

# Tasty & Healthy Meals with Beef

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With thought and planning, beef can make meal times tasty and healthy. Lean beef is a naturally nutrient-rich source of several essential vitamins and minerals. According to the Nebraska Beef Council, the beef cattle industry has a \$12.1 billion impact on Nebraska's economy. It's the state's single largest industry and the engine that powers the state's economy. Nebraska has the top three beef cow counties in the U.S., including the nation's top cow county – Cherry County, with Custer County ranking second and Holt County ranking third. Check out the following benefits and recommendations for beef, as well as research by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL).



## Beef Benefits, Recommendations, & Research

### Health Benefits:

- Protein in beef is a complete protein, so it supplies all the essential amino acids the body needs to build, maintain and repair tissues.
- It's also a good source of iron, zinc and B vitamins, which are important for building muscles, healing wounds, and a healthy immune and nervous system.



### Lean Beef:

- There are 29 cuts of beef that meet government guidelines for being lean.
- Examples include eye round, top round, round tip, bottom round, sirloin, top loin, tenderloin, and flank. These may be cut as roasts or steaks. For ground beef, choose 95% lean ground beef most often.



### Portion Sizes:

- Once you've picked a lean cut, don't forget about portion sizes.
- Start with a 3 oz serving of lean beef (about the size of a deck of cards) and round it out with brightly colored vegetables, fruits and whole grains.



### Reducing Fat:

- *The Journal of the American Dietetic Association* has good news for beef eaters.
  - Nutrition researchers found that rinsing cooked beef crumbles with water heated in the microwave on high for 5 to 6 minutes, reduced fat content by up to 50%.
  - Blotting with paper towels can reduce the fat content of cooked burgers, meatballs and meatloaf.
- To prepare lean cuts of meat, try broiling, grilling, roasting, pan-broiling, braising, stewing or stir-frying.

### Food Safety:

- Pick up beef just before checking out. If it will take longer than 30 minutes to get your purchase home, keep your beef in a cooler.
- For refrigerator storage, follow the "use by" information on labels.
- When freezing beef, label each package with the date, name of cut and weight to help follow the "first in, first out" rule.
- Use a food thermometer to ensure food is cooked to a safe minimal internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. Steaks and roasts should be cooked to 145 °F. Hamburgers should reach 160 °F.



Know how. Know now.



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## UNL Beef Research:

- Extensive research is being conducted on how to use ethanol by-products such as distillers grains, beet pulp from the sugar industry, and many crop residues such as cornstalks and wheat straw to produce high-quality beef while reducing the cost of feed inputs and industry by-products that would have to be dealt with otherwise.
- The complex digestive system of cattle allows them to digest high-fiber diets that humans cannot utilize. Cattle can then turn that fiber into highly nutritious protein readily digested and absorbed by people.

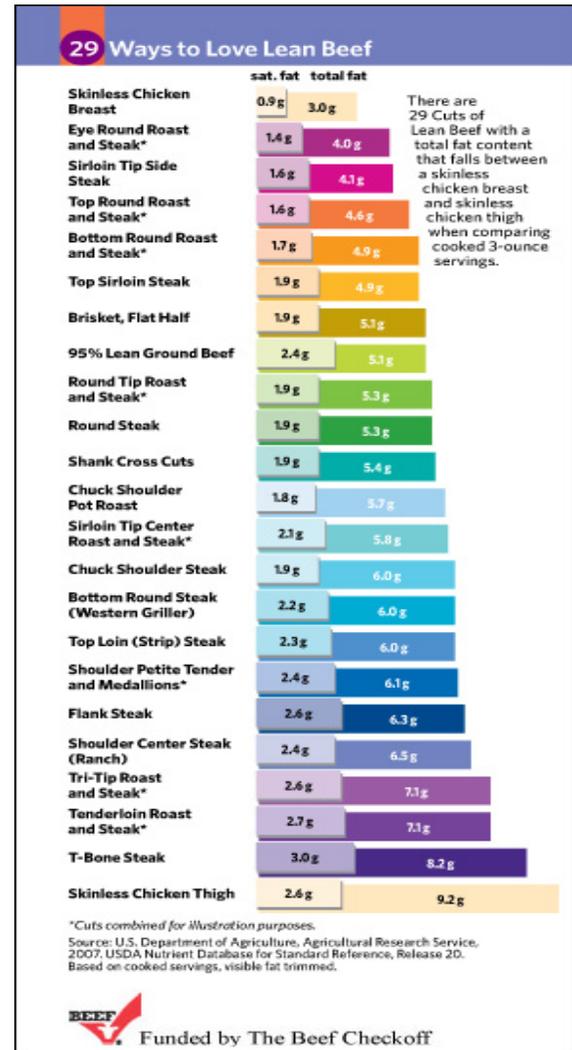
Nebraska produces more beef per square mile than any other state. By grazing cattle on land unsuitable for farming, more people are fed than would be possible otherwise. The Beef Quality Assurance program was initiated to assure animal health and well-being and also provide a safe product for humans. Over 95% of ranches and farms are family operations, which provide habitat for 75% of America's wildlife. Beef not only helps you meet nutrient needs but also fuels Nebraska's economy.

## Check out these additional resources for more detailed information on recipes, cooking tips, how-to videos, and food safety on beef.

- This website provides information on recipes, how-to videos, beef storage and handling, wine pairing, beef cuts, cooking timetables, and a culinary dictionary.  
<http://www.nebeef.org/inthekitchen.aspx>
- Brush up on your grill skills with tips from this site or by referencing the *Interactive Meat Case* to learn which beef cuts are best on the grill.  
<http://www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com/>
- For UNL Extension publications that explore several different aspects of agricultural production related to beef check out these Neb Guides and other publications.  
<http://elkhorn.unl.edu/public/pages/index.jsp>

## Get to know the 29 lean cuts

- According to government guidelines, a serving qualifies as "extra lean" if it has less than 5g total fat, 2g or less saturated fat and less than 95mg cholesterol per 3.5 oz. serving. A serving qualifies as "lean" if it has less than 10g total fat, 4.5g or less saturated fat and less than 95mg cholesterol per 3.5 oz. serving. For more details: [www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com/leanbeef.aspx](http://www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com/leanbeef.aspx)



## Sources:

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