



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE BEEF CHECKOFF

to be outreach efforts to make consumers more aware of the healthy benefits of beef.

Similarly, Brian Waddingham, Iowa Beef Industry Council director of industry relations, says, "We feel that having a Beef Month is important to the industry as it allows us to showcase the beef industry in Iowa and the men and women that make it possible. We also want to inform people that the beef industry plays a crucial role in Iowa's economy. From cattle producers to feed manufacturers to equipment dealers and food marketers, thousands of people play a role in bringing delicious, tender beef to our plates."

Waddingham adds that beef is big business in his state, generating \$5.1 billion in direct and indirect economic activity to Iowa's economy, to be exact.

Iowa hosts Beef Month in May; the Iowa Beef Industry Council promotion includes sending out a media kit with numerous news releases, cattle industry statistics, graphics and clip art, beef trivia, and recipes. All of the information is also available online. The council does various promotions with retail and foodservice companies in honor of their Beef Month activities in May as well.

The Iowa Beef Industry Council also provides cost-share funds to county cattlemen's associations for any beef advertising and promotion they do in their counties. This includes newspaper, radio and billboard advertising as well as grocery store and

Celebrating Beef

Summer signals the start of the grilling season, and several special promotions are planned to help celebrate the great taste of beef.

by **Kindra Gordon**

The leisurely pace of sunshine-filled days is a welcome part of summertime. For many it also means time-honored traditions of grilling steaks, burgers and beef brats on the grill. The beef industry has tapped into that enthusiasm for summer grilling and created several promotions that coincide with consumers' craving for beef.

Many state beef councils host promotional events at some point during the summer or fall to help build awareness for beef in their state. May is a popular month for these activities.

Laura Wilder, Idaho Beef Council executive director, says the Federation of State Beef Councils does not recognize any particular

month as a "National Beef Month." Instead, each state is encouraged to celebrate Beef Month when it works for them. For example, Alabama celebrates Beef Month in October. Idaho has been hosting Beef Month promotions every July since 2002.

Wilder says annual Beef Month activities in her state during the month of July will include a governor's proclamation, beef media packets and promotions, radio and outdoor billboard advertising, and several beef promotion events. All of the activities are designed



There is no National Beef Month. State beef councils are encouraged to celebrate Beef Month when it works for them.

restaurant promotions. Waddingham says the cost-share is available all year, but counties really step up in May to promote beef.



entertaining tips, and in-store sampling events are also important parts of the grilling campaign. So this summer, encourage your friends and family to look for these promotions and help support the beef industry.

To learn more about promotional beef events within your state, contact your state beef council. **HW**

Grilling campaigns

On the national level, the Beef Checkoff Program has annually kicked off summer with a “Grilling Campaign” since 2002. The program has been met with much success. For example, the 18-week 2006 campaign resulted in total beef dollar and pound sales up 3% and 6% respectively versus a year ago, and sales of beef grilling cuts accounted for 67% of total beef dollar sales during the campaign.

Building on that success, the 2007 summer grilling promotion is anticipated to be an even bigger and better effort to encourage shoppers to visit their local meat departments and to promote beef as America’s top-selling protein.

Partnerships with A.I.® Steak Sauce and Marinades and Sutter Home® wines will continue. New partnerships with the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board (WMMB), Edwards® Frozen Pies and Samuel Adams® have been formed in an effort to help increase incremental beef sales during the summer grilling season.

An example of how these partnerships work is free standing inserts (FSIs) within the store that offer a coupon for \$1 off beef with the purchase of A.I. Steak Sauce or Marinade and \$2 off beef with the purchase of Samuel Adams beer. These are frequently offered during the Memorial Day or Fourth of July holidays and reach thousands of consumers.

The WMMB’s Wisconsin Cheese and Edwards Frozen Pies partnerships will promote Wisconsin Cheese as the perfect burger topper and Edwards Frozen Pies as the perfect way to finish off a summer meal. These promotions will be done through FSIs within the store as well.

In-store merchandising displays with beef recipes, multi-page booklets of beef recipes and



Beef recipes available at the meat counter are a great tool to entice consumers to buy beef.

Great Grilling

Grilling the perfect steak just got easier thanks to researchers from South Dakota State University (SDSU). These researchers say there is some science to grilling the perfect steak on a gas grill.

To come up with new grilling guidelines, SDSU meat scientists grilled more than 1,400 steaks and presented them to a taste panel of 12 people, who evaluated the steaks for tenderness, juiciness and beef flavor intensity. Salt and pepper flavor and presence of any off flavors were also evaluated. Steaks were also evaluated for tenderness using Warner-Bratzler shear force.

Based on their research using U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Choice strip loins, here’s what the scientists learned:

- Steaks that were flipped every two to three minutes were juicier than steaks that were flipped once during cooking.
- Steaks that were cooked on high heat first and finished on low cooked in a shorter time than steaks cooked on medium heat, but there were no differences in tenderness, juiciness, flavor intensity or overall desirability between the two.
- There were no differences between steaks grilled with the lid open or closed. However, grilling with the lid closed greatly reduced grilling time.
- Steaks were more tender and flavorful if thawed completely before grilling, compared to steaks that were frozen when put on the grill.
- Some cookbooks suggest that steaks should not be seasoned before grilling, because it will draw out moisture. But the SDSU research showed that salt could be added either before or after grilling with no difference in results. Pepper and herbs should be applied after grilling, because some flavor is burned off during cooking.

The researchers offer these guidelines when grilling on a gas grill:

1. Thaw steak completely before grilling.
2. Start grill, set control(s) to medium and close lid.
3. Allow grill to warm for 5-10 minutes with lid closed.
4. Before grilling, pat the steak with paper to remove surface water.
5. Seasoning can be done before or after grilling (some spices such as pepper and herbs may burn off during grilling).
6. Grill steak on medium heat with lid closed, turning every two to three minutes until desired internal temperature is reached.
7. Let steak stand for five to 15 minutes before serving to redistribute juices. **HW**