

Beef Checkoff – Contractor Updates May 18, 2020

NCBA

During the past several weeks, NCBA has been continuing to adjust and develop programming to meet ongoing consumer, influencer, supply chain and media needs due to the COVID-19 crisis.

The good news is a Checkoff-funded research tracker, managed by NCBA, continues to show consumers are staying positive about beef during this pandemic. When asked if the current U.S. and global environment has changed their overall perception of beef, almost 90 percent of respondents said their attitudes haven't changed or have gotten even more positive. The percentage who say they are more positive has steadily increased from a low of 12 percent in early April, to 26 percent in early May. Negative perceptions of beef continue to be relatively minimal.

Since February, consumers trust that beef is both nutritious and safe to eat stayed very positive, with about 70 percent agreeing that beef is clearly and consistently meeting these criteria. NCBA will continue to monitor these insights and strive to keep consumer attitudes at this highly positive level.

Building on our April update to keep consumer perceptions positive, in early May, NCBA invited approximately 20 top-tier health and nutrition influencers to participate in a briefing with NCBA CEO Colin Woodall about impacts on the beef supply chain due to COVID-19. During this briefing, Woodall shared an update on the current state of the beef industry and answered influencer questions. As a result of the briefing, influencer participants created more than 15 pieces of content, from blog posts to social media content to media placements. This content helped other influencers and consumers better understand the beef supply chain and reinforced the availability of beef at retail and foodservice, even if the supply has been somewhat limited at times.

To help consumers continue to navigate changes to the supply chain, NCBA recently developed and distributed a press release titled "Beef. It's What's for Dinner. Shares Simple Steak Swaps for Summer Grilling Season." The release highlighted a new infographic showcasing simple steak swaps that make it easy to get beef on the table if a favorite cut of steak isn't available at the grocery store or there's a desire to try something new. The infographic was also shared with supply chain partners via a Beef News Now newsletter and on LinkedIn.

In the coming weeks, NCBA will also be encouraging consumers, 80 percent of whom have at least one meal's worth of ground beef on hand, to celebrate in National Beef Burger Day. While beef burgers are always a good idea, NCBA partnered with National Day Calendar to designate May 28 as National Beef Burger Day. This day creates a special occasion for families across the country to come together around their love of real beef burgers. In celebration of the event, NCBA is encouraging people to share a photo of their favorite real beef burger and use the hashtag #BeefBurgerBrag, as well as tag @BeefItsWhatsForDinner on Facebook leading up to May 28. *Beef. It's What's for Dinner.* will be giving away a grilling pack to several lucky beef burger lovers in appreciation for sharing their #BeefBurgerBrag.

Also, in late May, *Beef. It's What's For Dinner.* will be reminding consumers it's almost grilling season and that this summer grilling season is brought to them by beef farmers and ranchers. Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, beef farmers and ranchers have continued, as they always have, to work day-and-night to ensure their families and families around the country continue to have access to beef. A new video featuring beef producers will be released on social media to showcase how beef farmers and ranchers are helping keep beef on grills this summer grilling season. The video will be available soon on *Beef. It's What's For Dinner.*

This video will be the beginning of a major summer grilling promotion, which will launch in June. Stay tuned for more details in the June update.

When it comes to beef advocates, to help demonstrate the role beef has in helping fuel healthy, active lifestyles, even during social distancing, NCBA organized a virtual running and cycling event. During April, 1,508 beef advocates from 35 states participated in the Team Beef Virtual Run & Ride. Together they biked and ran a combined 12,700 miles. Participants shared their accomplishments, including new personal records and first-time 5ks, on Strava and social media to show how they are #FueledByBeef and remaining a strong community even during uncertain times.

Finally, and perhaps in light of all of the additional programming designed to reach consumers during the COVID-19 crisis, the *Beef. It's What's For Dinner.* Twitter handle (@Beef) was unexpectedly put in the spotlight on a recent episode of Last Week Tonight with John Oliver on HBO. Host and comedian John Oliver said @Beef is one of the three reasons for Twitter to exist during these unprecedented times, along with the handles from model and entrepreneur Chrissy Teigen and Possum Every Hour. He encouraged his viewers, "if you're not following this account, you should."

Since airing on May 3rd, the @Beef twitter following increased by nearly 6,200 followers, increasing by 10,000 percent compared to typical follower growth. This mention had a potential reach of 11.8 million consumers, including HBO viewers and social reach from Oliver and *Beef. It's What's For Dinner.* The segment can be viewed on YouTube (clip runs from timestamp 11:29 – 12:15). *Please note that some adult language is used in the clip.
