

North Dakota Beef Commission Promotes Beef as Top Protein Choice: Meat Substitutes Hold Small Segment of Market



By Kylie Blanchard for the North Dakota Beef Commission

While a variety of protein options have always been available to consumers, the North Dakota Beef Commission (NDBC) works hard to promote beef as the protein of choice in a well-balanced diet. Even though there is concern over beef substitutes having a larger presence in the marketplace, the good news for beef producers is beef substitutes represent a small segment of the consumer protein market and beef demand continues to rise.

Rising Demand for Beef

According to the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), when comparing the markets between beef substitutes and beef, substitutes account for less than 1% of sales. Consumers today crave the great taste, essential nutrients and high-quality protein found in beef, and they continue to choose beef as a nutrient-rich source of high-quality protein that supports a healthy lifestyle.



Travis Maddock,
NDBC Board
Member

“Through Beef Checkoff consumer research, we are also finding advertising for alternative proteins are actually in beef’s favor,” says NDBC board member Travis Maddock. “For instance, after consumers watch television ads for beef substitutes, 71% shared they were more inclined to get a real beef burger instead.”

Maddock also notes *Beef. It's What's For Dinner.* ads resonate better with consumers than ads promoting protein substitutes. “The ads that highlight beef as ‘One Simple Ingredient’ show 78% of consumers indicate the ad made them purchase beef. Research shows 60% of consumers stop watching alternative protein advertising after 15 seconds, sharing they prefer real beef.”

U.S. ranchers are also producing more high-quality beef than ever before. According to USDA information, more than 80% of beef grades at a Choice quality or higher. As a result, U.S. retail beef demand is at its highest levels in over 30 years. Consumers in the U.S. and across the globe are enjoying beef’s flavor, tenderness and juiciness due to a steady increase in the supply of high-quality beef in the market.

The Benefits of Beef

While the ingredients in meat substitutes vary, beef’s only ingredient is beef. In a four-ounce serving of lean ground beef, there are 10 essential nutrients at 10% or higher than their respective daily values per serving, including high-quality protein, zinc, iron, and B vitamins, in 170 calories. This provides fewer calories, fat, saturated fat, and sodium and more protein compared to some meat substitutes on the market. The prices of beef substitutes are also generally higher than corresponding



beef products.

Beef farmers and ranchers are also continuously improving the way beef is raised to ensure a sustainable beef supply, and beef producers are committed to protecting the environment. Compared to the mid-1970s, the same amount of beef can be produced with one-third fewer cattle. According to the NCBA, farmers and ranchers in the United States raise 18% of the world’s beef with only 8% of the world’s cattle. The industry also invests in scientific research and is continuously working to improve areas like cattle genetics and animal nutrition.

“We are assured our product in the market will continue to be viewed as a healthy, simple and flavorful premium protein,” says Maddock.

The NDBC, representing North Dakota beef producers, manages the state beef checkoff program with the mission of enhancing beef demand by strengthening consumer trust and exceeding consumer expectations. This is accomplished through programs and activities in the areas of promotion, research and consumer information. For additional information visit ndbeef.org.