Celebrating Beef Cattle and the Beef Industry

In May we celebrate the national beef month in the agriculture world. As of January 1, there were 91.9 million head of cattle and calves on farms in the United States. National Beef Month is a time to show our appreciation for the cattle ranchers who rise before the sun each day to provide food for the world. More than ever, ranchers are sharing their stories on social media platforms to share what animal agriculture means to them and why it is important. As a result, they are gaining increased recognition for their role in sustainability and global food security.

Educating consumers about beef nutrition is also an important part of Beef Month. Beef is healthy as it is rich in protein to provide energy and help build muscle. A single 3-ounce serving supplies 25 grams of protein, about 50% of the recommended daily value. Which is great for athletes, growing children, and anyone on the go. Eating beef provides essential nutrients, including protein, iron, and B vitamins.

All beef must meet a certain set of safety standards and follow strict government guidelines for it to be able to make it to your plate, with all of this in place you can ensure that the meat you are eating is safe. The United States produced 27.95 billion pounds of beef in 2021, producing the most beef in the World. On average, a single American consumes about 65 pounds of beef in a single year. The U.S. has the fourth largest cattle inventory in the world, with more than 94 million head of beef cattle being produced by 1 million beef producers in the U.S. Of these operations, 97% are family owned. The U.S. provides 25 percent of the world’s beef but only has 10 percent of the world’s cattle. Texas is the top producer of beef in the U.S., followed by Nebraska, Kansas, California, and Oklahoma.

In terms of the Kansas agriculture industry, the beef cattle sector is the single largest sector and is recognized nationally and globally for raising healthy cattle and producing high-quality beef. Kansas is ranked in the top five for the largest number of cattle ranches and feed yards and has a significant role in the nation’s beef processing as well. Resources to support beef cattle are plentiful in Kansas, from the abundant feed supply to the pasturial to the efforts to conserve the water supply. Beef production is sustainable as it only accounts for 3.3 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S.

Kansas ranked third nationally with 6.25 million cattle on ranches and feed yards as of January 1, 2023. That is a little over twice the state’s human population of more than 2.9 million people. Meatpacking prepared meat products manufacturing makes up the largest share of the food processing industry in the state. This manufacturing industry provides employment for over 31,440 people in Kansas. Beef production is useful as more the 99 percent of the animals are used, 65% for meat production, and 34% goes toward byproducts like leather, gelatin, cosmetics,
and medicines. Beef cattle farming and ranching have a direct output of about $6.3 billion and employ nearly 34,130 Kansans.

As you can see, there is plenty to appreciate when it comes to beef. We are thankful for the Kansas ranchers who care for their cattle and help bring so much to our tables and so much more. So, celebrate beef and the people who raise it!

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