

## INTRODUCTION

It's been said that the modern American supermarket is a reflection of the good life in the United States. The abundance and variety of groceries, produce, meat and other foods, dry goods and non-foods is staggering. Not the least of these attractions is the profusion of meat cuts offered in a typical fresh meat counter, with well over 100 *different* cuts offered at any given time in a large supermarket, and hundreds more cut names and identities in the overall label inventory. The vastness of choice for consumers in this array of fresh and cured meats is truly a benefit of American life.

“something  
ought to be  
done”

Yet the self-service meat display also has been at the root of many shoppers' frustrations. There are so many choices on which to center meals that few consumers could know or even be expected to learn them all. So many cuts of meat, called by so many different names, often left shoppers wishing the “kindly old butcher” of one's mother's or grandmother's memory was back to tell them how to cook or what to buy. Shopper confusion was compounded by the innovative merchandising techniques of retailers who sought to differentiate their otherwise generic fresh meats—sometimes by using colorful names. There were many more names (estimated at more than

1,000) than cuts. Occasionally, the same names described different cuts and in other cases a single cut might have had two different names in the same store! Colorful, or “fanciful,” names were often devised to enhance meat sales, rather than to provide customer information.

In the early 1970s, organizations ranging from THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE FOR CONSUMER AFFAIRS to HOUSEWIVES FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION, NATIONAL CONSUMERS UNITED, the VIRGINIA CITIZENS CONSUMER COUNCIL, the CONSUMERS FEDERATION OF AMERICA and scores of other private and government groups, newspaper and magazine food editors and cookbook authors, all agreed that “something ought to be done” about the puzzling variety of meat names.

A collective commitment of the meat/retail industry of that time was to establish a program intended to mitigate confusion that often beset meat shoppers in a supermarket. The NATIONAL LIVE STOCK & MEAT BOARD, then with more than 50 years of meat science, retail merchandising and home economics experience, was asked to coordinate industry efforts. An industry group was joined by meat science educators, food writers and representatives of consumer organizations and government agencies—including the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE and the WHITE HOUSE OFFICE FOR CONSUMER AFFAIRS—in what became known as the *Industry-Wide Cooperative Meat Identification Standards Committee (ICMISC)*.

That committee's goal was the development and promulgation of a meat cut identification system that *every retail meat organization in the U.S.* could readily adapt to its own merchandising program.

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### INTRODUCTION

### APPROVED NAMES

- BEEF
- VEAL
- PORK
- LAMB

### GROUND MEATS

### EFFECTIVE MEATCASE MANAGEMENT

### FOOD SAFETY

### MEAT COOKERY

### GLOSSARY & REFERENCES







