



Newsletter

December 2007

In This Issue...

Researchers Say New Steak's A Hit With Consumers 2

Bronson Urges Florida's Farmers And Ranchers To Participate In Census Of Agriculture 3

Cattlemen Commend House Vote On Peru FTA 4



UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
IFAS Extension

Dr. Dwain Johnson holds a flat iron steak at the University of Florida's IFAS Meats Laboratory in Gainesville.

Story on Page 2...



Dates to Remember

December 2007

- 1 Sunshine Farms Bull Sale - Clanton, AL
- 1 Osceola County Cattlemen's Brahman Heifer Sale - Kissimmee, FL
- 1 Salacoa Valley Bull Sale - Calhoun, GA
- 5 North Florida Angus Herd Sire Sale (Lemmon Cattle) - Lake City, FL
- 5 North Florida Sale - Lake City, FL
- 5-7 FCA Year-End Quarterly Meeting - Plantation Inn; Crystal River, FL
- 6-7 Basic Meat & Poultry HACCP Training - Kissimmee, FL
- 6-7 2nd Annual Florida Ag Expo - Wimauma, FL
- 7 Florida Brangus Association Bull Sale - Arcadia, FL
- 7 Calhoun Performance Tested Bull Sale - Irwinville, GA
- 7 All-Breed Bull Sale - Irwinville, GA
- 8 4-H/FFA Horse Judging School - Gainesville, FL
- 8 Florida Jr. Shorthorn Assn. Breed Show - Okeechobee, FL
- 8 Camp Cooley Brangus Bull Sale - Letohatchee, AL
- 12 Meadows Creek/Henry Cattle Black & White Sale - Linden, AL
- 15 Source for Profit Bull Sale - Ebla, AL

January 2008

- 5 SE All Black Classic - Marianna, FL
- 8 Marion County Cattlemen's 51st Annual Sale - Ocala, FL
- 8 Ocala Bull Sale - Ocala, FL
- 9-13 Western National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest - Denver, CO
- 11-12 4-H/FFA Livestock Evaluation & Meats Judging School - Gainesville, FL
- 12 Lake City Brangus Bull Sale - Lake City, FL
- 12 Western National 4-H Meats Judging Contest - Ft. Collins, CO
- 17 FL Cattlemen's Institute & Allied Tradeshow - Kissimmee, FL
- 19 Florida Bull Test Sale - Greenwood, FL
- 21 Hog & Ham Workshop - Gainesville, FL
- 26 AGRItunity 2008 - Bushnell, FL
- 26 South Florida Fair Youth Livestock Judging Contest - West Palm Beach, FL
- 29-30 2008 Florida Ruminant Nutrition Symposium - Gainesville, FL



Researchers Say New Steak's A Hit With Consumers

A cut of beef once ground into hamburger has become one of the nation's most popular steaks, thanks to a processing method co-developed by a University of Florida researcher.

Recent figures show flat iron steak sales now top 90 million pounds a year, making the value-priced cut the nation's fifth best-selling steak.

Dwain Johnson, a meat science professor with the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences who helped develop the steak in 2002, said some consumers say the cut tastes better than a New York strip.

"The cut is as tasty and tender as more expensive steaks, yet affordable enough for the average family to enjoy on the regular basis, and it costs a lot less than a choice filet or strip steak," he said.

Steve Wald, director of new product development for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association in Centennial, CO, said 47 million pounds of flat iron steak were sold in 2005, increasing to 92 million pounds in 2006 and about 90 million pounds so far this year. He said the sales data was



In this photo released by the UF/IFAS, Dwain Johnson holds a flat iron steak at the university's meats laboratory in Gainesville. Johnson, who helped develop the steak, said the cut is as tasty and tender as more expensive steaks, yet affordable enough for the average family to consume on the regular basis. In 2005, 47 million pounds of flat iron steak were sold, increasing to 92 million pounds in 2006. About 90 million pounds have been sold so far this year. (AP photo/University of Florida/IFAS/Thomas Wright).

compiled by Technomic Inc., a Chicago-based research firm.

"In the food service industry, which includes restaurants, the flat-iron steak outsells T-bone and porterhouse steaks combined," Wald said. "Strong consumer demand prompted several national retailers to introduce the steak during the summer of 2007."

Johnson, who developed the steak in cooperation with the University of Nebraska and the cattlemen's association, said their research was aimed at identifying undervalued portions of the beef carcass. In the largest study of its kind, the

researchers evaluated more than 5,600 muscles for flavor and tenderness.

He said the flat iron steak -- also known as the top blade steak -- is cut from deep within the shoulder muscle known as the chuck, traditionally used for roasts or ground beef.

"Although the cut is flavorful and relatively tender, the flat iron steak has a serious flaw in the middle of it," Johnson said. "There is a tough piece of connective tissue running through the middle, but it can be removed to create an amazing cut of beef."

By developing a method for cutting the connective tissue -- similar to filleting a fish -- the researchers created a steak that has the tenderness of a ribeye or strip steak with the full-flavored character of a sirloin or skirt steak. It's also perfect for grilling over medium high heat, he said.

"Supposedly named because it looks like an old-fashioned metal flat iron, the flat iron steak is uniform in thickness and rectangular in shape," Johnson said. "The only variation is the cut into the middle where the connective tissue has been removed."

Johnson said the research to produce leaner and more convenient beef products was initiated when demand for chuck, round and "thin cuts" -- which make up 73 percent of total beef carcass weight -- declined by more than 20 percent from 1980 to 1998.

"The Cattlemen's Beef Board realized that a more concentrated effort was needed to study the cause for the decreased demand in products from these carcass locations," he said. "They also wanted to find out what could be done to reverse the trend and increase the demand for the chuck and round cuts."

He said other value cuts such as the petite tender and ranch cut are starting to be used by the food service sector.

SOURCE:

Dwain Johnson

Email: dwainj@ufl.edu

Phone: (352) 392-1922

Steve Wald

Email: swald@beef.org

Phone: (303) 850-3315

By: **Chuck Woods**

UF/IFAS Communication Services

Phone: (352) 392-0400

Release - November 28, 2007



Bronson Urges Florida's Farmers And Ranchers To Participate In Census Of Agriculture

Forms will be delivered by mail in early January

Florida Agriculture Commissioner Charles H. Bronson is urging the state's farmers and ranchers to watch their mail in early January for the arrival of the 2007 Census of Agriculture form.

"I urge all of Florida's agricultural producers to participate in the Census by completing and returning the form," Bronson said. "The input received by the Census helps shape the future of agriculture for years to come, and we want to make sure that the voices of Florida's farmers and ranchers are heard."

Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Census is a complete count of the nation's farms and ranches and the people who operate them. The Census examines land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures and other topics. It provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every county in the nation.

"Regardless of how large or small their operation or what kinds of products they produce, it's important for Florida farmers and ranchers to complete and return the form," Bronson said. "By participating in the Census, they will help themselves and their communities."

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will mail out Census forms on December 28, 2007, to collect data for the 2007 calendar year. Completed forms are due by February 4, 2008. Producers can return their forms by mail or fill out the Census online via a secure web site.

"The Census of Agriculture provides information that benefits agricultural producers and their communities in many ways," Bronson said. "For instance, policy-makers factor Census data into decisions concerning agricultural and rural programs. Community planners use Census data to target needed services to rural residents. Companies rely on Census data when determining where to locate their operations. And farmers themselves can use Census data to help make critical decisions about their businesses."

For more information about the 2007 Census of Agriculture, contact the NASS Florida Field Office at (407) 648-6013 or 1-800-344-6277 or visit www.agcensus.usda.gov.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Census of Agriculture?

The Census of Agriculture is a complete count, taken every five years, of America's farms and ranches and the people who operate them. It is the most complete agricultural data resource available, providing the only source of uniform, comprehensive information for every county in the nation. The Census provides information on land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures, and many other important topics. The 2007 Census of Agriculture is your voice, your future, your responsibility.

Agriculture's Voice

By participating in the 2007 Census, producers can help show the nation the value and importance of U.S. agriculture. This is an opportunity for every producer to show how agriculture contributes to America by providing food, fuel and fiber. Each producer has the power to influence key decisions that will shape the direction of American agriculture for years to come, including:

- Transportation and marketing locations
- Farm services
- Production practices and new technologies
- Policy decisions

The Future

By responding to the Census, every producer can have a positive impact on the future of their own operation and their entire community. The Census provides valuable information used for:

- Community planning
- Farm succession planning
- Store/company locations
- Availability of operational loans and other funding
- Location and staffing of USDA service centers

- Federal budget support for agriculture

Everyone's Responsibility

Everyone's response to the Census makes a difference. To assure we are providing the best tools and reports, we need accurate information from all farmers and ranchers no matter how large or small their operations. This information is used to make a positive difference in local communities. Additionally, responses are required and protected by law.

What to Do?

Producers should look for the Census form in their mailboxes in early January 2008.

Forms must be mailed back or completed online by February 4, 2008.

Visit www.agcensus.usda.gov for more information.

For more information:

Jim Ewing

Phone: (407) 648-6013

Email: jim_ewing@nass.usda.gov



Cattlemen Commend House Vote On Peru FTA

Urge Senate to Act Quickly on Passage

Export opportunities for American cattle ranchers got a boost today when the House of Representatives approved the Peru Trade Promotion Agreement by a vote of 285 to 132.

“For U.S. cattlemen, the Peru Trade Promotion Agreement is one of the best-negotiated free trade agreements to date, providing for immediate duty-free access for U.S. prime and choice beef,” says Stacey Satterlee, director of legislative affairs for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA). “This gives U.S. producers the ability to compete aggressively against Argentinean and Brazilian beef in these markets.”

NCBA is working with a coalition of ag industry

groups in support of this agreement, which presents a great opportunity for American agriculture, and especially for beef producers. Under the Peru Trade Promotion Agreement:

- U.S. choice and prime beef will have immediate duty-free access.
- All tariff rate quotas will be eliminated within 12 years.
- Peru has committed to recognize the U.S. meat inspection system as equivalent to its own, thereby allowing imports from facilities approved by USDA-FSIS.
- Peru has committed in writing to specific Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) terms.

It's also important to note that beef comprises less than 8 percent of Peru's total agriculture gross domestic product, making it an exceptional export growth opportunity for U.S. beef. In 2003, Peru was a \$6 million export market for U.S. beef, beef variety meats and beef products. This improved access could amount to roughly \$15 million a year - about half the value of Peru's current total beef imports.

“America's cattlemen rely on our nation's policymakers to support a pro-trade agenda in order to grow their businesses and help support the U.S. economy,” says Satterlee. “A vote for expanding trade is a vote for American agriculture and small business.”

The trade agreement with Peru is one of several waiting for Congressional consideration. “While we are urging swift passage of the Peru agreement in the Senate, we are also looking to Congress to consider the Colombia and Panama free trade agreements. These are well-negotiated agreements and Congress needs to ratify them!”

SOURCE:

Karen Batra

Email: kbatra@beef.org

Phone: (202) 347-0228

Joe Schuele

Email: jschuele@beef.org

Phone: (720) 987-4783

Release - November 8, 2007