



Purchasing local beef can be cost prohibitive (but not impossible). That is a realistic barrier that schools face. It's important to recognize that local beef programs can involve donated beef, but schools can also purchase beef. It's important to assess what will work for each individual district and then put a plan together based on that assessment.

Federal procurement regulations regarding the purchase of food for the National School Lunch program requires free and open competition and ensuring the lowest price is paid. The school lunch fund is supported by USDA reimbursement and should be sufficient to support the purchase of foods for the program. The cost of local beef tends to be higher than what can be purchased from a larger distributor due to the cost of the animal, slaughter, processing, packaging and distribution.

Some options for beginning a local beef program that involves the purchase of the beef could be to start small like with a Local Foods day and event, or a Harvest of the Month.

School foodservices recommend budgeting school meals over a semester or year, rather than by meal, in order to balance the cost of more and less expensive food products." This resource also points out that producers can market the less expensive cuts of meat to schools and the premium cuts to other markets. Cull cattle that are less marketable to the larger market can also be sold to the schools.

Likewise, beef boosters programs- donating beef to schools- allows producers to donate animals that are less than market quality and wouldn't receive top dollar. This works for school meals as most of the beef used is in the form of ground beef. When a school is fortunate to receive an animal that allows them to use higher quality cuts for menu items such as stew meat and roasts, they will do so. I have also heard of schools using higher quality cuts of meat for fund raising events (raffling packages of steaks, meat bundles) and serving the cuts for special events such as prom.

Receiving donated beef has allowed the schools to promote local producers, educate students on where food comes from, and connect with the community. Beef Booster programs frees up funds to be used for equipment needed to handle and cook the meat. There are benefits to using donated beef. There are also many benefits involved when local beef is purchased, and USDA supports that as well and has paved some routes to make it possible. The capacity of each district to do so is unique and does take assessing and planning.

# Nebraska Beef in Schools

## *Mission Statement:*

*Promoting Nebraska Beef for Schools lunch program & encouraging beef education and nutrition throughout Nebraska schools.*

## *About Nebraska Beef in Schools Lunch Program*

A trend is catching on in Nebraska—Beef is what's for lunch in schools. Great quality, Nebraska produced beef served more frequently in schools across Nebraska.

Local Cattlemen groups and other agricultural organizations have organized across the state to increase the offerings of beef in school lunches. Nebraska Cattlemen have showcased the successes of some of these programs recently, and interest is growing as others cattlemen and school districts explore the possibilities of adding more beef to the menu.

At its October meeting, the Nebraska Cattlemen Board of directors appointed a working group to put together a plan to gather information from programs already in place and for those who might want to start a program. The board strongly supported the work of its local affiliates in organizing and implementing programs across Nebraska.

The working group had its first organizational call in late October. Members of the working group are Brenda Masek (Purdum), Chair, Jerry Underwood (Alliance), Naomi Loomis (Alliance), Rob Marsh (Belvidere), Gregg Wiedel (Hebron) and Stephen Sunderman (Norfolk). NC Staff members are also supporting the group as it gathers information.



*If you are interested in implementing a "Nebraska Beef in Schools" initiative in your area, please contact the Nebraska Cattlemen office at (402) 475-2333 for more information.*

# Nebraska Beef in Schools

## *How to Implement Project in Your School*

This is a basic guideline on how to implement this idea in your area. Please note that every individual program is different.

1. Contact your superintendent and ask them if they would be willing to present the idea to your school district board.
2. Contact local producers, businesses, local Nebraska Cattlemen affiliate and community to discuss commitment required for cattle, monetary donations etc.
3. Prior to meeting with the school board have a plan in place with details and names of committed participants. You may also wish to have a committee set up for this project for future tasks that may be implemented as a program.
4. Once your program is approved by school contact a federally inspected slaughter house to see if they would process your donated animals.
5. Be sure to keep your head school cook in the loop throughout the process.
6. Kickoff event with the school. Be sure to advertise those who donated and were involved in the project.

## *How to be Successful*

Having community support that believes in your school system and the youth for tomorrow is key to making this program successful.



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# Nebraska Beef in Schools

## *Talking Points*

As we are all excited about this program please be courteous of all types of beef producers when visiting with the media. Below are a few talking points to remember while having conversation with the media and other sources at your school event or even on the streets of your community. If your school decides to host a media event, please contact Nebraska Cattlemen as we would love to be there in support of you and your unique program. Also, for additional talking points or media help, please contact Talia Goes at [tgoes@necattlemen.org](mailto:tgoes@necattlemen.org).

- Please remember that the Nebraska Beef in Schools projects across the state are meant to enhance the relationship between the local producers and the community via the school. Refrain from making comments about the quality of beef being better. Talk about the opportunity the program gives to serve more beef in the school.
- All of the Nebraska Beef in Schools programs are pertinent to the community coming together to make it happen. Without community strength, the programs would not be successful. It is 100% a community driven task. Allows students to interact with business and industries in their community to create a sense of collaboration and pride.
- This is an opportunity for producers and local businesses to give back to the community by offering beef or monetary donations for the schools to serve the local students.
- Nebraska Cattlemen have used this program to explore the possibilities of adding more beef to the menu across the state.
- Nebraska Beef in Schools helps school aged children learn about where their beef comes from. Informed choice is a huge factor in today's industry. Learning things early such as where your food comes from, how it is grown, who grows/raises it, and the purpose of agriculture helps the beef industry long term.
- The beef cattle industry is Nebraska's single largest industry and powers the state's economy with 20,000 beef cow operations. For every ONE person in the state there are FOUR beef animals. Nebraska has a unique mix of natural resources that provide for an abundant amount of cattle. For more facts visit: [www.nebeef.org](http://www.nebeef.org)



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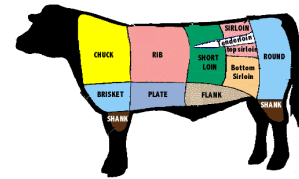
# Nebraska Beef in Schools



This fact sheet provides information for meat specifications that covers food safety requirements for the slaughter and processing of beef and the requirements of the National School Lunch Program. In addition to beef, this information can also be applied to pork.

## Slaughter and Processing

- Donated **and** purchased beef must be slaughtered, processed, and packaged in a USDA federally-inspected facility.
  - When meat is handled in this way, and **ONLY** when it is handled in this way, will the package have the USDA stamp.
  - A list of USDA inspected facilities can be found on the Nebraska Cattlemen website at: <http://nebraskacattlemen.org/federalslaughter.aspx>.
- A school must be prepared to provide the following information to the processor:
  - Cuts of beef desired
    - Types and acceptable weight ranges
  - Ground beef must be no more than 30% fat.
    - Processor must provide official crediting documentation to verify the fat content and the documentation kept on file at the school.
  - Packaging requirements
    - Size of packages – For example, ground beef in 10 lb. rather than 2lb. tubes.
  - Portion size (raw weight) that will yield appropriate cooked weight to meet meal pattern.



## Transportation of Meat

- The specification must include acceptable temperature ranges depending on whether the beef is transported in a fresh or frozen state in temperature controlled trucks. Frozen meat should stay frozen and fresh meat should be held at a temperature of 41°F or below.

## Storage of Processed Product

- The school's food safety plan should include specific information concerning the proper receiving, storing, and handling of the beef whether it is stored on- or off-site.



## Meeting Nutrition Standards

- A cooked portion must provide 2 ounces of lean meat per serving
- Ground beef must be no more than 30% fat

## Procurement

- When beef is purchased and/or processing paid by the school, proper procurement procedures must be met.



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The Nebraska Cattlemen are excited in the success of agriculture education in your school district, and we hope that you will explore the possibilities of adding more agriculture education to help us education the students in Nebraska more about beef production and beef nutrition.

Additional resources can be found at:

[www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com](http://www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com)

[www.agfoundation.org/free-resources/](http://www.agfoundation.org/free-resources/)

[www.onthefarmstem.com/resources](http://www.onthefarmstem.com/resources)

Additional materials available. If you need more information or additional materials, please let us know.

- Home on the Range – lesson plan with materials
- Beef's Top 10 – one-page colored flyer
- Beef Lifecycle – two-page colored flyer
- Protein Benefits – two-page colored flyer
- What comes from Beef Cattle – one-page colored flyer
- Activity Book – 6 pages of activities
- Kid Friendly recipes – 7 beef recipes
- A Doctor for Cow – reading book
- Pasture to Plate – reading book
- Beef display – large backdrop for presentations
- Cattle and People – large backdrop for presentations (created around the A Doctor for Cows book)

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*Working for Nebraska beef producers - pasture to plate*



# CATTLE & PEOPLE

ARE MORE SIMILAR THAN YOU MAY THINK



**NUTRITION**

PEOPLE MAY ASK A DIETITIAN FOR ADVICE ON NUTRITION AND CATTLE HAVE NUTRITIONISTS THAT MAKE SURE THEY GET THE NUTRIENTS THEY NEED





**ANIMAL HEALTH**

JUST LIKE KIDS GET VACCINATED BEFORE GOING TO SCHOOL, CALVES GET VACCINES TO KEEP THEM FROM GETTING SICK





**VETERINARIANS**

SIMILAR TO DOCTORS AND NURSES HELPING PEOPLE WHO ARE ILL, SOME VETERINARIANS ARE DOCTORS FOR CATTLE





**SUSTAINABILITY**

CATTLE HAVE THE UNIQUE ABILITY TO TURN GRASS INTO PROTEIN AND RANCHERS TAKE CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT BY CAREFULLY MANAGING GRASSLANDS

