

How Chicago-Based Purely Meat Stepped Up for Meijer Customers

Last year posed severe challenges across the retail industry as our customers drastically changed their shopping habits and adjusted to a largely at-home lifestyle. But difficult times can also offer opportunities for partnerships to grow and flourish. For example, [Purely Meat](#), a Hispanic woman-owned meat supplier, stepped up to fill our shelves throughout the 2020 meat shortage and grew their business in the process.

Owner Maribel Moreno-Musillami has been in the meat business for 25 years. She began Purely Meat, which is based in Chicago, by using her family's butcher shop to source meat for friends in the restaurant industry.

"Now the company has grown to about 50 employees and we're delivering meat wholesale throughout the United States, and of course Meijer is our biggest retailer," Maribel said.

Prior to the 2020 meat shortage, Purely Meat supplied ground meat and pork tenderloins to our stores. The operation hustled to help us feed our customers last year by expanding to provide chicken and pork chops, as well.

"As you know, 2020 was a difficult time for everyone," she said. "The retail business started to take off because people were not going out to eat, and because of the size of our company we were able to pivot."

As a significant part of their business slowed down with the decline of restaurant orders, Purely Meat quickly focused their attention on serving retailers like Meijer as we saw demand skyrocket. Many meat production facilities faced severe supply chain challenges during this time, but Maribel's team jumped into action to supply us with more product than ever before. She credits strict safety protocols and the hard work of her team as essential for helping them meet the increased demand.

"It's our people...We're more of a family," she explained. "We help each other out and it's not just a job."


Maribel has built that familial culture by applying some of the traits she most admired in her own mother as part of her leadership style.

"Growing up, she was very firm with my sisters and I, but very loving and was always very proud of us," Maribel said. "I feel the same way with our people and our team when it comes to getting the job done and our product. I want everybody to take pride in what they do... and feel like a family."

Looking back on how far she and her business have come, Maribel is proud of the obstacles she overcame.

"Coming from East Los Angeles to where we are now working with Meijer is unimaginable," she said. "The meat world is a 'man's world' so it's hard when a woman presents herself and tries to cross that barrier."

In addition to becoming a strong business partner, Purely Meat also shares our focus on serving the community. From donating hotdogs and hamburgers to the local school carnival fundraiser or turkeys at the holidays and cooking for those facing homelessness, the team at Purely Meat cares deeply about being a good neighbor, just like we do. We're pleased to play a small part in their success.

Additional assets available online:  [Photos](#) (2)