

Did You Know?



If you are hoping for a tender piece of meat to grill on the outdoor barbecue this summer, your task could be a bit easier, thanks to ARS research.

ARS conducts extensive research on meat safety and quality, and as part of that work, ARS researchers have developed technology that predicts beef and pork tenderness.

In 2001, scientists at the ARS Roman L. Hruska U.S. Meat Animal Research Center at Clay Center, NE, devised a system to determine meat tenderness—without cutting it, cooking it, or tasting it. The scientists have worked cooperatively with the beef and pork industries to make sure the technology works on a commercial scale, not just in the laboratory.

The technology will make it easier for the industry to market beef and pork for their best end-use. One commercial company has implemented the technology to ensure the tenderness of its branded line of beef products.

The discovery is part of ongoing work at Clay Center on meat tenderness. In the 1990s, several scientists helped pinpoint a major gene in cattle responsible for boosting muscle size and leanness. Since then, ARS researchers have added to their understanding of this gene and are working to find optimal ways to use it alongside other genes to make beef more healthful, without sacrificing taste and tenderness.

Predicting meat tenderness and exploring the genetics behind it are just some of the ways ARS scientists are working to help put the best piece of meat on your summer grill.

Did you know that...

- Total U.S. beef consumption in 2010 was 26.4 billion pounds? [Source](#)
- Average U.S. per capita consumption of red meat (retail weight) in 2009 was 112.3 pounds? [Source](#)

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