



Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

Understanding the label

As of March 1, meat and poultry products are required to carry nutrition labeling. As with anything, there are pros and cons.

Benefits on display

USDA's Nutrient Data Laboratory in Beltsville, Md., released new data sets for beef and poultry that will be used as the basis for the "Nutrition Facts" labels. In the "New Nutrient Data" story presented beginning on page 272, we give some examples of the nutrient profiles for various cuts of beef. You will note that the profiles are provided for USDA Choice and USDA Select beef.

Obviously, as beef producers we understand the good news that will be displayed to the consumer. The labels will document beef's ZIP — its value as a source of zinc, iron and protein. They will document beef as being a source of necessary minerals and vitamins. They will also document beef's nutrient density — the nutritional benefit per calorie ingested. Many will be surprised at how low-calorie beef really is.

As Angus producers and promoters of quality beef, we understand the importance of higher-quality beef to consumer satisfaction with the end product.

Our challenge in the meatcase will be explaining to the consumer why the Choice product is a better option. I have to admit, when I shop for loaves of bread, I look for the loaf with 0.0-0.5 g of saturated fat. There are tasty options. When I pick salad dressings, I look for the no-fat options.

Based on the home economics education I received in high school, the human nutrition courses I chose to take in college and the cow nutrition education I get every day in this job, I understand nutrient tradeoffs. Based on that, I choose to get my daily dose of saturated fat in the form of a steak that has the protein, iron, B vitamins and zinc that will keep my mind and body healthy and alert, rather than from the salad dressing that offers very little in the form of nutrition other than calories.

Will consumers understand?

Please forgive the I's in that former paragraph, but we have a challenge in front of us that not many people in our country have a fundamental understanding of nutrition.

Calories are a necessary nutrient. Any beef producer trying to get his or her first-calf heifers in shape to rebreed this spring understands that. The founders of school lunch programs understood that.

Now we have an administration that equates healthy diets to limiting calories in school lunches by age to avoid obesity. One of my nephews is a sophomore in high school; 6 foot (ft.) 2 inches (in.), 275 pounds (lb.); and plays football and basketball (so very active). When I was a sophomore, I was 5 ft. 2 in. tall, weighed 110 lb. and spent my time studying and grooming show heifers.

Tonya Amen joins AGI

Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI) welcomes Tonya Amen as genetic service director.

In joining the Angus team, Amen assists in coordinating genetic education and outreach programs tailored to Angus breeders and commercial cattle producers. She will interact with Association entities to enhance strategic development of predictable supply chains using the available technologies and networks.

"Tonya will be a great asset to our team as we continue to look to the future of genetic evaluation programs, and the need for education and outreach to our members and the beef industry," says Bill Bowman, Association COO and AGI president.

Amen is a native of Colorado and received a bachelor's degree in animal science from Texas Tech University. She earned a master's degree and doctorate in animal breeding from Texas A&M University.

For the past two years, Amen served as a cattle genetics specialist in the southeastern United States with Pfizer Animal Genetics. Prior to Pfizer, Amen served as an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin—River Falls. Amen is active in industry activities and currently serves on the NCBA's Young Producers Council.

There's no way we should have been allotted the same number of calories at the same age.

It points out the educational challenge we have ahead of us. Obesity is unhealthy. Malnutrition is unhealthy. A deficiency or toxicity in any nutrient can cause a health problem. We have our work cut out for us to help consumers understand the complexities of nutrition.

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