

## **Mandatory Nutrition Labeling**

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There are some changes occurring regarding food labeling that should give beef a great chance to really shine as a healthy, nutritious product. The Mandatory Nutrition Labeling rule, which has been ten years in the making, will go into effect at the beginning of 2012. It is officially titled “Nutrition Labeling of Single-Ingredient Products or Chopped Meat and Poultry Products.”

The nutrition label will appear on forty of the most commonly purchased cuts of beef, lamb, pork and poultry. Nutrition information will also be required for ground meat and poultry products. The labels will include the number of calories and grams of total fat and saturated fat in a product. In addition, any product listing a lean percentage statement also will list its fat percentage which should make it easier for consumers to understand the actual amounts of lean and total fat in their purchases.

According to comments received by the NCBA, cattle producers support this inclusion of all nutrients found in beef, to be included on the label. This information should be very helpful in continuing to educate the public about beef’s contribution to a modern healthy diet. Consumers have the right to know what nutrients are found in the products they purchase but certainly there will be additional costs associated with the implementation of this rule. It is anticipated that the USDA will work with industry to find the least disruptive and most cost effective methods to implement the rule.

Beef producers are committed to meeting consumer demands for nutritious, affordable, high-quality beef products at a reasonable price. The beef industry has a long history of providing good quality information to consumers regarding the great nutritional opportunities of beef. Remember that there are numerous cuts of beef that have less fat than chicken breast and also have all the great nutritional qualities found only in beef. This is information that will be more readily available to the consumer, with this positive new labeling change.