

# Just the facts

**Nutrition information on meat and poultry packages and signage is likely to boost sales.** *By Richard Mitchell, Editor*

A proposal by the U.S. Department of Agriculture that would require meat and poultry merchandisers to provide nutritional data on products is making its way through the government review process.

Under the USDA's "Nutrition Labeling of Ground or Chopped Meat and Poultry Products and Single-Ingredient Products" ruling, nutritional information for ground meats would appear on packages, while data on whole meats could either be presented on packages or at the point of sale.

While it still is unclear if—and when—the proposal will become law, such a mandate could help propel sales. Indeed, an on-pack nutritional labeling test last year found that one-third of consumers were more likely to shop at stores that provide such nutritional data at the meat case.

The 16-week study was operated by the Centennial, Colo.-based National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) and Indianapolis-based Marsh Supermarkets Inc. at 20 stores operating under the Marsh Supermarkets and LoBill Foods banners.

"The use of on-package labeling will pay off in dollars and cents in a short period of time," says Randy Irion, NCBA director of retail marketing.

**LoBill Foods**

**BEEF** a GOOD SOURCE of

**ZINC, IRON, PROTEIN, & MANY B-VITAMINS**

{Nutrient Sources}

- ZINC helps fight colds and maintains a healthy immune system
- IRON is important to your children's mental development
- PROTEIN acts as a building block for muscles, which helps your metabolism
- MANY B-VITAMINS help turn your food into energy

For details on the benefits of specific nutrients, visit the Nutrition section at [www.BeefitthatsForDinner.com](http://www.BeefitthatsForDinner.com)

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{Daily Activities}

"Consumers are anxious to get information on their meat products."

Beef packages in the test stores were affixed with labels spouting a variety of messages, such as: "Beef is an excellent source of protein"; "Cooked ground beef is lower in fat"; "Iron helps give you energy for

daily activities. Beef is a good source of iron"; "Cooked ground beef is lower in calories"; "Beef is a good source of zinc"; and "Beef is a good source of many B-vitamins." Labels also revealed the amount of fat and saturated fat in the beef.

Signage at the point of sale

had such messages as, “Beef, an excellent source of protein to help your body build lean muscles”; “Beef, an excellent source of zinc to help your body fight colds and flu”; and “Beef, a good source of B-Vitamins to help your body turn food into energy.”

The labeling initiative also was promoted in advertising circulars.

Marsh Supermarkets had a 6-percent increase in meat dollar sales and a 1-percent gain in pound sales during the test. LoBill Foods generated a 2-percent increase in dollar sales and a 4-percent gain in pound sales.

In addition, pound sales of lean cuts increased 7 percent at Marsh stores and 3 percent at LoBill outlets.

Meanwhile, 52 percent of consumers surveyed said their attitudes on the health aspects of beef were more positive after the test.

Study results mimic the findings of similar research that was conducted in 2003 at Matthews, N.C.-based Harris Teeter Inc. outlets and Tolleson, Ariz.-based Fry’s Food & Drug Stores, Irion says.

He adds that that the test highlighted the importance of educating consumers on the nutritional benefits of meat, and how nutritional data

changes shoppers’ views and behavior towards the protein.

Such labeling also is important because more consumers are looking for healthy claims on food, says Mary Young, NCBA executive director, nutrition.

“Saturated fat—which leads to heart disease—is the top health concern of shoppers, and the meat case is the number-two source for saturated fat after dairy,” she notes. “Retailers that are not focusing on health and wellness will not stay in business.”

Young says that meat retailers are “probably not doing enough” to leverage consumers’ interest in health.

“The new wave is to promote the vitamins, minerals

and nutrients in food and meat is a good source of that,” she states.

It also is important to stress the leanness attributes of meat, she says. Young notes that there are 29 cuts of beef that meet the government’s definition for lean, including 10 of the 12 most popular whole muscle cuts.

Meats labeled as lean must, for a 3-ounce serving, have fewer than 10 grams of total fat; 4.5 grams or less of saturated fat; fewer than 95 milligrams of cholesterol; and have

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**NEW!** in our meat department

**Nutrition Information on all Beef Packages**

Plus, we've added key **MICRONUTRIENTS** so you can easily see the benefits of eating beef.

**IRON:** Important for your children's mental development

**ZINC:** Helps you fight colds & maintain a healthy immune system

**MANY B-VITAMINS** help turn your food into energy

**U.S.D.A. CHOICE BEEF EYE OF ROUND**

NUTRITION FACTS	
Serving Size	Servings
4 oz (112g)	varied
<b>Amount / Serving</b>	
<b>Cal 240 Fat Cal 140</b>	
%Daily Values*	
Total Fat 16g	25%
Sat Fat 6g	32%
Cholest. 70mg	23%
Sodium 55mg	2%
Total Carb. 0g	0%
Protein 22g	44%
<b>%Daily Values*</b>	
Vit. B6 25%	Zinc 20%
Vit. B12 50%	Iron 20%

\*Percent Daily Values (DV) are based on a 2000 calorie diet. Not a significant source of fiber, sugar, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, calcium

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