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CONTACT: Meghan Pusey, (303) 850-3340 or mpusey@beef.org



AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION CERTIFICATION GIVES CONSUMERS AND RETAILERS ANOTHER REASON TO LOVE BEEF

The heart-check mark spotlights three heart-healthy beef cuts in the meat case

DENVER (February 15, 2011) – Now there's another reason to love beef -- the Beef Checkoff Program is proud to announce that the American Heart Association has listed three beef cuts as part of its Food Certification Program. This program helps healthy consumers over age 2 identify foods that meet criteria for saturated fat and cholesterol when labeled with the association's heart-check mark.

The three beef cuts that met the American Heart Association's criteria for extra lean, and are now certified to display the heart-check mark include:

- Boneless Top Sirloin Petite Roast (select grade)
- Top Sirloin Filet (select grade)
- Top Sirloin Kabob (select grade)

"We are extremely thrilled to receive the American Heart Association certification because for consumers, it represents the independent voice of a trusted health organization," says Margie Hande, a cow/calf operator from Amidon, ND and chair of the checkoff retail committee. "Today the Beef Checkoff Program has added another nutrition success point to its growing roster to show that a serving of extra lean beef can be part of an overall sensible eating plan. The nutrients in lean beef, such as protein, iron and zinc, help people feel satisfied longer and get more nutrition from their calories without sacrificing taste."

The American Heart Association's heart-check mark is the one of the most trusted icons on food packaging today – and it continues to resonate with health-conscious shoppers, even in a challenging economy. In fact, more than 83 percent of consumers have an aided awareness of the heart-check mark and nearly 75 percent of primary grocery shoppers say the heart-check mark improves the likelihood that they'll buy a product

This certification allows retailers to display the heart-check mark on fresh case beef packages; promoting the health benefits of a serving of these particular beef cuts to their customers. This is good news, as many of the food industry's top brands have certified products. The mark has been shown to influence sales by as much as 5 percent. In addition, The Beef Checkoff Trade Association Certification simplifies a retailer's processing and related costs to participate in the American Heart Association's heart-check mark program such as certain fees waived as well as significant discounts to participate.

In addition to the three products certified by the American Heart Association, there are many popular beef cuts that meet government guidelines for lean for a single serving, including favorites such as Sirloin, Flank steak, Tenderloin, T-Bone steak and 95 percent lean Ground Beef. With more than 29 lean beef cuts, it's easy to build great-tasting and healthy meals that include America's favorite protein – beef – with vegetables, fruits and whole grains.

"Lean beef helps Americans build a healthy diet and manage their waistline because one 3 ounce serving provides ten essential nutrients for about 154 calories, helping you meet the new Dietary Guidelines," says Cheryl Hendricks, a registered dietitian with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, which contracts to manage retail marketing efforts for the beef checkoff. "With today's focus on obesity, lean beef is a solution that satisfies our appetites and provides more nutrients for fewer calories than many other foods."

For retailers, the checkoff-funded integrated promotions feature merchandising elements where it matters most – the point of purchase. As part of the integrated promotions, there is a comprehensive campaign including on-pack labels, recipes and more to help drive awareness, traffic to lean beef cuts in the meat case and ultimately product sales.

"Knowing that 99 percent of primary grocery shoppers think lowering saturated fat is important to managing overall health and wellness, we are pleased to be able to provide the three American Heart Association-certified beef cuts as another option in creating an overall sensible eating plan," says Hendricks. "Looking forward, we're not stopping at just three cuts. We are in the process of obtaining certification for some of our other extra lean beef choices as well."

To learn more about receiving the American Heart Association's certification, please visit www.BeefRetail.org.

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About The Beef Checkoff Program

The Beef Checkoff Program (www.MyBeefCheckoff.com) was established as part of the 1985 Farm Bill. The checkoff assesses \$1 per head on the sale of live domestic and imported cattle, in addition to a comparable assessment on imported beef and beef products. States retain up to 50 cents on the dollar and forward the other 50 cents per head to the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board, which administers the national checkoff program, subject to USDA approval

About the National Cattlemen's Beef Association

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association is a contractor to the national Beef Checkoff Program, which is administered by the Cattlemen's Beef Board. Consumer-focused and producer-directed, NCBA and its state beef council partners work together as a marketing organization on behalf of the largest segment of the food and fiber industry.

About the Heart-Check Mark

The American Heart Association established the heart-check mark in 1995 to give consumers an easy, reliable system for identifying heart-healthy foods as a first step in building a sensible eating plan. Approximately 800 products that bear the heart-check mark have been screened and verified by the association to meet criteria for saturated fat and cholesterol.

To learn more about the heart-check mark, and to see a complete list of certified products and participating companies, visit heartcheckmark.org.