

YOUR GUIDE TO
HAVING THE
BEEF
CONVERSATION



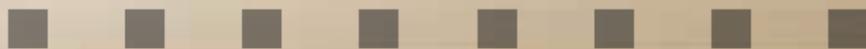
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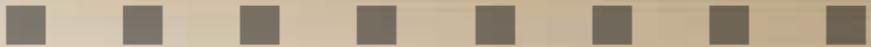
Having the Beef Conversation

Conversations about how beef is raised are happening in our local and virtual communities. But farmer and rancher voices are not always included.

Engaging in a conversation about how beef is raised — rather than just defending what we do — helps farmers and ranchers connect with consumers and change the dialogue about the people and the practices behind raising today's beef.

By listening to their questions, acknowledging concerns and talking about how we continually improve what we do on our farms and ranches, we learn from each other. In the end, we all have an interest in how our food is raised. Having a beef conversation helps build trust with our consumer.





Conversations With E.A.S.E.

ENGAGE

The first step is engaging the consumer. This could be an everyday encounter with a neighbor or a conversation on Facebook or Twitter. The key is having an attitude of openness, inviting questions and listening to concerns.

Look for opportunities to engage, such as:

- Shopping at the meat case — offer tips for selecting and preparing beef cuts
- At the neighborhood barbecue — discuss proper cooking temps
- Visiting a farmers market — ask a fellow shopper what is important to them when choosing beef
- Reading the news online — look for articles about beef/food production and post comments offering your experience
- Checking Facebook or Twitter — discuss current events, recent studies, movies, books on beef/food production

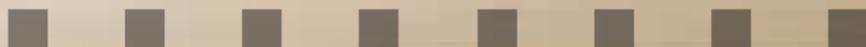
ACKNOWLEDGE

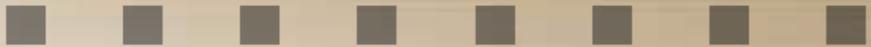
Acknowledge that consumers have questions and concerns. By inviting questions and listening to concerns you are establishing a connection. Look for areas of common ground to build upon. Don't focus on differences.

- Consumer questions about how beef is raised are not necessarily criticisms.
- Food safety, health, environment and animal care are areas we all should care about.
- Validate questions by letting them know you understand and appreciate their concerns, then offer to provide information on how the beef community works to address their concerns.

Remember the 3 Cs:

- We Care (about the same issues you do)
- We're Capable (of raising safe beef while caring for animals and the environment)
- We're Continuously improving (to meet your expectations)





SHARE

Once you have acknowledged questions and concerns ask for permission to share your viewpoint.

- Would you be interested in learning more about what we are doing to address that issue?
- Have you heard about our efforts to improve in that area?
- Do you want to know what I do every day to meet your expectations?

Share personal examples of continuous improvement; consumers are inspired by and curious about what you do.

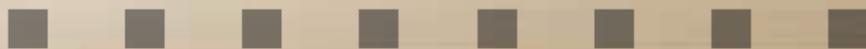
- Don't sell yourself short. Things you do every day may be "news" to them.
- However, don't assume they have never been on a farm or are "uneducated."
- Do an occasional "gut check" to make sure they understand or if they have other questions you have not addressed.

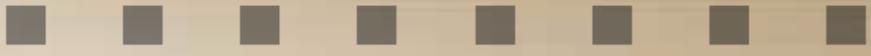
EARN TRUST

The goal of the conversation is to earn trust. It's not about winning an argument or proving you are right. It is important to correct misinformation but don't refute with facts alone; food is very emotional. Remember, if you don't trust someone, you don't trust their facts.

Remember these conversation tips to earn trust:

- Turn off your defense mechanism. Don't take questions personally.
 - Listen with the intent to understand.
 - Talk about what concerns them...not what you want to talk about.
 - Don't claim to be 100 percent right. Acknowledge mistakes if they have been made.
- 
- Talk about what we are doing to continuously improve and meet their expectations.





Words Matter

We say “efficient.” Consumers say, “You are cutting corners to make more money.”

Talk about using fewer resources instead of producing more food.

We say, “safe.” Consumers say, “We don’t know if pesticides, antibiotics or hormones are good for our long-term health.”

Talk about how and why we use these products judiciously to ensure they are not creating a health concern.

We say, “affordable.” Consumers say, “We don’t want cheap food at the expense of quality.”

Talk about efforts to raise the highest quality beef at a price consumers can afford to feed their family.

We say, “abundant.” Consumers say, “We have an abundance of food and an obesity problem.”

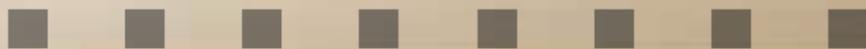
Talk about raising nutrient-rich beef which provides essential nutrients and vitamins we need in our diet.

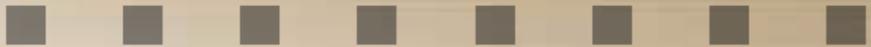
Share Your Story

An important part of engaging in the conversation about how beef is grown and raised is sharing your personal story. Your story consists of all the everyday things that make you so passionate about raising cattle and providing delicious beef to consumers.

The answers to these questions begin to shape your story:

- Has the farm/ranch been in your family for many generations or are you new to farming and ranching?
- Is there something geographically/environmentally/historically unique about the location of your farm or ranch?
- Have you implemented any unique environmental or other practices on your farm or ranch you are particularly proud of?
- Why do you raise beef/feed crops as opposed to plant foods (e.g., fruits and vegetables)? Why does this make sense given the unique resources you have to raise food on your farm/ranch?
- What are you most proud of about your farm/ranch?





The Beef Community

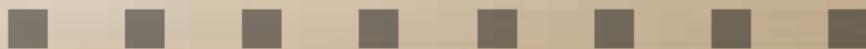
Beef is raised by a broad community of dedicated people working together to raise nutrient-rich beef in a way that is sustainable for the future. The result is delicious, healthful food you can feel good about.

- Throughout the entire beef community, there is a shared commitment to raising cattle in a humane and environmentally responsible manner.
- Working together, all segments of the beef community make the best use of resources such as land, water and energy to raise nutrient-rich beef in a way that is sustainable for the future.
- Cattle farmers and ranchers believe that safe beef comes from healthy cattle. Programs proactively created by cattlemen for cattlemen assure the highest level of care for our animals.

The Beef Lifecycle

One of the basic questions consumers have is “where does beef come from?” You can help answer this question by explaining the beef “lifecycle” — the journey from pasture to plate.

- It all starts on cow-calf farms and ranches where calves are born and spend time drinking their mother’s milk and grazing on pastures.
- Cattle spend the first part of their lives grazing pasture, essentially converting forage and grass into protein.
- Most cattle then go to a feedyard where they receive a carefully balanced, nutritious diet and individual attention daily.
- By allowing each member of the beef community to do what they do best with the resources available to them, we raise high-quality, great-tasting beef with fewer resources.



Tough Questions

1. Does feeding animals grain take food from the hungry?

No. Livestock turn feed-grade grains (not human food) into high quality protein for our diets. Less than 5 percent of global grain production is used to feed livestock.

2. Is beef raised on large corporate factory farms, which are putting smaller family farms out of business?

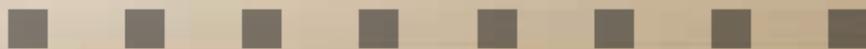
No. In fact, 97 percent of beef farms and ranches are family-owned. But it takes a community of people — from cow-calf farmers and ranchers to the cattlemen, nutritionists and veterinarians at larger feedyards — working together to bring beef to your plate.

3. Are the cattle in feedyards crowded and not able to move around?

The roomy outdoor pens where cattle live in feedyards are designed with their comfort in mind. Each animal has access to clean water, a balanced diet and receives daily individual attention and veterinary care.

Facts to Share

- One farmer or rancher today raises enough food to feed 155 people compared to just 19 in 1940. In fact, less than 1 percent of the U.S. population raises our food.
- U.S. consumers spend a smaller percentage of their disposable income on food than consumers anywhere else in the world.
- Nearly half of farmers and ranchers volunteer with a youth organization compared with a national average of about 7 percent.
- The beef community directly or indirectly accounts for more than 1.4 million jobs and contributes more than \$188 billion in output to the national economy.





Good Food

Beef Nutrition

You can feel good about loving beef because the protein in beef is a powerful nutrient that helps strengthen and sustain your body.

- Protein can help in maintaining a healthy weight, building muscle and fueling physical activity — all of which are important to a healthy life and disease prevention.
- Not all proteins are created equal. Animal proteins such as lean beef are complete, high-quality proteins that contain all the essential amino acids your body needs for optimal health.
- The foods you choose, combined with physical activity, can help you live vibrantly. The key to staying active and energetic is taking good care of yourself.

Beef Safety

Raising the safest and highest quality beef is a top priority for U.S. cattle farmers and ranchers, who recognize that healthy cattle are the foundation of a safe food supply.

- Cattle farmers and ranchers are committed to continuous improvements in food safety and are dedicated to investing in science-based solutions.
- The science-based safety practices that are part of how beef is raised today, coupled with strict government requirements, allow the beef community to address foodborne pathogens more effectively than ever.
- Consumers also play an important role in food safety by following proper food handling, cooking and storage steps.



Choices for Consumers

Farmers and ranchers raise a variety of beef choices, such as grain-finished, grass-finished, natural and certified organic beef.

- Most cattle are grass-fed, spending the first part of their lives grazing on grass pastures.
- Most of the beef you buy is considered natural, meaning it is minimally processed and contains no additives.
- All beef choices have to meet the same safety standards. Vigilance on farms, rigorous safety inspections and strict government guidelines ensure the highest level of safety for whichever type of beef you choose.
- All beef provides more than 10 percent of the Daily Value for 10 essential nutrients, such as iron, zinc, protein and B vitamins.



Tough Questions

1. Are Americans eating too much beef?

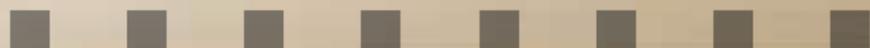
On average, Americans consume 5.1 oz of protein each day from all foods, including meat, poultry, eggs, fish/seafood, nuts and soy products. Compared with the 5.5 oz the Dietary Guidelines recommend daily, Americans are not over consuming protein.

2. Did feedyards encourage the emergence of *E. coli* O157:H7?

No. Bacteria like *E. coli* are found naturally in the environment and in the intestinal tracts of healthy animals whether in a feedyard or grazing on pasture. The beef community, however, has implemented measures to ensure the safest beef possible.

3. Does eating beef increase your risk for heart disease and high cholesterol?

Contrary to conventional wisdom, beef can be good for heart health. New research shows that eating lean beef every day, as part of a heart-healthy diet and lifestyle, can improve cholesterol levels.



Tough Questions

- 4. Are beef choices such as natural and organic better for you than conventional beef?**

No. All beef offers the same primary nutritional benefits in a healthy, balanced diet. There is no major nutritional or safety advantage to choosing one type of beef over another. Beef farmers and ranchers have options for raising beef which provides consumers with a variety of beef choices.

- 5. From the news, *E. coli* illnesses seem to be increasing. Is this true?**

The beef community has been credited in part for helping reduce the risk of illness from *E. coli*, which according to The Centers for Disease Control, was cut in half between 2007 and 2010.

- 6. Are vegetarian diets healthier?**

One 3 oz. serving of lean beef provides 25 grams of protein for fewer calories (154) than many plant-based proteins, such as peanut butter, tofu or black beans. Iron deficiency is the most common nutritional deficiency worldwide, and beef provides the most readily available and easily absorbed source of iron.

Facts to Share

- Many of Americans' favorite cuts such as Top Sirloin, Tenderloin, Strip Steak and 95-percent-lean Ground Beef are lean.
- You would have to eat 6 tablespoons of peanut butter (564 calories) to get the same amount of protein provided by one 3-oz serving of lean beef (160 calories).
- Lean beef has less than 10 grams of total fat per 3-oz serving. About half the fat in beef is monounsaturated fat, the same heart-healthy kind found in olive oil.
- Cattle farmers and ranchers have invested more than \$30 million since 1993 in safety research and outreach programs. The beef community as a whole invests at least \$550 million in safety annually.
- 95.6 percent of total beef dollar sales are grain-finished, conventionally raised beef. Natural and organic makes up 4.4 percent and 0.1 percent is grass-fed.



Healthy Animals

Farmers and ranchers take care of their cattle because it's the right thing to do, it makes good business sense and they know that safe beef comes from healthy cattle.

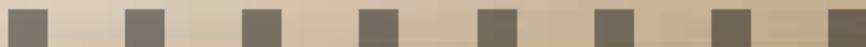
- Farmers and ranchers are honored to be stewards of their animals and therefore work daily to keep them safe, healthy and secure.
- Farmers and ranchers provide their animals with food and water; health care that prevents, controls and treats disease; and facilities and handling practices that promote safe and humane movement.
- Moving animals quietly, caring for them and making them comfortable is both an art and a science achieved through training, best practices and generational experience.

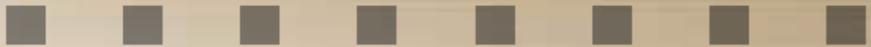


Beef Quality Assurance

The checkoff-funded Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program was created in 1987 and includes research, training and certification that help farmers and ranchers provide the best care for their cattle.

- BQA educates people at every step in the beef lifecycle about providing optimal care for their cattle.
- The beef community “Guidelines for the Care and Handling of Cattle” were developed in cooperation with leading animal health and welfare experts. The guidelines are clear: Abuse of animals will not be tolerated.
- Every five years the beef community conducts a comprehensive audit of cattle handling practices. This audit shows continuous improvement in cattle handling practices across all segments.





Tough Questions

1. Isn't corn an unnatural and harmful diet for cattle?

Cattle in feedyards receive a balanced diet of grasses, grains and other renewable feeds, which usually includes corn. Corn is a nutritious, energy-rich feed source for cattle.

2. Is the livestock industry overusing antibiotics and creating "super bugs"?

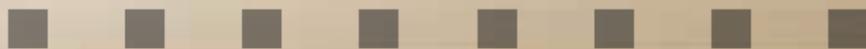
Evidence shows the proper use of antibiotics in livestock is not creating a public health risk. Farmers and ranchers work with veterinarians to first prevent, and then judiciously treat, illness in cattle.

3. Why are growth hormones/steroids used and are they harmful to human health?

Cattle farmers and ranchers use Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved growth promotants to safely raise more lean beef with fewer natural resources. Growth promotants go through a stringent approval process and are continually monitored for safety.

Facts to Share

- The handling and care of more than 90 percent of feedyard cattle is influenced by the veterinarian-endorsed BQA program.
- There are more than 750,000 U.S. cattle farmers and ranchers, whose livelihoods depend on treating animals humanely to raise quality beef.
- 87 percent of farmers and ranchers who raise beef (seedstock, commercial cow/calf, backgrounder/preconditioner, stocker/yearling, feedlot, and dairy) follow best management practices consistent with BQA because it's the right thing to do.
- The FDA's New Animal Drug Application approval process requires a sponsor to submit multiple studies over multiple years to prove an antibiotic's safety.



Environment

All food, including beef, requires resources such as land, water and energy. Today, however, farmers and ranchers raise more beef using fewer resources than ever before.

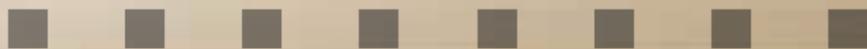
- Raising beef today requires less water, land and energy and has a smaller environmental footprint thanks to continuous improvements by farmers and ranchers.
- Compared to 1960, there are half as many farmers and ranchers today feeding a U.S. population that has more than doubled.
- Many experts agree that U.S. livestock production is sustainable and should be considered a model for the rest of the world.

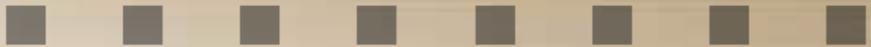


Beef Sustainability

The beef community is committed to enhancing U.S. beef sustainability to ensure a better quality of life for today's global population and generations to come.

- Farmers and ranchers believe sustainable beef means raising our cattle in environmentally tenable, economically viable and socially responsible ways.
- America's farmers and ranchers are committed to continuously improving how we raise beef. We believe sustainability is a journey, not a destination.
- Sustainability is not a new concept for farmers and ranchers, who are dedicated to leaving their land, businesses and communities in better shape for the next generation.





Tough Questions

1. Doesn't raising beef have a huge carbon footprint?

According to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), livestock accounts for just 3.4 percent of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, beef's carbon footprint has significantly decreased in the last 30+ years.

2. Isn't organic, grass-finished or natural beef more environmentally friendly?

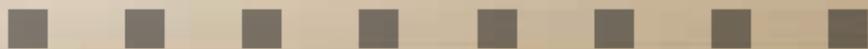
Not necessarily. Cattle from grass-finished production systems can take longer to raise and therefore require more natural resources and produce more carbon emissions. Organic and natural systems do not reduce the use of natural resources.

3. Aren't feedyards bad for the environment?

Moving cattle to a feedyard to finish growing actually is the most sustainable way to raise beef. All large livestock operations are subject to strict federal and state regulations prohibiting waste contamination of natural resources.

Facts to Share

- U.S. farmers and ranchers raise 20 percent of the world's beef supply with just 7 percent of the world's cattle.
- Approximately 85 percent of U.S. grazing lands are unsuitable for growing crops. Grazing cattle on this land more than doubles the area that can be used to raise food.
- Open space, primarily managed by cattle farmers and ranchers, provides habitat for 75 percent of America's wildlife.
- Farmers and ranchers have invested their beef checkoff dollars in a first-of-its-kind, comprehensive sustainability assessment to identify opportunities for improvement.
- Feedyards are a significant source of natural fertilizer used on crops and in urban landscapes, which reduces the nitrogen needed to manufacture synthetic fertilizers.



The Beef Checkoff

The Beef Checkoff Program is the beef community's only national self-help program.

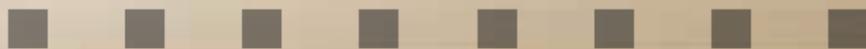
- Congress created the Beef Promotion and Research Act, the "Beef Checkoff Program," with passage of the 1985 Farm Bill. Producers approved making the Beef Checkoff Program mandatory in 1988, with 79 percent voting in favor of it.
- All producers and importers pay the equivalent of \$1/head each and every time a beef animal is sold throughout its lifetime.
- Half of the money collected by state beef councils — 50 cents of every dollar — is invested through the beef council in each state.

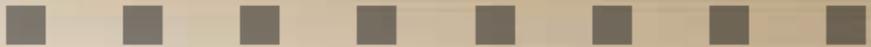


Leveraging Your Investment

Every dollar you invest in the Beef Checkoff Program is leveraged toward the goal of building demand for beef globally.

- Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) producer members are nominated by producer organizations in their states and appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.
- Your checkoff invests in programs — promotion, research, industry information, consumer information, foreign marketing and producer communication — aimed at affecting consumer preference.
- By law, checkoff funds cannot be used to influence government policy or action, including lobbying. In addition, the checkoff doesn't own cattle, packing plants or retail outlets. It can't control prices or singlehandedly turn around a bad market.
- CattleFax estimates that the increase in beef demand since 1998 has added about \$250/head to the price of fed cattle and about \$200/head to the price of calves.





Tough Questions

1. Does CBB support governmental or regulatory policy issues?

As the administrator of the beef checkoff, CBB cannot take a position on policy matters and cannot lobby. In addition, contractors are prohibited from using checkoff funds to lobby—a strict rule CBB enforces through regular audits and reviews.

2. Does the beef checkoff promote natural or organic beef?

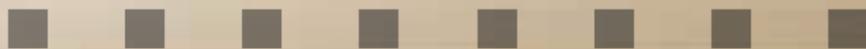
The beef checkoff promotes all beef. As a matter of policy, it doesn't promote one breed over another, nor one operation or production model over another. The checkoff's mission is to increase demand for beef, benefiting all beef producers.

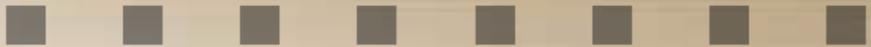
3. How do I know that my checkoff dollars are promoting U.S. beef in other countries?

Both CBB and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service insist their funding promote U.S. beef in foreign markets and evaluate every program they invest in to assure that is happening.

Facts to Share

- All national checkoff-funded programs are budgeted and evaluated by the CBB, a stand-alone organization of checkoff-paying producer volunteers.
- Dairy producers also pay the checkoff. About 20 percent of the beef produced in the U.S. comes from dairy-breed animals; and dairy producers are represented on the CBB.
- Sixty-nine percent of producers agree that over the years, “the beef checkoff program has helped contribute to the profitability of my operation.”





Resources

Social Media

Become A Fan On Facebook

- www.facebook.com/BeefItsWhatsForDinner
- www.facebook.com/MyBeefCheckoff

Follow Us On Twitter

- www.twitter.com/BeefForDinner
- www.twitter.com/BeefFacts
- www.twitter.com/MyBeefCheckoff

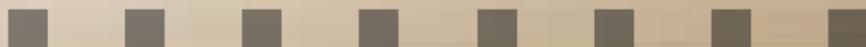
Share Videos On YouTube

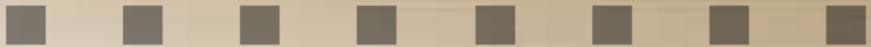
- Beef. It's What's for Dinner.
www.youtube.com/LandOfLeanBeef
- Beef Facts
www.youtube.com/BeefPasturetoPlate
- My Beef Checkoff
www.youtube.com/MyBeefCheckoff



Websites

- My Beef Checkoff
www.MyBeefCheckoff.com
- 'Masters of Beef Advocacy' Application
www.Beef.org/MBA
- Facts About Beef
www.FactsAboutBeef.com
- Beef. Its What's For Dinner.
<http://www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com/>
- Beef Quality Assurance
www.BQA.org
- Beef Industry Food Safety Council
www.BIFSCO.org





Government Agencies

- U.S. Department of Agriculture
www.usda.gov
 - Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)
www.ams.usda.gov
 - Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
www.aphis.usda.gov
 - Economic Research Service (ERS)
www.ers.usda.gov
 - Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)
www.fsis.usda.gov
- Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov
- Food and Drug Administration
www.fda.gov

Promoting. Researching. Educating. Safeguarding.



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