

NORTH DAKOTA BEEF COMMISSION

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FOURTH ANNUAL CONTEST ENGAGES RURAL FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS



The North Dakota Beef Commission (NDBC) hosted the Best Beef Burger Contest in April and May. Now in its fourth year, the burger contest started as a way to engage consumers with local restaurants after COVID. After challenging times during the pandemic, the commission aimed to revitalize the local restaurant

scene and reignite the community's passion for dining out. What began as a simple contest evolved into a celebration of resilience, creativity and the enduring bond between North Dakotans and their beloved beef burgers.

From April 15 to May 15, quaint diners and cozy cafes in cities and towns throughout the state served up their juiciest burgers in hopes of unseating the 2023 Champion, Old 281 Tavern in Minnewaukan. Old 281 outclassed two-time champion Finish Line Burgers and Brews of Velva to wear the crown. The top four establishments went head-to-head for the 2024 title.

Ultimately, Old 281 Tavern in Minnewaukan was determined to have the best burger in North Dakota.

The contest, funded by North Dakota beef farmers and ranchers through the Beef Checkoff, was part of Beef Month in North Dakota. This year's contest has been most successful in driving demand for beef burgers in rural areas across the state. ■

NDBC, DPI PROMOTE BEEF IN SCHOOL LUNCHES

In the heartland of North Dakota, where the fields stretch like a patchwork quilt and the sun casts a warm glow over fertile fields, a delicious partnership was brewing between the North Dakota Beef Commission (NDBC) and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Together, they embarked on a mission to promote beef as a cornerstone of a healthy diet and to champion beef as a delicious delight and a nutritional powerhouse, particularly in school lunches.

As part of the partnership, the NDBC and DPI launched a school lunch promotion that provided promotional kits to food service professionals across the state, who then had the tools to showcase beef's versatility and nutritional benefits. From savory beef stews to mouthwatering burgers, each meal celebrated wholesome goodness, enticing young palates and nourishing growing bodies.

Seventy-three schools embraced the challenge and shared their "beefed up" lunches. From Instagram to Twitter, beef wafted online, captivating audiences far and wide. With the aid of promotional

kits provided by the NDBC and DPI, food service professionals could develop meals that were delicious and packed with essential nutrients. From lean beef tacos to hearty beef and barley soups, each dish was carefully crafted to fuel young bodies and minds.

Mohall School took the promotion to another level. There, Food Service Director Terri Morgel had a bold vision to take learning beyond the lunchroom walls and organized a field trip to a nearby ranch, where the mysteries of beef production were explained. Led by local ranchers, they roamed the sprawling pastures, learning about the care and dedication that goes into raising beef cattle. From the gentle nuzzles of newborn calves to the rugged charm of the cowboys on horseback, every moment was a lesson in rural life.

With its rich protein content, essential vitamins and minerals, beef plays a vital role in childhood development. From building strong muscles to supporting cognitive function, beef is a nutritional powerhouse that forms the cornerstone of a balanced diet. ■



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READ UP, EAT UP AS PART OF THE JR. BEEF READERS CLUB

The Junior Beef Readers Club and Challenge is an initiative by the NDBC that turned reading into a sizzling adventure for kids from pre-kindergarten to sixth grade.

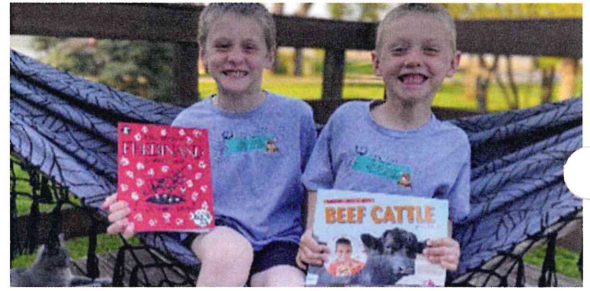
The story club began in April and continued through May, which the NDBC recognizes as Beef Month. Armed with books about beef, cattle and cooking, students delved into tales of ranchers, chefs and the secrets of the grill.

As May unfolded, participants were tasked with documenting their reading progress, immersing themselves in stories that transported them from the rolling hills of the prairie to bustling kitchens where the aroma of beef filled the air. The mission was to spark curiosity and ignite a passion for learning about where food comes from. Through the pages of books, children discovered the journey of beef from pasture to plate, learning about the care and dedication of raising cattle and the importance of sustainable farming practices.

As participants submitted their completed logs, they were rewarded with beef swag.

This year, the NDBC reached new heights by engaging with all public libraries across North Dakota, casting a wide net to capture young readers' imaginations from every corner of the state. And the response was nothing short of phenomenal, as 2024 participation increased by more than 500 percent.

As May drew to a close, the Junior Beef Readers Club and Challenge left a sizzling legacy, igniting a love for reading and a deeper appreciation for the beef that graces their dinner tables. ■



STOP RUNNING ON EMPTY. REFUEL WITH BEEF

Each year, as part of Beef Month, the North Dakota CattleWomen host a virtual 5K run. Throughout May, runners participated in the North Dakota CattleWomen's Be Beef Strong virtual 5K. They ran to their heart's content on downtown streets and dirt roads between May 1 and May 31 to raise money for the Powered By Beef Program funded by the NDBC. Beef is a great way to fuel after a challenging run or long day on the gridiron or diamond. Beef's nutritional value and high-quality protein are essential in fueling active bodies. ■



BEEF IS A HOME RUN IN NORTH DAKOTA BALLPARKS

The North Dakota Beef Commission, stewards of the state's proud ranching tradition, has long sought innovative ways to promote high-quality beef to consumers across the region. Understanding the power of local connections has forged a long-lasting partnership with the Northwood League's Bismarck Larks and a new effort with Minot Honeybees, the state's first Northwoods League women's softball team.

The average American eats 114 hamburgers yearly, many of those at the old ballpark. Splash on the mustard and pickles, grab a seat and have a cold beverage. It's classic Americana right in front of your eyes. On August 8, the team will announce a new promotional brand powered by the NDBC.



The Larks will rebrand themselves as the Heartland Holy Cows, and beef will prominently be the theme for the night. Special jerseys will be worn and auctioned off with funds used to buy beef for the Great Plains Food Bank. Beef information will be highlighted in the outfield on the new jumbo screen during home games at Bismarck Municipal Ballpark. It's a built-in audience as many games sell out and those that don't see attendance near capacity.

The Honeybees are the latest addition to the collegiate Northwoods League. Based in Minot, home of the Hot Tots baseball team, the Honeybees are one of four women's fastpitch teams making their debuts this summer. Beef will be featured during Family Fun Night on June 18.

Through social media campaigns and grassroots outreach, the message of North Dakota beef spread far and wide, reaching new audiences beyond the confines of the baseball stadium. Families across the state embraced the opportunity to support local farmers and ranchers, making North Dakota beef a staple on their dinner tables. ■

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