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STUDY FINDS PREPARATION INFORMATION ON-PACK IS KEY FOR CONSUMERS

Industry Leaders Partner to Identify Consumer Needs at Meat Case

Chicago, IL – A recent study found that beef and pork on-pack labels that include recipes, serving suggestions and preparation tips fulfill many consumer needs, thus leading to potential increased sales at the meat case. With more than 94% of American households purchasing fresh meat, it's not surprising that consumers gravitate to information that can help them make better buying decisions at the meat case (Nielsen Homescan, 2002).

This study, conducted by Shugoll Research, was designed to gain further insight into consumer labeling needs at the meat case. The study was funded by the Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB), National Pork Board (NPB), and Yerecic Label, and managed by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), NPB and Yerecic Label.

Karen Boillot, director of retail marketing at NPB sees this new research as a natural evolution. "We're building on the research that was conducted in the late 1990's. We think it's critical that we maintain a constant dialogue with consumers to ensure that we're delivering the kind of information that they really need."

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ON-PACK PREPARATION INFORMATION STUDY/Page 2

Consumers in three markets tested four on-pack label formats, in addition to samples of information printed on film and thermal weigh scale labels. The study found that on-pack labeling, which includes appetizing photography, cooking charts, serving suggestions, and simple preparation tips and recipes would help consumers overcome boredom with their current meal routine, as well as encourage consumers to try unfamiliar cuts. Providing this kind of information is likely to deliver impulse purchases of these cuts.

“Consumers have demonstrated their desire for on-pack information, especially in the meat case section, where they spend the most time in the grocery store,” said Randy Irion, director, retail marketing services for the NCBA, one of the contractors of the Cattlemen’s Beef Board. “Most of those surveyed indicated they would prefer to see additional information, like preparation tips, included on-pack. In fact, some mentioned that they would be willing to pay an extra five cents for the additional information.”

“Participating in this research helps us better understand consumer needs at the point of purchase,” said Art Yerecic, president of Yerecic Label. “It’s expected that consumers need information on less familiar cuts such as beef round, pork roasts and chicken thighs. But their interest in new recipes for familiar cuts was a bit surprising. We also found that consumers clearly preferred on-pack labels as opposed to those pre-printed on the film or as part of the price label because it is less messy, easier to read and easier to retain for future use.”

The study was conducted following the success of Beef Made Easy (Beef Checkoff Program) and the Integrated Meat Case Program (NPB) developed by trade associations in 1998 and 1999, both of which were lauded by consumers and meat department executives.

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Beef Checkoff Program

Beef industry demand building efforts are funded by the Beef Checkoff Program. The Beef Checkoff Program was established as part of the 1985 Farm Bill. The checkoff assesses \$1 per head on the sale of live domestic and imported cattle, in addition to a comparable assessment on imported beef and beef products. States retain up to 50 cents on the dollar and forward the other 50 cents per head to the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board, which administers the national checkoff program, subject to USDA approval.

Producer-directed and consumer-focused, the NCBA is a trade association of America's cattle farmers and ranchers, and the marketing organization for the largest segment of the nation's food and fiber industry.

National Pork Board

The National Pork Board has responsibility for Checkoff-funded research, promotion and consumer information projects and for communicating with pork producers and the public. Through a legislative national Pork Checkoff, pork producers invest \$0.40 for each \$100 value of hogs sold. Pork importers also invest a comparable amount. The Pork Checkoff funds national and state programs in advertising, consumer information, retail and foodservice marketing, export market promotion, production improvement, technology, swine health and pork safety. For information on Checkoff-funded programs, call the Pork Checkoff Service Center at 800-456-PORK or check the Internet at www.porkboard.org.