Beef’s Contribution to Nutrient Intake in the American Diet

Beef is a nutritionally complete protein and provides significant quantities of B vitamins as well as trace minerals. A 3-ounce serving of beef provides 37% of the Daily Value (DV) of vitamin B12, 38% DV for zinc, 14% DV for iron and 51% DV for protein. In a study funded in part by the Beef Checkoff, data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) 1999-2004 was used to examine the nutritional contribution of total beef and lean beef to the diet of U.S. children, adolescents, and adults using the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) definition of lean beef as defined in MyPyramid. NHANES is a nationally representative sample of the United States.

Twenty-four hour dietary recall data from children 4-8 years of age (y) (n = 2,474) and 9-13 y (n = 3,273), adolescents 14-18 y (n = 4,044), and adults 19-50 y (n = 7,049) and 51+ y (n = 6,243) were assessed. The USDA definition of lean beef, defined in MyPyramid as beef with ≤9.28 g fat/100 g, was used to determine the lean portion of all beef consumed.

The results show a similar outcome between the children, adolescent, and adult subgroups evaluated in the study as beef consumption did not exceed the USDA MyPyramid recommendations for the Meat and Beans Group. Consumption of beef provided significant contributions to the intake of protein and important micronutrients including vitamins B6 and B12, zinc, iron, niacin, phosphorus and potassium, for all age groups. This was accomplished with a contribution of only 5% to total calories and less than 9% to total fat (lean beef less than 4.5%) and 1% to sodium. Furthermore, this study also documents that the contribution of beef to the saturated fat intake is 10% or less in all age groups. The findings that 90% of the saturated fat in American diets come from food sources other than beef is noteworthy.

Sources:


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