



# Plate with Purpose

Advocating to keep beef on the table.

by *Rebecca Bland*

**B**eef provides the healthy nutrition Americans need, and the beef industry has the studies to back up that claim. Yet, some experts and consumers disagree about how beef and meat fit into a healthy diet. Cattle producers and nutritionists advocating for the beef industry continue to defend beef's rightful place on the dinner plate—and that means promoting proven nutritional information about the advantages of beef as part of a healthy, balanced diet and positioning beef in a positive light.

## Using the science

Americans deserve to have science steering the recommendations for a healthy diet. So, when the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee was deliberating its new Dietary Guideline for Americans, the foundation document for federal nutrition policies, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) wanted the credible scientific evidence about beef's health and nutrition to be heard loud and clear. Indeed, it was. The Dietary Guidelines recommends lean beef as a healthy protein food for the American diet, and that's an important inclusion for the beef industry.

Recommendations in the Dietary Guidelines affect how physicians, dietitians, nutritionists and other nutrition-related professionals offer advice about healthy food choices and how federal agencies purchase food for schools, low-income families, the military, prisons and more. Such programs affect one in every four Americans.

"We have so much good science to support the role that beef plays in a healthy diet," says Shalene McNeill, NCBA executive director of nutrition science, health and wellness. On an ongoing basis, the Beef Checkoff invests in randomized control trials, which are the gold

standard of clinical trial studies, to provide robust cause-and-effect research that the industry uses to promote beef nutrition.

The protein foods named in the Dietary Guidelines include lean meats, poultry and eggs; seafood; beans, peas and lentils; and nuts, seeds and soy products.

## Boosting the benefits

Beef delivers many health benefits in a way that few foods can. For starters, lean beef is high in protein and low in calories, providing more than half (25 grams) of the daily value for protein with only 170 calories per 3-ounce serving. Beef also offers essential nutrients, including vitamins B and B12, which are highly absorbable compared with B vitamins found in plants, as well as phosphorus, niacin, riboflavin, selenium and choline.

In addition, beef contains iron to help the body use oxygen and zinc to maintain a healthy immune system. Scientific research shows that iron and zinc play a beneficial role in the physical and cognitive development of young children. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the World Health Organization recommend the introduction of complementary foods, including beef, to babies at 6 months old. And for the first time, the Dietary Guidelines offered guidance on nutrition for children from birth to 23 months, recommending animal proteins, such as beef, to support healthy growth. Beef contains more than twice the iron as chicken or pork and twice as much zinc as turkey, chicken or pork.

## Valuing high protein

Approximately one-third of the American population follows a specific eating pattern or diet, according to the International Food

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## PLUM-MARINATED STEAK

Marinate this steak for 6 hours up to overnight for a tasty and tender Asian-style steak dish.

30 MIN • 4 SERVINGS • 320 CAL •  
22 G PROTEIN

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 boneless shoulder steak cut 1-inch thick (1 pound)

#### Marinade:

- 1/2 cup plum preserves
  - 3 tablespoons minced green onion, divided
  - 2 tablespoons distilled white vinegar
  - 2 tablespoons hoisin sauce
  - 2 teaspoons minced fresh ginger
  - 1 teaspoon dry mustard
  - 1/2 teaspoon ground red pepper
- Garnish: Minced green onion (optional)

### COOKING

1. Combine marinade ingredients in small bowl; reserve 1/4 cup marinade for basting. Place remaining marinade in food-safe plastic bag; add beef shoulder steak, turn to coat. Close bag securely and marinate in refrigerator 6 hours or as long as overnight, turning occasionally.  
*Cook's tip: Apricot preserves may be substituted for plum preserves.*
2. Remove steak from marinade; discard marinade. Pat steak dry with paper towel. Place steak on grid over medium, ash-covered coals. Grill boneless shoulder steak, covered, 12 to 17 minutes for medium rare (145°F) to medium (160°F) doneness (top round steak 12 to 14 minutes for medium rare 145°F; do not overcook), turning occasionally and brushing with reserved marinade.
3. Carve steak into thin slices. Garnish with minced green onion, as desired. **HW**



## SESAME-SOY BEEF STIR-FRY

Ready in just 25 minutes, this will be a go-to for quick and nutritious weeknight meals.

25 MIN • 4 SERVINGS • 380 CAL •  
3 G PROTEIN

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound beef sirloin tip steaks, cut 1/8- to 1/4-inch thick
- 1 package (16 ounces) frozen stir-fry vegetable mixture
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch dissolved in 1/3 cup water
- 2 cups cooked rice
- 1/4 cup chopped toasted walnuts

### Marinade:

- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons dark sesame oil

### COOKING

1. Stack beef sirloin tip steaks; cut lengthwise in half, then crosswise into 1-inch wide strips. Combine marinade ingredients in medium bowl. Remove and reserve 2 tablespoons mixture. Add beef to remaining marinade; toss to coat. Cover and marinate in refrigerator 30 minutes to 2 hours.
2. Combine vegetables and 1/4 cup water in large nonstick skillet; cook over medium-high heat 4 to 5 minutes or until most of water is evaporated and vegetables are hot, stirring occasionally. Remove from skillet and set aside.
3. Heat same skillet over medium-high heat until hot. Add 1/2 of beef; stir-fry 1 minute or until outside surface of beef is no longer pink. (Do not overcook.) Remove from skillet. Repeat with remaining beef. Combine cornstarch mixture and reserved marinade mixture. Return beef and vegetables to pan. Add cornstarch mixture; cook and stir 1 minute or until thickened and bubbly. Serve over rice. Sprinkle with walnuts, if desired. **HW**



## BEEF TENDERLOIN, CRANBERRY & PEAR SALAD

This is no ordinary salad.

25 MIN • 4 SERVINGS • 390 CAL • 25 G PROTEIN

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 beef tenderloin steaks, cut 3/4-inch thick (4 ounces each)
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 package (5 ounces) mixed baby salad greens
- 1 medium red or green ripe pear, cored, cut into 16 wedges
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries
- 1/4 cup coarsely chopped pecans, toasted
- 1/4 cup crumbled goat cheese (optional)

### Honey Mustard Dressing:

- 1/2 cup prepared honey mustard
- 2 to 3 tablespoons water
- 1-1/2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon white wine vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon salt

### COOKING

1. Season beef tenderloin steaks with 1/2 teaspoon pepper. Heat large nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot. Place steaks in skillet; cook 7 to 10 minutes for medium rare (145°F) to medium (160°F) doneness, turning occasionally.

*Cook's tip: To grill, place steaks on grate over medium, ash-covered coals. Grill steaks, covered, 7 to 10 minutes (timings remain the same for gas grill) for medium rare (145°F) to medium (160°F) doneness, turning occasionally. Do not overcook.*

2. Meanwhile whisk honey mustard dressing ingredients in small bowl until well blended. Set aside. Divide greens evenly among four plates. Top evenly with pear wedges and dried cranberries.
3. Carve steaks into thin slices; season with salt, as desired. Divide steak slices evenly over salads. Top each salad evenly with dressing, pecans and goat cheese, if desired.

*Cook's tip: To toast pecans, spread in single layer on metal baking sheet. Bake in 350°F oven 3 to 5 minutes or until lightly browned, stirring occasionally. (Watch carefully to prevent burning.) Set aside to cool.*

Recipe adapted from *The Healthy Beef Cookbook*, published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt **HW**



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Information Council Foundation. These diets include Paleo, low carb, Whole30, Mediterranean and ketogenic, to name a few. One common element in each of these diets is the inclusion of protein. Protein, with a slightly higher fat content than some diet foods, tends to satisfy, making it easier for consumers to stick with their diets and manage their weight.

“The more we get protein on their radar and the importance of protein, the more they think about beef as a solution for that protein,” McNeill says. “That’s a part of how we can increase demand for beef though nutrition, by raising awareness of protein.”

However, competition exists in the protein space. Beef competes with traditional meats such as chicken, pork and fish. Now, it also competes

“People see beef as a food for strength,” McNeill says. She added that the nutrients in beef help people stay strong, not only physically but mentally.

In particular, one life stage where beef can help with strength is older Americans. Research shows that people in their 60s and older naturally lose muscle mass as they age, and an increase in dietary protein can help to offset that muscle loss. According to the Dietary Guidelines, approximately 30% of men and 50% of women who are 71 years and older do not consume enough of the recommended protein foods in their daily diets. Beef advocates should remind older adults to stay strong by continuing to consume beef for protein or increasing their intake of beef if they are not getting enough protein in the meat, poultry and eggs food subgroup.



For even more delicious recipes, check out [BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com](http://BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com).

with protein bars and powders, whole grains, such as quinoa, and plant-based meat substitutes. Meat substitutes currently make up only 1% of the market share, and chicken ranks as the most formidable competition for beef.

Consumers have very different views of chicken and beef, according to McNeill. Consumers view eating chicken as a way to cut calories or lower cholesterol, which is very restrictive. On the other hand, when consumers consider eating beef, they think about satisfaction, stamina, fortitude and achievement.

### Keeping good company

Consumers are looking for healthy beef dishes their families can enjoy, so beef advocates should deliver with visuals of balanced meals in sensible portions. Photographs for recipes, marketing collateral or social media posts should feature beef dishes alongside colorful fruits and vegetables, whole grains and crunchy nuts. The healthful ingredients can be part of the beef dish itself, such as mixed greens, fruit and chopped pecans in a steak salad, or added as a healthy side to complement the meal, such as broccolini stalks plated with an Asian-style steak. The combination of beef and other nutrient-rich foods on

a well-portioned plate creates a positive visual association of health for consumers. The more consumers associate beef with healthy foods, the better for the industry.

“The public loves beef,” McNeill says. “They’re looking for permission to eat it.” Beef advocates can give consumers the beef they want and need in their diets and, armed with good science, feel good about it. And consumers can feel good about eating it. **HW**