



## **Educating Youth About Nutrition**

*News release by the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board*

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DENVER, CO (Feb. 1, 2006) — New products, aggressive market promotions and nutrition education have helped strengthen beef demand in the past five years. Despite this focus on current beef users, however, the Beef Checkoff Program has not ignored its upcoming consumer base — the youth of this country.

Nearly 40,000 teachers and more than 1 million students were reached in 2005 with a variety of programs that teach nutrition at the elementary and secondary school levels. These programs, which incorporate curriculums such as social studies, math, science and health, are part of a campaign to develop and distribute accurate, balanced nutrition information to classrooms.

The Youth Initiatives program is being reviewed by the Youth Education and Information Subcommittee, as well as by the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board and Federation of State Beef Councils, during their meetings this week at the 2006 Cattle Industry Convention in Denver. The program is coordinated on behalf of the Beef Board and state beef councils by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA). Oversight for

the checkoff is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In addition to students reached by classroom materials, more than 80,000 girls and their families were reached with the popular *Fit For a Princess* program, a Junior Girl Scout patch activity that teaches "tween" girls how to eat smart and stay active.

In addition, thanks to the efforts of state beef councils, 135,000 *Beef It Up* brochures, which contain kid-friendly recipes and nutrition advice, were distributed to kids at health fairs and other events.

"It's important that we not lose sight of the next generation of beef consumers, as they're establishing their eating habits right now," according to James Rhein, chairman of the Joint Youth Education & Information Subcommittee. "Many of these young consumers also make suggestions about what they and their families will eat."

In the current fiscal year, the youth program is again focused on the school environment, says Rhein, a cattleman from Mountain Home, Ark. In December, after the release of the USDA's *MyPyramid for Kids*, posters and tear pads were produced for free distribution to

teachers. *Choose Well*, a nutrition and math program in the final stages of development, will teach fourth and fifth graders how to choose a variety of nutrient-rich foods and appropriate portion sizes. The program is funded in part with a grant from Pfizer Animal Health.

The Beef Checkoff Program's youth effort is also supporting school-based solutions to health issues facing American children. In 2004, congress mandated that all school districts receiving USDA funds for meals develop and implement school wellness policies, including both nutritional and physical components, by the

beginning of the 2006-2007 school year. The checkoff is funding a *School Wellness Tool Kit* to serve as a comprehensive resource for anyone wanting to participate in this process at the local level.

"We need to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to providing materials that schools will use and fit into their standard curriculum," Rhein says. "The beef checkoff has always been respected by teachers for its ability to do just that."

The *School Wellness Tool Kit* will be available for distribution on March 1. To order a free kit, call 1-800-368-3138.



**Editor's Note:** This release is adapted from a news release distributed by the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board. For the original release, click the "Press Releases" link at [www.beefboard.org](http://www.beefboard.org).