



THE FACTS ABOUT MEAT ALTERNATIVES

HOW THE BEEF CHECKOFF IS PROMOTING BEEF TO CONSUMERS

NCBA, as a contractor to the Beef Checkoff, is working to make sure that beef is the number one protein choice for consumers. By presenting the positive facts about beef to consumers, retailers, foodservice operators, the media and the scientific and influencer communities, consumers are choosing beef more often.

There has been a lot of media coverage on the new alternative protein products hitting the market. It is important to note that the products currently in the marketplace are plant-based, made from such sources as soy and peas, and have been available for decades. There has also been a lot of media coverage on “Lab-Grown Meat” made from animal cell cultures. These products are NOT available to consumers today and it is uncertain when they will be available.

To help consumers accurately compare plant-based proteins and beef, as well as to correct misinformation about beef production, NCBA is executing Checkoff-funded programs to position beef as the top protein. Checkoff funds are not being used on regulatory issues. Organizations representing parts of the beef and meat industries, using non-Checkoff funds, are working to ensure that all protein sources, including existing plant-based proteins and future cell-based proteins, are produced and marketed using the same standards as animal-based proteins.

HERE ARE SOME CHECKOFF HIGHLIGHTS

Conducting Intensive Consumer and Market Research

The Checkoff is funding research to determine how consumers think about beef and alternative proteins; as well as where they are spending their protein dollars. For example:

- Meat alternatives represent a fraction of pounds sold; registering at 0.3% share in 2019. The share of beef alternatives is 0.5% compared to beef’s 99.5% of market share.¹
- 2019 annual projected beef consumption is more than 58 pounds per capita versus beef substitutes measuring in at a few ounces per capita. 2019 will mark the fourth straight year per capita consumption increase from 2015’s low of 53.9 pounds.²
- The U.S. Retail Beef Demand Index has increased by almost 15% since 2012. This increase in demand is being driven by consumer expenditures on beef, which reached an all-time high in 2018 of more than \$105 billion in sales.³
- In terms of share of total meat and poultry consumption, chicken is in the lead with 42% share, or 93 pounds per capita, compared to beef’s 26% share, or 58.3 pounds per capita.⁴

- Research shows that consumers consider beef one of the best sources of protein. In the same research, plant-based and lab-grown alternatives are not as good. While there is interest in these substitutes among some consumers, research shows that the majority of meat alternative users still eat beef.⁵
- Beef continues to be extremely valuable to the retail and foodservice channels. A recent study found that when beef is part of a consumer’s grocery basket, retailers enjoy a considerable increase in the total basket’s value. In fact, carts with beef generate 44% more sales across the store than carts with chicken. Beef substitutes fare even worse. Carts with beef contribute almost 20 times as many dollars to retailers as do carts with beef substitutes.⁶
- While more foodservice operators are beginning to include meat alternatives on their menus, there continues to be far more beef items in food service than meat alternatives. In 2018, \$31 billion of beef was sold through foodservice outlets compared to \$99 million of beef substitutes.⁷

Consumer Marketing and Information

For more than 25 years, the iconic *Beef. It’s What’s For Dinner.*®, funded by the Beef Checkoff and managed by NCBA, helped slow the decades long decline in per capita consumption of beef that began in the 1970’s. And today, with beef production on the rise, *Beef. It’s What’s For Dinner.* is helping increase per capita beef consumption.

The Checkoff-funded Consumer Beef Tracker shows that when people are aware of the *Beef. It’s What’s For Dinner.* brand, they’re more likely to feel positive about beef and more likely to eat beef more often. *Beef. It’s What’s For Dinner.* was relaunched in October 2017 with a core focus on leveraging beef’s greatest strengths – the powerful and complete protein benefit of beef; the amazing stories of the people who raise beef; and the unforgettable pleasurable eating experience of beef.

Through a nearly \$5 million consumer advertising budget, *Beef. It’s What’s For Dinner.* is always-on (never dark) and is reaching more consumers today than ever before in the places where they spend their time – online.

Using innovative marketing techniques, NCBA, on behalf of the Checkoff, targets consumers who are actively searching for information related to beef – including searches for whether or not beef is sustainable, one of the key ways that alternative proteins are marketing against beef – on Google and drive them to the [BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com](https://www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com) website to get accurate information.

BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com has had more than 15 million site visits since October 2017. The total amount spent on paid Google Search this year is \$750,000 and we're constantly shifting this spend to ensure that it hits the highest Google queries, questions and keywords that consumers are asking about at any given moment. Since March 2018, more than 120,000 Google Search impressions were generated on beef production related content, including sustainability, safety and the beef lifecycle.

The *Beef. It's What's For Dinner.* brand has also created a series of social media ads that clearly position beef as the top protein and address meat alternative head on. These ads appear on popular websites and social media platforms and utilize tongue-in-check humor and beef's swagger to address alternative proteins head on. Some of these ads include:



- [“Nicely done beef, you know a protein packed meal looks nothing like a shake.”](#)
- [“Nicely done beef, you’ve proved that meat substitutes are just that. Substitutes.”](#)

These two ads alone have reached more than 700,000 consumers.

Some consumers don't always trust single sources of information, especially on complex topics such as this, so NCBA, on behalf of the Beef Checkoff, has worked with third-party content partners and websites – such as Quartz, Greenbiz and Nativo which place articles on third-party websites – to ensure consumers are also seeing balanced information about how beef is healthy and sustainable. This has garnered nearly 8.5 million impressions on these articles balancing the online conversation.

With Checkoff dollars, NCBA, contractor to the Beef Checkoff, is also testing consumer messages to determine how to best position beef as the number one protein – whether that's showing comparative ingredients or nutrient data on beef alternatives – to help inform the future of our consumer marketing and consumer information programs.

The Beef Checkoff is funding presentations about nutrition and sustainability research to opinion leaders such as dietitians, medical doctors, bloggers and reporters to debunk misinformation presented by some plant protein makers.

In addition, the Beef Checkoff funds are used to work with retailers and foodservice operators to showcase the business value of beef to their operations. Even Chuck Knows Beef, the first all-knowing beef expert, powered by Google Artificial Intelligence and BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com, can answer questions about alternative proteins – visit him at [ChuckKnowsBeef.com](#) and ask him “What are meat substitutes?”

Issues Management and Media Response

Every day, NCBA, a contractor to the Beef Checkoff, is using Checkoff dollars to monitor more than 40,000 media and social media sites to counter misinformation about beef in comparison to alternative proteins. For example, in the few weeks surrounding the launch of the EAT-Lancet report, which promoted a largely plant-based diet, there were more than 100 media touchpoints with national consumer media outlets providing correct messaging and the latest facts and data on beef's role in a healthy, sustainable diet.

This outreach paid off in NCBA, a contractor to the Beef Checkoff, being included or quoted in six of the biggest national stories on the EAT-Lancet report, including stories in *USA Today*, *AP*, *Reuters*, *New York Times*, *LA Times* and *Forbes*. Beef's inclusion in these stories brought balance to the coverage and raised questions about the report's findings. Outreach to media continues on a weekly – and sometimes daily – basis to address misinformation and offer resources and interviews with industry experts.

On behalf of the Beef Checkoff, NCBA is leveraging resources across program areas to promote beef. Consumers love the taste of beef. Consumers hold beef producers in high regard. And when it comes to key nutrients, beef is an important source for today's consumers.

1 Source: *Alternative Proteins at Foodservice Study, Technomic, October 2018; Usage and Volumetric Assessment of Beef in Foodservice, Technomic, December 2017; IRI, Refrigerated/Frozen Meat Substitutes, 52 weeks ending 6/16/19; IRI/Freshlook, Total US MULO ending 5/28/18; Categorized by VMMeat System*

2 Source: *USDA, CattleFax Projected 2019*

3 Source: *K-State; IRI/Freshlook, Total US MULO ending 11/26/18; Categorized by VMMeat System*

4 Source: *USDA WASDE, December 11, 2018; Alternative Proteins at Foodservice Study, Technomic, October 2018; IRI Refrigerated and Frozen Meat Substitutes, July 2018*

5 Source 1: *Toluna Protein Survey Results 2018, Source 2: Consumer Insights 2019*

6 Source: *IRI Market Basket Study*

7 Source 1: *2018 Technomic Foodservice Volumetric Study; ARMS # 092518-04, Source 2: Alternative Proteins Multi-Client Study, Technomic, 2018*



Funded by Beef Farmers and Ranchers