

The Nutritional Value of Beef: Education important to understanding and industry success



By Kylie Blanchard for the N.D. Beef Commission

The mission of the North Dakota Beef Commission (NDBC) is to enhance consumer demand for beef, increase consumer awareness of beef and strengthen consumer trust in the beef industry. An important component of succeeding at this mission is promoting the nutritional value of beef and educating nutrition influencers, consumers and producers about beef's role in a healthy diet and lifestyle.

"When consumers better understand the value beef can bring to a healthy diet, the entire beef industry benefits," says Caitlin Mondelli, a registered dietitian and director of Food and Health Communication at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NBCA), a contractor to the national beef checkoff. "It's important beef farmers and ranchers have access to accurate information so they can share this knowledge with consumers."

A Foundational Food

"Beef is a foundational food that nourishes and optimizes Americans' health at every life stage," Mondelli says, adding beef's nutritional benefits help individuals avoid nutrient shortfalls across their lifespan.

Beef also provides protein essential for building and maintaining strength. "A three-ounce serving of beef delivers 25 grams of high-quality protein," Mondelli notes, adding the same serving also provides 10 essential nutrients in about 170 calories, including zinc, iron and B vitamins. "No other protein source offers the same nutrient mix."

Educating Consumers

Beef is now leaner than ever before, Mondelli says, making it easier to include in a variety of diets. "This is a direct result of determined efforts by beef farmers and ranchers to fuel a more healthful American population."

Lean beef contains less than 10 grams of total fat, 4.5 grams or less of saturated fat and less than 95 mg of cholesterol per 100 grams, or 3.5 ounces, cooked. "Nearly 40 cuts of beef, including some of the most popular cuts, such as sirloin, are lean as defined by the USDA," she notes.

"It's important the beef industry continues to give consumers reasons to believe in beef's contribution to a healthy diet and give them the tools that show how to build a healthy diet with beef," Mondelli continues.



Available Resources

The beef industry has a long-standing commitment to nutrition research, and the majority of this research is made possible with producer dollars through the beef checkoff program. "NCBA's team of registered dietitians and nutrition scientists manage nutrition research and educational programs that provide access to the facts on beef nutrition for both producers and consumers," notes Mondelli. "This information is then shared through a variety of different venues, including the Beef. It's What's For Dinner. website."

The website, www.BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com, features educational fact sheets, videos and other resources to enhance producer and consumer knowledge on beef-related topics.

The North Dakota Beef Commission (NDBC) enthusiastically supports these national efforts and extends consumer education on the nutritional value of beef across the state through radio spots and social media posts, as well as digital advertising campaigns focused on older millennials with young families. Students are reached through Living Ag Classroom events, beef grants and education resources for Family & Consumer Science classes. The NDBC also continues to work with dietitians, nutritionists, foodservice experts, family physicians, nutrition researchers and others to take science-based, beef nutrition information and resources and share it with a much larger audience of clients, patients, and consumers. For more information visit www.ndbeef.org.