agriculturalists like Ranch Foods Direct founder Mike Callicrate dispute the corporate line that taking on more debt and increasing production is the path to profitability. In the U.S., the opposite has happened. Since the 1980s, the farmer's share of the consumer food dollar fell by more than half, to an all-time low of 27 percent during the COVID pandemic. That means a \$19 hamburger contains just \$2 worth of ingredients; the farmer's share is even less, just 27 cents. As a result, family farms have been forced off their land, while billionaire Bill Gates is now the country's largest landowner. At the Julien Dubuque International Film Festival — the first screening held in the Midwest — the filmmaker answered questions about the project.

## **INDIAN FARM LAWS, HASTILY ADOPTED IN 2020, RESULTED IN MASS PROTESTS THAT MADE HEADLINES AROUND THE WORLD. YOU'VE SAID THAT WAS THE STARTING POINT FOR YOUR FILM. WHAT MESSAGE DID YOU HOPE TO SEND?**

What happened in India is happening everywhere. This idea of the big guys, the corporate monopolies, coming in and that's how we'll bring prosperity to a place is a story we're being sold everywhere on every front. And that's where I started from. I wanted to bring attention to the problem, not just in farming but in every sphere of our lives. Think about the media, think about news, there's only four or five companies that control what news you get and how you get it. And it's not just news — it impacts what content you see, what content you consume. You're told what to think and how to feel. The term "free market" is such an interesting euphemism. It's being used to sell you something, while what it really brings are monopolies.

## **SAY A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE INDIAN FARM LAWS? WERE THEY EVER ENACTED?**

They passed but then were repealed. Now the big companies are working on a back-door way to bring these things in. The MSP (short for minimum support price, the equivalent of parity pricing in the U.S.) is not being enforced, so that's the fight right now. Companies in India are pushing back on the MSP and offering contracts below the cost of production. We've already seen that happen with apples. Now it's spreading to other crops.

Within India we already have monopolistic companies, but now various American companies are also coming into India with the same story: "Let us come in, we'll mechanize everything, we'll make agriculture more efficient. There are so many opportunities and there's such a huge market you're going to get!" I wanted to show the actual outcome of this for farmers in America. That's why the film is called *Deja Vu*. This is exactly what was being sold forty years ago to farmers in this country. To me, the important thing was taking that lesson to India's farmers.

## **ARE FARMERS IN INDIA DIVIDED LIKE THEY ARE HERE IN THE U.S.?**

The farmers in India aren't as organized as farmers in the U.S. But they do need access to the market. I think it's important for people to know that access to the market is not the same thing as having a fair market. That's where the trouble comes in.

## **WHAT DID MIKE CALLICRATE ADD TO THE FILM?**



Mike and Joe Maxwell (president of Farm Action) turned out to be the key people I interviewed. It wasn't intentional, that's just how it came out in the editing process. What they told me fit very nicely with the story I wanted to tell. Mike speaks very well, and he had more to say about the corporations than anyone else we talked to.

## **IS THERE MORE TO COME ON THIS TOPIC?**

I think there's a narrative film in all this, about what corporate monopolies have done to our lives, told from the perspective of those who have suffered through it and are fighting back. Also, there's a part two. We have to explain the problem, but then we also have to talk about solutions. This is not just a farm crisis; like I said before, it's everywhere on every front.

*Ranch Foods Direct founder Mike Callicrate, above left, attended a film screening with filmmaker "BeDo" Pain, shown here along with two Wisconsin farmers who also appear in the film, John Beck and Joel Greeno, at the National Mississippi River Museum. The film was later awarded BEST DOCUMENTARY at the prestigious film festival.*





## 'Top-shelf service'

Chris Loeffler and his wife Suzanne own Triple D Ranch in Northwest Kansas. They recently stopped by Callicrate Cattle Company's office in St. Francis, Kansas, on the way to their ranch from their primary home north of Denver. The couple both work for a large construction contractor in addition to owning ranch properties. As they toured the on-site store and the adjacent Callicrate Bander manufacturing business, Chris talked about what they look for in a custom processor and why they've become a repeat customer.

### YOU HAVE CATTLE CUSTOM-PROCESSED BY CALLICRATE CATTLE COMPANY. HOW DID THAT COME ABOUT?

We've tried various locals over the years. My ranch managers found Callicrate's to use for their own brand, and we started using Callicrate a couple of years ago.

### WHAT ARE YOUR IMPRESSIONS SO FAR?

I've been to each of the facilities, including the one in Colorado Springs, and I can tell it's clean, it's professional, and all the people I've met are very courteous. We know it's a top-shelf operation. We love how the meat is packaged. We love that it's not getting freezer-burned in a short period of time. Everything is first class, and we're all about that at our ranch as well.

### TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR RANCH.

Rawlins County, Kansas, is where the headquarters are, but we also have an elk hunt ranch in Nucla, Colorado. We run 350 momma cows and butcher half a dozen head a year. Our ranch manager sells some of the meat, but I would just as soon eat it and give it away to friends and family. I'm a building contractor by trade. I wear a cowboy hat and cowboy boots with a big belt buckle. But my cowboys do the cowboying. I run the business. I know my limitations. (Laughs).

### ARE GOOD CUSTOM PROCESSING SERVICES GETTING HARDER TO FIND?

There's no doubt. For my elk hunt ranch in Western Colorado, I started buying walk-in cold storage space. And everybody asked why, when you have such a great butcher right there in town? The truth is he's got maybe two years left (before he retires.) We can't necessarily rely on the guy in town because I don't know how much longer he'll be in business, right? The craft of butchering and processing is going away. These small towns are starting to dry up when it comes to quality help for butchering and processing of meat. So I think what Callicrate Cattle Company is doing is great. Just the fact that a) you're a top-notch business, but b) this is a business that's going away in a lot of places.

### SO ANOTHER QUESTION IN YOUR CASE IS WHETHER THE GUY IN TOWN WILL BE ABLE TO FIND SOMEONE TO REPLACE HIM, RIGHT?

It's a craft. You have to learn it. You can't just come in and start cutting meat.

### WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE OF RANCHING?

We've started making money now. A couple years ago I would have said that it was very hit or miss. But now, with prices the way they are, things are looking better.

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