BEEF nutrition.org Today's Beef Choices

More than one million beef farmers and ranchers raise cattle in every state in the country. They use the diverse resources available in their local areas to produce nutritious, safe and delicious beef. For consumers, that means there are a variety of beef choices such as grain-finished, grass-finished, natural and certified organic beef. From the pasture to the plate, the entire food chain works together to ensure high-quality and healthy beef for Americans. So, no matter what you desire, there is a great beef choice for you.

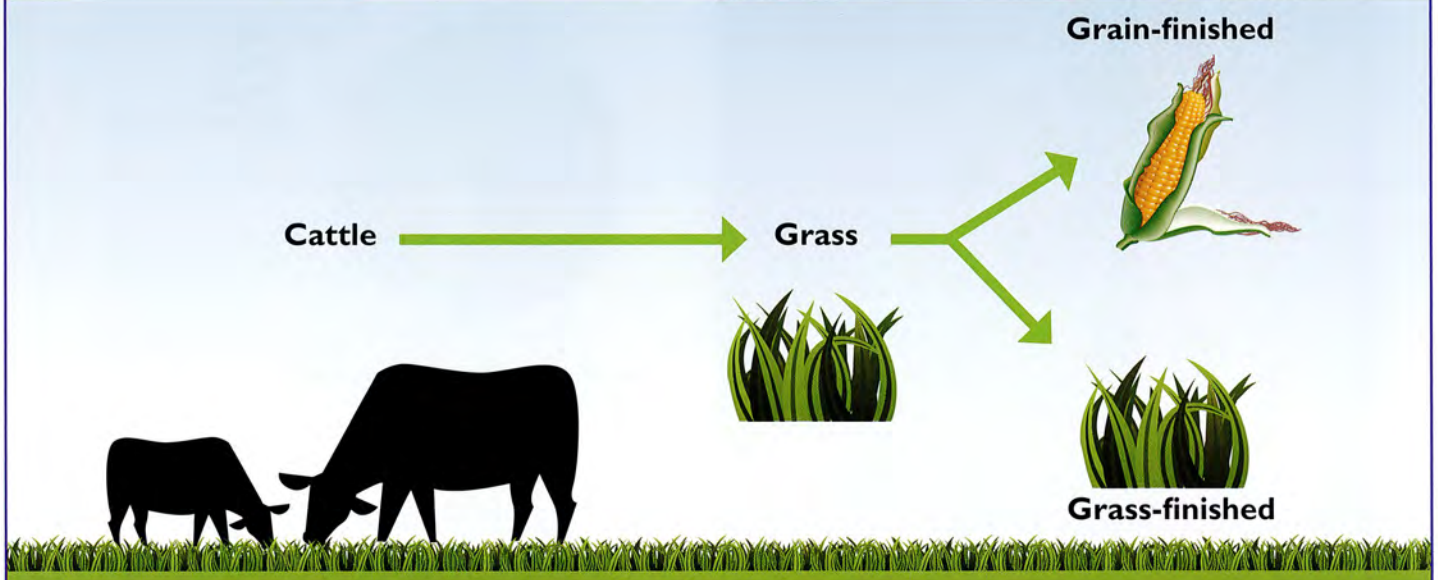
All beef is:

Grass-Fed
All cattle spend a majority of their lives eating grass on pastures

Natural
Most beef does not contain any additives and is not more than minimally processed[1,2]

Nutritious
Beef is a powerful protein and an excellent or good source of 10 essential nutrients

Safe
Vigilance on farms, rigorous safety inspections and strict government guidelines ensure the highest level of safety



Beef can be:

Grain-finished
- Cattle spend most of their lives grazing on pasture, then spend 4 – 6 months in a feedlot
- Fed scientifically and healthy balanced diet of grains, such as corn, wheat or soybeans
- May judiciously be given FDA-approved antibiotics or growth promoting hormones
- May be given vitamin and mineral supplements
- Have continuous access to clean water and room to grow and roam

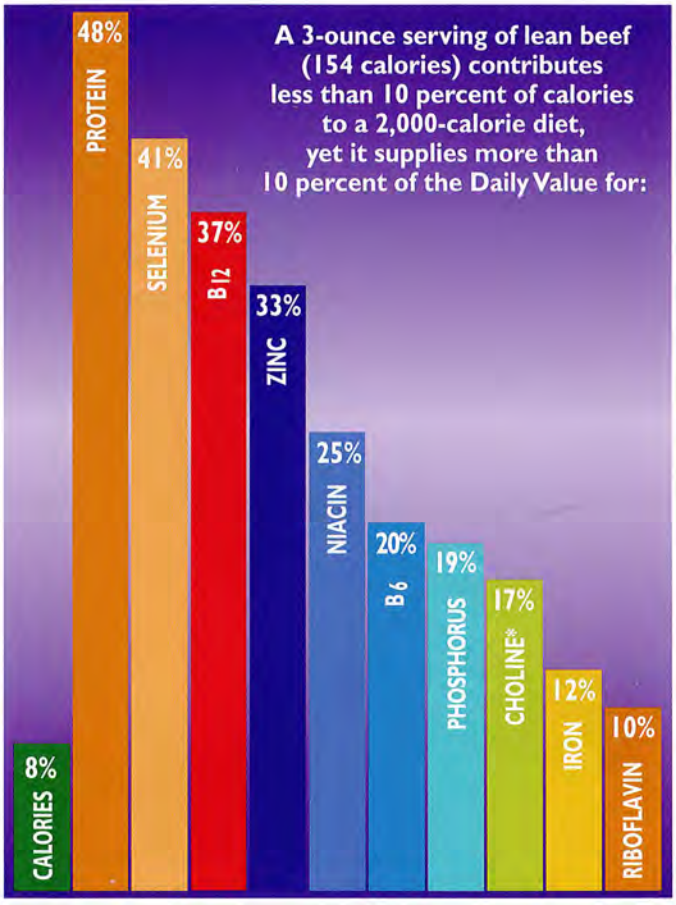
Grass-finished
- Cattle spend their entire lives grazing on pasture
- May judiciously be given FDA-approved antibiotics or growth promoting hormones
- May be given vitamin and mineral supplements
- Can be difficult to produce year-round in North America due to changing seasons and weather conditions

Naturally raised
- Cattle can be grain-finished or grass-finished—look at the label for details
- Have never received antibiotics or growth promoting hormones
- May be given vitamin and mineral supplements
- Must be certified by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service[3]

Certified organic
- Cattle can be grain-finished or grass-finished, as long as the feed is 100% organic
- Have never received antibiotics or growth promoting hormones
- May be given vitamin and mineral supplements
- Must be certified by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service[4]
- Look for the official label

Nutrient-rich beef

All choices of beef are excellent or good sources of 10 essential nutrients and there are 29 cuts of beef that meet government guidelines for lean. Several of the key nutrients in beef, specifically iron and choline, are known to be lacking in the diets of many Americans, especially women and children. Research shows beef offers several health benefits including heart health, muscle development and weight management.



U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, 2009. USDA Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 22. Nutrient Data Laboratory home page www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp

*A 3-ounce serving of lean beef provides approximately 17% of the highest adequate intake for choline (550mg).

Dietary Reference Intakes, Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, National Academies Press, Washington, DC, 2006.

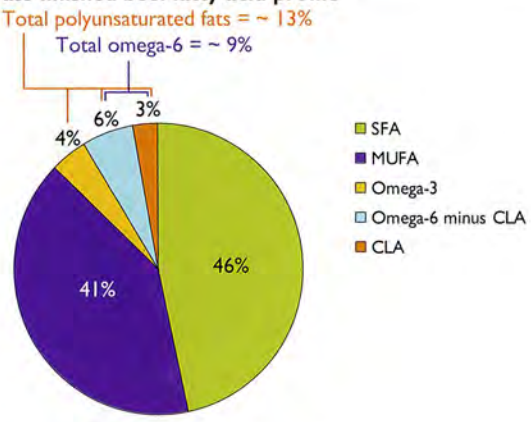
Guidance for Industry, A Food Labeling Guide. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, April 2008. *http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/2lg-toc.html*

Beef's beneficial fatty acid profile

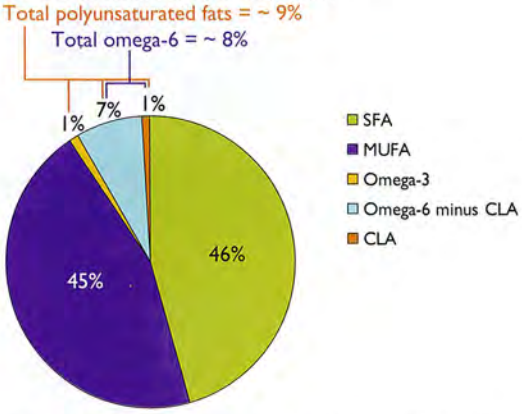
While an animal's diet can impact beef's fatty acid profile, it remains primarily monounsaturated and saturated fatty acids regardless of the feeding practice. For example, extended grain feeding can actually increase the amount of monounsaturated fat, which has cholesterol-lowering effects. And, feeding grass longer can influence the amount of omega-3 fatty acid in beef. Either beef choice offers the same health benefits in a healthy, balanced diet.

Half the fatty acids in beef are monounsaturated, the same heart-healthy kind found in olive oil. One-third of the saturated fat in beef is stearic acid, which has a neutral effect on blood cholesterol levels and is the same fat recognized in chocolate for its benefits. Polyunsaturated fatty acids represent the smallest class of lipids found in beef which include omega-3, omega-6 and conjugated linoleic acid (CLA).

Grass-finished beef fatty acid profile



Grain-finished beef fatty acid profile



While all beef offers small amounts of omega-3 fatty acids and can contribute to omega-3 intake, the American Heart Association recommends fatty fish such as salmon as the primary source for omega-3 fatty acids.

1 USDA FSIS Labeling Terms *http://www.fsis.usda.gov/FactSheets/Meat_&_Poultry_Labeling_Terms/index.asp*

2 This definition only applies to how the meat was processed after the cattle were harvested and does not apply to how the animals were raised. Efforts are underway to coordinate FSIS' regulation of natural claims with the AMS voluntary "naturally raised" marketing claim standard. *http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/2006-0040A.htm*

3 January 2009, Federal Register: Vol. 74, Num. 12

4 Organic Foods Production Act, *http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/FactSheets/ProdHandE.html*

5 Daley et al, Nutrition Journal, 2010. 9:10.

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