



Promoting Beef as a Part of a Healthy Diet and a Healthy Lifestyle

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It's that time of year! Yes, the holiday season has come to an end and the New Year is upon us. Many Americans are focusing on health and fitness as a part of their New Year's resolutions. As beef producers it is important that we make a New Year's resolution to take an active role in promoting beef's nutritional benefits to our consumers. Beef should be "*What's for Dinner*" and here are some reasons why.

According to the "2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans" consumers should select nutrient-rich foods from all food groups. Lean beef, calorie-for-calorie, packs more nutrients into fewer calories than many other animal proteins. Today's lean beef is leaner than ever before. According to the "USDA Nutrient Database" a total of 29 cuts of beef qualify as "lean" under government labeling guidelines. Many of these beef cuts are 20 percent leaner than USDA data indicated just 14 years ago. Lean beef can easily fit into lowfat diets. Choose one of the 29 cuts of beef that meet the government guidelines for "lean" such as the eye round, top round, mock tender steak, bottom round, top sirloin, round tip, 95% lean ground beef, brisket flat half, shank crosscuts, chuck shoulder roast, arm pot roast, shoulder steak, top loin, flank steak, ribeye steak (small end), rib steak (small end), tri-tip roast, tenderloin, and T-bone steak.

A common misperception is that vegetarian diets are lower in fat than meat containing diets. However, a study by Broughton and Barr (1999, Canadian Journal of Dietary Practice & Research) indicated that no differences in fat, energy, carbohydrate intake or relative

body weight were identified when comparing vegetarian and meat containing diets. In fact, there are several benefits to making meat part of a healthy diet.

- **Vitamin B.** The red meats (beef, pork and lamb) account for 61 percent of vitamin B-12 in the U.S. food supply, 20 percent of vitamin B-6, 16 percent of niacin, 11 percent of riboflavin, and 14 percent of thiamin. Poultry and fish add an additional 13 percent, 13 percent, 17 percent, 4 percent, and 2 percent of B-12, b-6, niacin, riboflavin and thiamin, respectively.
- **Zinc (Z).** Animal foods such as meat, poultry and fish are major sources of bioavailable zinc. A 35 percent reduction in the total amount of zinc absorbed has been observed in vegetarian women, compared to a non-vegetarian diet. When added to the diet, beef provides as much zinc as 11 three-ounce servings of tuna.
- **Iron (I).** Iron deficiency is among the most common nutritional deficiencies in the U.S. Iron in food is present in two forms--heme iron in meat, poultry and fish, and nonheme iron present in a variety of plant and other animal foods. Beef, when added to the diet, provides as much iron as three cups of raw spinach.
- **Protein (P).** Meat and other animal foods provide complete protein, while some plant proteins are incomplete or lack sufficient amounts of one or more essential amino acids.

- Conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) is a derivative of the essential fatty acid, linoleic acid, which may potentially protect against cancer, heart disease, and diabetes, and may enhance immune function and reduce body fat. Meat, a major source of CLA, accounts for over 97 percent of CLA consumed, 36 percent of which is provided by beef. CLA Eliminating meat from the diet increases an individual's risk for vitamin B, iron, and zinc deficiencies.

Here is a great product that consumers can use to deliver great-tasting, health-promoting lean beef dishes to their tables. The American Dietetic Association and the Beef Checkoff combined their expertise to produce "**The Healthy Beef Cookbook**". Authored by Chef Richard Chamberlain (owner of Chamberlain's Steak and Chop House in

Dallas, TX) and Betsy Hornick, M.S., R.D., the cookbook is packed with over 130 delicious recipes and the latest nutritional information and cooking techniques.

As beef producers we need to know the research based facts when promoting and communicating the benefits of beef as part of a healthy diet. So the next time when someone questions the nutritional benefits of the product you produce, keep your New Year's resolution. Let them know that they can not only enjoy the flavor and quality of lean beef, but also feel good about it being part of a healthy diet and order them a copy of "**The Healthy Beef Cookbook**".

If you would like more information on nutrient-dense beef, visit www.beefnutrition.org. To order the "**Healthy Beef Cookbook**" go to www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com.