



## RESEARCH BRIEF HUMAN NUTRITION

## BEEF RESEARCH

### Impact of Grass/Forage Feeding Versus Grain Finishing on Beef Nutrients

Some U.S. customers choose to purchase “grass-fed” beef over grain-finished beef, for numerous reasons, largely based on perceptions including promotion of animal well-being, environmental sustainability and superior nutritional profile. A recently published manuscript in *Meat Science*, summarizes the nutrient and sensory quality data from published U.S. studies comparing beef from grass-fed to that of grain-finished cattle. In the United States, grass-fed beef appears to be leaner than grain-finished beef but largely at the expense of monounsaturated fatty acids, which can help lower bad cholesterol levels in your blood as well as lower your risk of heart disease and stroke. Both U.S. grass-fed and grain-finished beef contribute similar n-3 fatty acid content, predominately in the form of linolenic acid. In addition, lean beef from either grass-fed or grain-finished cattle can make a modest impact on n-3 long chain polyunsaturated fatty acid intake goals while contributing a limited amount of total fat to the diet. Regardless of feeding regime, evidence from U.S. studies suggests that beef from both grass-fed and grain-finished cattle contributes a wide variety of important nutrients to the U.S. diet, and consumption of either can be compatible with efforts to improve the overall diet quality of Americans.

**Source:** Van Elswyk ME, McNeill SH. Impact of Grass/Forage Feeding versus Grain Finishing on Beef Nutrients and Sensory Quality: The U.S. Experience. *Meat Sci* 2014;96(1):535-40.

[Full text available](#)

**This study was funded by The Beef Checkoff Program.**



BeefResearch.org



303.694.0305

*For more information, contact:*

Science and Product Solutions

National Cattlemen's Beef Association • Contractor to the Beef Checkoff Program

9110 East Nichols Avenue • Centennial, CO 80112 • 303.694.0305



Funded by the Beef Checkoff.