

# Grass Fed Beef

Part of a well balanced diet

The assembly line, by reducing the amount of time necessary to produce goods, has brought us affordable consumer goods from cars to computers. In the past 50 years or so the assembly line model has been applied to food production in this country. But what works well for cars, may not be such a good idea for beef production or producing potatoes for human consumption. In order to be nutritious and healthy for human consumption, food needs time to mature. The additives that speed production and harvesting are limiting the nutritional value of the things we eat, and in some instances may literally be killing us.

For instance, ruminants, (animals with two stomachs like a cow or sheep that chew their cud) are biologically designed to eat grass. They take a little longer to mature and fatten if they are not fed concentrates such as corn or barley, but that extra time is what nature intended. When fattened this way the meat is not only more flavorful, but becomes a healthy and vital protein source.

You have heard that fish is a good healthy meat. The reason fish has been labeled a healthier choice than beef or even chicken is the levels of essential omega 6 and omega 3 fatty acids contained in fish. These fatty acids cannot be made by human bodies but are necessary for all our cells especially our eyes, brain and nerves throughout our bodies. But did you know that if beef is grown properly and grass fattened it contains the same balance of essential omega 6 and omega 3 fatty acids that makes fish such a valuable protein source? The human body needs both omega 6 and omega 3 essential fatty acids, but it needs them in the proper balance. That proper balance should be close to one and not exceed four times as many omega 6 as omega 3. The typical American diet is from 11 to 30 times as many omega 6 as omega 3. The result is a diet that promotes disease whereas a proper balance of omega 6 to omega 3 fatty acids actually helps the body fight disease. Maintaining the proper balance of omega 6 and omega 3 fatty acids in the diet has been linked to prevention of Alzheimer disease, atherosclerosis, heart attack, depression and cancer. Omega 3 intake has even allowed those suffering from rheumatoid arthritis to discontinue other treatments.

Grain fed beef contains an omega 6 to omega 3 ratio of 4 to 1, whereas grass fed beef has a health promoting ratio of 2 to 1. You will find much exciting discussion about these essential fatty acids under the rubric of Conjugated linolenic

Acid, (“CLA”) CLA prevents breast cancer, colon cancer, and diabetes, among other diseases. It is also important in lowering LDL cholesterol levels and fighting obesity. While it seems too much to claim for one nutrient substance, the reason for the amazing impact of CLA is that it helps the body modulate proper composition by preventing fat buildup and becomes the source of the body’s other essential nutrients. Humans can not synthesize omega 3 and 6 conjugated bonds so we use the CLAs as a building block to produce the other omega 3 and 6 fatty acids we need. We must eat linolenic acid (one type of omega 6) and alpha linolenic acid (one type of omega 3). We can then use those as building blocks for the other Omega 3 and omega 6 fatty acids we need. For reasons yet not fully understood, if we don’t eat them in the right



amount the body cannot synthesize the correct nutrients. Grass fed beef has the correct balance. While there are some side effects to eating high doses of artificial CLA, the more natural CLA one can ingest the better. CLA is found naturally in the meat of ruminants due to the anaerobic activity of the rumen bacterium *Butyrivibrio fibrisolvens*. However, feeding the animals grain in confinement substantially reduces the amount

of CLA the animal provides. A hamburger from grass fed beef will contain about 123 mg of CLA whereas that same hamburger from grain fattened beef will only have about 48.3 mg of CLA. Ironically, the highest CLA deposits are in the fat. This should not come as a surprise because omega 3 and 6 fatty acids are just what their names imply, fats! So rather than selecting lean beef as we have been conditioned to do, you will want to eat the fat, marbled, flavorful grass fed beef because, when properly raised those best flavored cuts are also the most healthy for you.

Now a word about flavor. As you read about grass fed beef you will note that most researchers acknowledge a flavor difference between grass fed and corn fed beef. That is true. As your pallet becomes adjusted to meat raised the way nature intended it you will begin to notice that the meat you buy in the store has a strong, almost liver like taste. Now I personally like liver, but not when I am expecting T-bone! Some who have grown accustomed to the flavor of grass fed beef can no longer stomach a steak at the restaurant and have to order fish. If you would like to learn more, check out

[WWW.ROCKYRANCH.COM](http://WWW.ROCKYRANCH.COM)

Click on “Grass Fed Beef”