

# Meat Board Responds to Cholesterol Controversy

The Coronary Primary Prevention Trial (CPPT), recently released by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, "has great potential for being misunderstood and misinterpreted by the public," according to a leading meat industry scientist.

Responding to extensive press coverage of the massive \$150 million study, Burdette C. Breidenstein, Ph.D., director of research and nutrition information with the National Live Stock and Meat Board, said, "My first reaction is to point out that red meat is not the terrible cholesterol problem that people have been told it is. My second reaction is to point out that this was not even a dietary study.

"Combining data from the USDA nutrient profile studies of red meats, just published in 1983, with what we now know about real-world meat consumption—not retail weight or carcass weight figures—we can say that the daily four ounces of red meat actually consumed per capita contributes just 88 milligrams of cholesterol per person, per day. Our best estimate of per capita cholesterol consumption in the U.S. diet, based on the food-disappearance method, is 509 milligrams per day. Thus, meat provides only 17 percent of the total cholesterol in our daily food supply.

"The amount of cholesterol contributed by the meat portion of our diet also represents only 29 percent of the 300 milligrams the American Heart Assn. has told us we should reduce our daily cholesterol consumption to. Viewed against the background of meat's excellent nutrient contribution to the American diet—high in B-vitamins, protein and many essential minerals—this relatively low cholesterol contribution is seen in its proper perspective."

Breidenstein pointed out dietary advice given to subjects in the CPPT project included nine ounces per day, cooked edible portion, of meat, poultry or fish. He added, "This was not a dietary study at all, which is a point evidently not understood by much of the media covering the CPPT story.

"It was a drug intervention trial using 3,806 subjects drawn from the approximately two percent of the population suffering from hyperlipoproteinemia. The study provided us with some important information about serum cholesterol levels and the incidence of heart disease, but there was no significant dietary component in the study design, and no dietary control at all."

The study divided subjects into two groups, Breidenstein said. One group received a placebo and the other received cholestyramine, a proven cholesterol-lowering drug.

Breidenstein quoted from an article in the Jan. 20, 1984, *Journal of the American Medical Association* which said study participants were advised to consume "a mod-

erate cholesterol-lowering diet," and added, "I've spoken with the nutritionist at one of the twelve lipid research clinics which performed the study. Subjects were given a dietary cholesterol allowance of 400 milligrams per day.

"In fact, they did not consume anywhere near this much. But if, as the nutritionist explained to me, these men were advised to eat nine ounces of meat, poultry and fish per day on a 'moderate cholesterol-lowering diet,' I can't see where all the news stories

about reducing meat intake because of the CPPT's findings got started."

Breidenstein said his office is maintaining open communications with the American Heart Assn., the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, and a major lipid research clinic involved in the study. **AJ**

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## ANGUS JOURNAL Flashbacks

**1971**—"A 19-year-old Michigan farm boy was named top junior Angus showman in North America for 1971 at the fifth annual National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest in Lexington, Ky. He is Pete Sweeney of Armada, Mich., the son of Mr. & Mrs. John Sweeney."