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American Consumers Increasingly Food Price Sensitive

Eating the nutrient-rich way is easy, enjoyable and affordable

Madison, WI (June 9, 2009)—According to a recent consumer survey* American consumers are actively working to manage their food costs but aren't sure of the best approach. Sixty percent of respondents said they are changing purchasing patterns at the supermarket in an attempt to balance their budgets. A quarter said they're seeking information on how to best stretch their food dollar, according to the Wisconsin Beef Council, which agrees with survey results.

"In today's challenging economic times, consumers should first look for nutrient-rich ingredients that are satisfying, nutritious and easy on the pocket," added Deana Foster, R.D., with the Wisconsin Beef Council.

"Low nutrient-dense foods, which typically include added sugars, solid fats and processed grains, supply calories with relatively minimal to no nutritional value. Over-consumption of such discretionary calories can blow your food budget and jeopardize your nutrient intake," she added. "Pair lean meats with vegetables and whole grains for a variety of dishes, including salads, soups, stews, sandwiches and stir-fry."

According to the MyPyramid Food Guidance System, ** naturally nutrient-rich foods help people obtain more essential nutrients in fewer calories. And lean beef is one of the most nutrient-rich protein sources in the diet. It is naturally rich in nine essential nutrients that fuel a healthy, active lifestyle, including: protein, zinc, vitamin B12, selenium, phosphorous, niacin, vitamin B6, iron and riboflavin.

A substantial body of evidence shows protein can help in maintaining a healthy weight, building muscle and fueling physical activity – all of which play an important role in a healthful lifestyle and disease prevention.

Beef can be an easy and economical way to "go lean with protein" by selecting one of the 29 cuts of beef that meet government guidelines for lean. The majority of lean cuts are affordable, including top round steak, chuck shoulder pot roast and 95 percent lean ground beef.

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Nutrient-rich: easy, enjoyable, affordable

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Navigating the Meat Case for Today's Cost-Conscious Consumer

There are beef choices to satisfy all tastes, schedules and budgets. Planning menus, creating shopping lists and knowing what to look for on the label when buying beef will help consumers stretch food dollars, without sacrificing the health benefits of a high-quality protein diet.

Here are some tips for efficient purchasing decisions at the meat counter:

- **Evaluate purchases based on the cost per serving – not just the price per pound.** The amount of beef to buy varies with the cut selected. Cooked yields per pound are related to the amount of bone, fat trim and cooking method.
- **Match the cut with the cooking method.** Matching the beef cut to the appropriate cooking method is the key to moist, tender, flavorful beef. For instance, less-tender steak cuts from the chuck, round, plate and flank (shoulder steak, eye round steak, top round steak, skirt steak, flank steak) are more affordable, but all require a tenderizing marinade before cooking using the grill, broiler or stovetop. For example, *Tangy Lime Grilled Top Round Steak* is tender and juicy, thanks to a tenderizing marinade, cooking to medium rare (145°F) doneness and carving across the grain into thin slices. For many less-tender roasts and steaks, moist heat cooking methods, such as braising or using a slow cooker appliance, soften the strong muscle fibers and connective tissue, guaranteeing moist, flavorful results.
- **Plan ahead to cook once and dine twice.** Preparing a little extra ahead of time is an easy way to create beef dishes that are ready to serve without breaking the bank. A grilled steak tonight easily becomes a key ingredient for tomorrow's protein-packed salad. Or crumble leftover cooked burgers into chili, pizza or pasta dishes for a planned meal the next day. *Classic Beef Pot Roast with Root Vegetables* utilizes the affordable chuck shoulder pot roast for a timeless family favorite. And next day shredded beef sandwiches are fast and delicious!
- **Explore the versatility of ground beef.** A perfect option for many recipe favorites is 95 percent lean ground beef, a convenient and economical way to add protein to a family meal. A traditional meatloaf is easily transformed into *Southwest Meatloaf* with the addition of a few flavorful, low-cost ingredients. Extra servings can be frozen for future use, or continue the fiesta the next day and create a meatloaf burrito wrap.
- **Buy in bulk to realize cost savings.** Instead of buying pre-cut meat for kabobs, stew and stir-fry, save money by buying steaks or roasts and cutting into meat cubes or strips. Another approach is to purchase boneless roasts to cut into steaks. Your local butcher may be happy to slice them for you without added cost. Plan ahead and freeze cut beef for 6 to 12 months.

Visit www.beeftips.com or www.BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com for additional information and more nutrient-rich main dish recipes that are satisfying, delicious and easy on the pocket book.

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*Sources: * Survey funded by the Beef Checkoff Program*

*** MyPyramid, U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Enacted through the 1986 Beef Promotion and Research Act and Order, the Wisconsin Beef Council is a check-off funded, producer-directed organization dedicated to building demand for beef and veal through promotion, consumer education and research. For more information on the Wisconsin Beef Council or the beef check-off call the WBC office at 800-728-2333 or visit www.beeftips.com.

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Find the recipes mentioned in this release at:

Tangy Lime Grilled Top Round Steak, <http://biwfd.cylosoftncba.com/recipe.aspx?id=1724>

Classic Beef Pot Roast with Root Vegetables, <http://biwfd.cylosoftncba.com/recipe.aspx?id=1619>

Southwest Meatloaf, <http://biwfd.cylosoftncba.com/recipe.aspx?id=2003>