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## **American Consumers Increasingly Food Price Sensitive**

*Eating the nutrient-rich way is easy, enjoyable and affordable*

DENVER (October 8, 2008) – According to a recent consumer survey funded by the Beef Checkoff Program, American consumers are actively working to manage their food costs but aren't sure of the best approach. Sixty percent of respondents are changing purchasing patterns at the supermarket in an attempt to balance their budgets. A quarter shared that they're seeking information on how to best stretch their food dollar.

"In today's challenging economic times, consumers should first look for nutrient-rich ingredients that are satisfying, nutritious and easy on the pocket," says Connie Gutteresen, Ph.D., R.D., nutrition instructor at the Culinary Institute of America.

"Low nutrient-dense foods, which typically include added sugars, solid fats and processed grains, supply calories with relatively minimal to no nutritional value. Over consumption of such discretionary calories can blow your food budget and jeopardize your nutrient intake," said Gutteresen. "Pair lean meats with vegetables and whole grains for a variety of dishes, including salads, soups, stews, sandwiches and stir-fry."

According to the *MyPyramid* Food Guidance System, naturally nutrient-rich foods help people get more essential nutrients in fewer calories. And lean beef is one of the most nutrient-rich protein sources in the diet. It is a naturally rich source of nine essential nutrients that fuel a healthy, active lifestyle, including: protein, zinc, vitamin B<sub>12</sub>, selenium, phosphorous, niacin, vitamin B<sub>6</sub>, iron and riboflavin. A substantial body of evidence shows protein can help in maintaining a healthy weight, building muscle and fueling physical activity – all of which play an important role in a healthful lifestyle and disease prevention. Beef can be an easy and economical way to "go lean with protein" by selecting one of the 29 cuts of beef that meet government guidelines for lean. The majority of lean cuts are affordable, including top round steak, chuck shoulder pot roast and 95 percent lean ground beef.

"Beef not only tastes great, it easily fits into a healthful and affordable diet. You don't have to sacrifice taste and nutrition for price," said Mary K. Young, M.S., R.D., vice president of nutrition, National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

### **Navigating the Meat Case for Today's Cost-Conscious Consumer**

There are beef choices to satisfy all tastes, schedules and budgets. Planning menus, creating shopping lists and knowing what to look for on the label when buying beef will help consumers stretch their food dollar, without sacrificing the health benefits of a high-quality protein diet. Here are some tips for efficient purchasing decisions at the meat counter:

- **Evaluate purchases based on the cost per serving – not just the price per pound.**  
The amount of beef to buy varies with the cut selected. Cooked yields per pound are related to the amount of bone, fat trim and cooking method.
- **Match the cut with the cooking method.** Matching the beef cut to the appropriate cooking method is the key to moist, tender, flavorful beef. For instance, less-tender steak cuts from the chuck, round, plate and flank (shoulder steak, eye round steak, top round steak, skirt steak, flank steak) are more affordable, but all require a tenderizing marinade before cooking using the grill, broiler or stove top. **Tangy Lime Grilled Top Round Steak** is tender and juicy, thanks to a tenderizing marinade, cooking to medium rare (145°F) doneness and carving across the grain into thin slices. For many less-tender roasts and steaks, moist heat cooking methods, such as braising or using a slow cooker appliance, soften the strong muscle fibers and connective tissue, guaranteeing moist, flavorful results.
- **Plan ahead to cook once and dine twice.** Preparing a little extra ahead of time is an easy way to create beef dishes that are ready to serve without breaking the bank. A grilled steak tonight easily becomes a key ingredient for tomorrow's protein-packed salad. Or crumble leftover cooked burgers into chili, pizza or pasta dishes for a planned meal the next day. **Classic Beef Pot Roast with Root Vegetables** utilizes the affordable chuck shoulder pot roast for a timeless family favorite. And next day shredded beef sandwiches are fast and delicious!
- **Explore the versatility of ground beef.** A perfect option for many recipe favorites is 95 percent lean ground beef, a convenient and economical way to add protein to a family meal. A traditional meatloaf is easily transformed into **Southwest Meatloaf** with the addition of a few flavorful, low-cost ingredients. Extra servings can be frozen for future use, or continue the fiesta the next day and create a meatloaf burrito wrap.
- **Buy in bulk to realize cost savings.** Instead of buying pre-cut meat for kabobs, stew and stir-fry, save money by buying steaks or roasts and cutting into meat cubes or strips. Another approach is to purchase boneless roasts to cut into steaks. Your local butcher may be happy to slice them for you without added cost. Plan ahead and freeze cut beef for 6 to 12 months.

Visit [www.BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com](http://www.BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com) for additional information and more nutrient-rich main dish recipes that are satisfying, delicious and easy on the pocket book. Recipes and images are available for download in the Newsroom.

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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.

Consumer-focused and producer-directed, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and its state beef council partners are the marketing organization for the largest segment of the food and fiber industry.