

Good news for environmentally conscious foodies - beef is lean and 'green'

(ARA) - There is no doubt the green movement has gained momentum in the last decade. While many companies may just be starting sustainable practices to meet consumer demand for more planet-friendly products, cattlemen have been raising environmentally sustainable, nutritionally efficient food for generations and continue to look for ways to improve. There are a surprising number of ways beef is both good for you and the planet.

Why beef is good for you

It's easy to enjoy high-quality protein, like lean beef, in your diet and get all the essential nutrients you need for optimal health. With more than 29 cuts that meet government guidelines for lean beef, it's a healthy, naturally rich source of 10 essential nutrients that are needed to live vibrantly. And, unlike most plant sources of protein, lean beef is the food supply's most readily available, and easily absorbed, source of B12, iron and zinc - all vital

in developing and maintaining cognitive ability regardless of age.

When considering beef as part of your next meal, you may be surprised to learn that lean beef is a calorie-saver. A 3-ounce serving of lean beef is about 150 calories, on average, and is the perfect partner for fruits, vegetables and whole grains - making it even easier to enjoy a balanced diet. Visit the BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com for a host of recipes, meal ideas and nutritional information about cooking with beef.

Why beef is good for the planet

Many of America's cattlemen are everyday environmentalists, dedicated to leaving the land in better shape for the next generation. Thanks to the stewardship practices on cattle farms and ranches, the United States often is recognized as the world model for raising sustainable beef. On average, each cattle rancher has 13 different practices in place to accomplish environmental goals. These practices include actions that help nurture wild-

life, prevent erosion and conserve and protect water.

Cattle farmers and ranchers are innovators, always looking for ways to raise more delicious, nutritious beef while using fewer natural resources. Raising beef today requires 30 percent less land, 14 percent less water and 19 percent less fossil fuel energy than 30 years ago, according to 2010 research from Dr. Jude Capper at Washington State University. As a result, the carbon footprint per 1 pound of beef today is 18 percent smaller than in 1977. A 2010 beef checkoff survey reveals that more than nine out of 10 cattlemen say that protecting natural resources is critical to their business.

Take comfort in knowing that lean beef is a "green" meal that provides a sustainable source of the nutrients you and your family need to live an active, healthy life. To learn more about how cattle farmers and ranchers raise high-quality, nutritious beef while being environmental stewards, visit www.explorebeef.org.