

Nutrition Information – Nutri-Facts

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What I'd like to do is share with you a little of the history of Meat Nutri-Facts, as well as an update on the program.

To this audience, I certainly don't have to explain the changes that have happened in the livestock industry. The move towards leaner, more muscular livestock can be easily shown when we compare the Grand Champions of the American Royal in the 40's to that of today.

These changes were also reflected in the new nutrient composition studies conducted by the USDA and many land grant universities present here this morning. The challenge was to convert this new nutrient information on today's livestock and provide this to consumers in an understandable format. That is where the three cooperating organizations – the American Meat Institute, Food Marketing Institute and the Meat Board – came together to determine a way to display the information.

The first thought considered was to display the information exactly how it's found in most nutrition information programs. Simply lift the data from USDA sources and display it. However, we soon learned that, because of the image we already have, that wouldn't change any attitudes. For example, a 3-ounce cooked, trimmed portion of pork chop is only 59 grams of sodium. That appears high in many consumers' eyes because of the association of high sodium levels in processed meats. In reality, that serving size is only 2% of the standard set by the National Academy of Sciences. The bottom line is: The information needed a perspective. That's why Nutri-Facts uses a graph to display the information.

Elements of Meat Nutri-Facts

But let's take a closer look at the elements that make up the Meat Nutri-Facts graph.

Because calories are of the greatest importance, and most easily understood by consumers, this number is prominently displayed.

Next, you'll notice that the data for the specific cut is based on 3 ounces of cooked and trimmed lean meat. Also,

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because cooking affects the nutrient profile, the Nutri-Facts graph uses, and lists, the most common method of preparation.

Now let's examine each of the bar graphs.

Here again, because of the wide consumer acceptance and understanding, we start with calories. For example, if we take a 3-ounce broiled pork loin chop, we have 196 calories. In this example, this chop provides about 10% of the daily requirement based on the National Academy of Science calorie range. This range is from 1800 to 2200 calories per day for women from the age of 23 to 51. Meat Nutri-Facts uses the mid-point, or 2000 calories, for all of its graphs.

Next, we come to fat. Fat is, of course, of interest to many consumers. But the question is: "How much is too much?"

The American Heart Association recommends that no more than 30% of our total daily calorie intake come from fat. Using our 2000-calorie level, we calculate that 30% is 600 calories that could come from fat.

In our pork loin chop, we find 8.9 grams; and at 9 calories per gram of fat this is the equivalent of 80 calories, or only 13% of the recommended daily requirement.

But there is another consideration. That is that there are three kinds of fat. There's saturated fat, monounsaturated fat and polyunsaturated fat. The Meat Nutri-Facts graph includes the amount per serving, in grams, of each fatty acid category.

Because of the concern about saturated fats, we believe that fully displaying this information is important to the consumer. We also think that consumers will be surprised and pleased to learn that less than half the fat in beef and pork is saturated fat.

If we go back to our example, broiled pork loin chop, we find that it contains only 3 grams of saturated fat.

The American Heart Association recommends that we limit our consumption of cholesterol to 300 milligrams per day. Our pork chop example has 83 milligrams per serving, or 28% of this standard. This leaves plenty of room for additional intake from the meat group and dairy products.

Sodium appears next on the Nutri-Facts graph. The National Academy of Science's daily recommended standard maximum consumption is 3300 milligrams. Fortunately, red meat is low in sodium. Each cut in the Meat Nutri-Facts program has 2% or less of the standard.

Beef, pork and lamb are excellent sources of high-quality protein and many minerals. The protein, iron and zinc content per serving are listed on the graph by showing the quantity per serving as a percentage of the U.S. Required Dietary Allowances for each nutrient.

Meat is also an excellent source of many B-vitamins. Each Meat Nutri-Facts graph includes three. They are niacin, thiamin and B-12.

The standards for comparison and the sources for the data are also listed on each Meat Nutri-Facts graph. Recommendations from the American Heart Association, the National Academy of Sciences and the U.S Recommended Daily Allowances are used.

There you have the standard Meat Nutri-Facts graph. Its simple design is intended to allow the consumer to quickly become totally familiar with its format.

You will note that the items covered in the graph are those items that are of interest to most consumers, whether they are meat lovers or have an increased interest in health. The next step was the actual mechanics in displaying the information.

It was agreed that our role in this program should be to provide the information in camera-ready art form and let each retailer customize the program to meet his needs. That all sounds well and good, but just how well was that going to be accepted?

I am happy to report to you, if anything, camera-ready art was not a hurdle, but rather provided the opportunity to help retailers develop what looks to be a long-term nutrition information program which fits their individual merchandising programs.

Efforts by Retailers

I'd like to take just a moment and share with you what some retailers have done.

Albertson's gave the program a new name: "Lean Facts" now covers the meat case, with durable plasticized case cards, rail cards, posters and mobiles. "Lean Facts" not only provides the nutrition information, but also reinforces the message to consumers that we're producing leaner meat products.

Jewel Food Stores in Chicago also customized the program, calling it "Jewel Nutri-Facts." They put it on a plastic backing for greater durability.

King Soopers, market leader in Denver, first used a generic program and then decided to customize the program to fit their needs.

Stop & Shop, a strong force in New England, is in the middle of developing a program that will blend a promotion program they are involved in with Nutri-Facts information.

Farmer Jack's in Michigan let their customers know about the program before they entered the store and again when they went to the meat department.

Topps, a division of Cullum Companies, in the Buffalo area, tried a new concept. Rather than case cards or signs, they have a Nutrition Center. Here, shoppers are given an explanation about the program and then can find the nutrient information on a particular cut. The opportunity here is that this is permanent. It's a small, durable display that is not going to interfere with any promotions, but still provides the information consumers are looking for.

Safeway, who plan to unveil their program next month, has incorporated the Nutri-Facts program information into the "Snap Program," which stands for "Safeway Nutrition Awareness Program."

Publix, the largest retailer in the southeast, customized the program with posters and rail cards that are spread throughout the meat case.

Tom Thumb, a division of the Cullum Companies based in Dallas, also customized the program with nicely-laminated rail cards and case cards.

Eagle and its parent company, Lucky Stores are based in California, and with stores nationwide, tried something a little unique. They used plasticized feature flags with Nutri-Facts information.

One point I'd like to make here is that before Nutri-Facts broke, Lucky and Eagle were committed with their "5-Star Meat" program, one of their strongest promotions ever. With so many dollars tied up in the program, it would have been very easy for them to put a hold on Nutri-Facts. However, you can see how they incorporated Nutri-Facts into their 5-Star program.

I've shared what some large retailers have done, but what creative things have smaller chains or independents done?

Jerry's in Minnesota only has 6 stores, but yet has completely customized the program and called it "Lean Kuts."

D'Agostino's in Manhattan, New York, with only 19 stores, has been very aggressive with Nutri-Facts in their ads, as well as providing the information in their stores.

Food Emporium, another small chain in New York, customized the program to fit their customers' needs.

We've given presentations to the major food editors in New York on Nutri-Facts. In conversations we've had after these meetings, they all shopped at either D'Agostino's or Food Emporium. *Woman's Day* is already running stories on Nutri-Facts, with more in the months ahead.

For some retailers, Meat Nutri-Facts has become more than just sharing nutrition information. It has become another form of merchandising. Wakefern, or as their stores are named, Shop Rite, was one of the first companies to introduce Nutri-Facts, and has a merchandising tie-in called "Trim-N-Lean." Here, they take a section of the meat case and take *all* the fat off their round and loin cuts. Meat department tonnage has continued to increase and they are testing Trim-N-Lean on an *entire* meat case in a store in New York City, with plans to expand the program to many more stores.

Randall's, the market leader in the Houston area, is using Nutri-Facts, but is also on a similar merchandising program called "Randall's Lean Line." Like Shop Rite, they are maintaining a six-foot section with no fat on round and loin cuts.

Kroger, one of the largest retailers and also one of the first to come out with Meat Nutri-Facts, is currently in a 20-million-dollar meat promotion. Two key elements of the promotion are Nutri-Facts and their new $\frac{1}{4}$ " fat specification. Here, all cuts across the meat case are trimmed to $\frac{1}{4}$ " of fat.

Shop Rite, Randall's and Kroger are all progressive retailers that other retailers watch. I know of many other retailers that are also looking at the same close-trim concept. Merchandising "more red" and "less white" is becoming a reality.

Yankelovich, Skelly and White and the National Consumer Retail Beef Study suggest that's the direction our industry must take. Consumers simply don't want the excess fat and are willing to pay for its removal. It's exciting to see some visible retailers who are actually doing it.

Another exciting development with Nutri-Facts is the way the program has become part of the advertising. The pattern has been that when a retailer introduces the program, such as here with Food Emporium, a full-page ad is used to just explain the program; then the following ads are showing the Nutri-Facts recipes of the items on sale. I might add that this full-color ad with a beef, pork and lamb shot ran in the *New York Times*, one of the most widely read newspapers in the country.

This is what we'd hoped for. For Nutri-Facts to be successful, it had to fit into the existing merchandising program. Meat Nutri-Facts has to become part of the meat department, the same as nutrition information is found in the rest of the supermarket.

That's why this program is so successful. The entire industry – producers, packers and retailers – have unified to get behind a program.

Plans for the Future

What's our next step? Let me share with you some of what we are currently working on to maintain the Nutri-Facts program.

1. Expanded information. As we've said before, when new information becomes available, we will provide it to the industry. New beef, lamb and veal information will be released. Handbook 8-13 for beef will soon be released. In the case of beef, this will give us the nutrient data, not only by grade but also by trim level. Does this mean all beef nutrition information will be out of date? No, it just means they will be able to offer more complete information catered to their merchandising program.

2. More cuts. The nutrient information collected was collected on cuts from all the major primals throughout the carcass. Those cuts not listed in the Nutri-Facts manual can be cross-linked to the major cut from which they came from.

For example, you will not find "top blade steak" in the USDA research. You will find the blade steak. We can use that information for the top blade. We're simply going to match up the information.

3. Recipes. The recipe part of the program has had an overwhelming pickup. Right now, we are looking at ways to offer a much more expanded recipe program. We hope to provide that even when the new beef data is released.

4. 3-Ounce serving. Without question, one of the most common questions that comes up is defining three ounces. We are looking to provide pictures of three-ounce servings, list what cuts make up a three-ounce serving or list how many servings one can expect from a particular cut.

5. Merchandising. If Meat Nutri-Facts has done anything, it's begun a way of thinking; it's given another form of variety that wasn't thought of before. We are looking to expand this section with more ways to merchandise nutrition.

6. Consumer information. We've taken the four brochures that are presently used in the manual and combined them into one. As we did before, this is available in camera-ready copy.

7. Video. The last area, and the one we are probably most excited about, is video.

This project is called "Meat Features," which are point-of-purchase video programs. We can not only show consumers what a 3-ounce portion size is, but also show them how to prepare it and provide nutrition information. Let me show you some examples already taped.

Nutri-Facts has also helped the meat department feel better about the meat department. What I mean is that the people behind the meat case, our sales force, read and hear the same negative editorials about red meat. And every day, they face those customers who also read or hear those negative editorials. Nutri-Facts allows them to share something positive. It's making them feel better about the products they're selling. And what is one of the first rules in selling? Enthusiasm.

For example, I was in a Houston Kroger store two weeks ago. The market manager said, "With the Nutri-Facts display and our new trim standards, I honestly feel better about my meat case."

I was also talking to another vice-president of meat merchandising. He stated that he didn't agree with cutting the fat off or trimming the tails on T-bones, but then he said, "If that's what consumers want, then that's what we'll give them." Meat Nutri-Facts is changing some old ways of thinking.

The momentum and enthusiasm of the retail industry continues to be high. Our challenge now is to maintain that momentum. Our ultimate goal has to be that nutrition information becomes a part of the meat department way of life, the same way it's found throughout the store.

Discussion

D. Buege: Tom, have you given any thought to, or done anything with comparing muscle movements? Because people see this information, it looks good; but they probably still think red meat may be vastly inferior to poultry, for instance. It doesn't seem like comparing poultry cuts with red meats, or perhaps even fish, to give these two a perspective.

T. Flaherty: The poultry people, it was announced at FMI, are coming out with a Nutri-Facts program.

J. Williams: The problem with the fish data, according to the USDA, is that they are not completing the studies for another year. So it looks like the fish data will not be available

for two or three years. This means that someone who is selling fish would have to do his own analysis, so it is difficult to make the composite comparison of fish to poultry and red meat. Poultry not so much a problem, but red meat vs. fish is a problem.

Flaherty: I think you are going to see poultry by the end of 1986. FMI, who helped us with Nutri-Facts, is also working with the poultry people. I don't know if they will do it in the same format we have done. I am assuming they will. If they do, I think you are automatically going to see those comparisons. I think we are going to have to be very careful. If we