

## FACT SHEET: Natural Beef

<p><b>What is Natural Beef?</b></p>	<p>By definition, most beef is natural. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), natural may be used on a beef product label if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The product does not contain any artificial flavor or flavoring, coloring ingredient, or chemical preservative or any other artificial or synthetic ingredient; and</li> <li>• The product and its ingredients are not more than minimally processed (FSIS Directive 7220.1 Policy Memo 55 "Natural Claims").</li> </ul>
<p><b>Natural Beef Production</b></p>	<p>The government's definition of natural does not relate to the way animals are raised or what they are fed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural beef can be from cattle finished on a grain diet, those raised entirely on grass or cattle that are raised according to National Organic Program standards as long as it is minimally processed and contains no additives such as preservatives, artificial flavors, colors or additional ingredients.</li> <li>• "Natural" beef programs are largely defined and regulated by the company that owns the brand. While some "natural" labels are defined to mean no growth promotants or antibiotics, this definition is not universal. Under USDA's definition, most beef at the grocery store is natural because it is minimally processed and there are no additives.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Some "natural" beef programs only restrict antibiotic and implant use during the last 100 to 120 days prior to slaughter (University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Nutritious Value of Natural Beef</b></p>	<p>Beef marketed as "natural" has the same nutritional profile as other types of beef (American Council on Science and Health report, "The Role of Beef in the American Diet," January 2003).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beef has eight times more vitamin B12, six times more zinc and two and a half times more iron than a skinless chicken breast.</li> <li>• 29 cuts of beef (including 15 of the 20 most popular cuts) meet government guidelines for lean like the tenderloin, sirloin and 95% lean ground beef.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Safety and Inspection</b></p>	<p>Like all beef, "natural" marketed products go through a rigorous inspection process and are subject to strict government guidelines to ensure the highest level of safety. All U.S. cattle are inspected by a USDA public health veterinarian before entering the packing plant and those with any signs of illness are not allowed into the food supply.</p>
<p><b>Natural Beef Labeling</b></p>	<p>The government definition for natural applies to all meat that does not have an ingredient label, which is added if the product includes a preservative, artificial color or flavoring or marinade. Currently there is no government certification program for "natural" food products, so companies are free to create their own guidelines for what natural means. In 2001, 75 percent of U.S. consumers believed that "natural" and organic were the same thing (Agri-Food Trade Service, December 2005).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A "natural" label can encompass a wide range of production parameters so it is up to producers to decide how to raise their cattle and market their beef.</li> <li>• "Natural" beef producers may raise cattle adhering to specific conditions in order to brand their products with claims such as: "Raised Without Added Hormones;" "No Antibiotics Used;" "Corn Fed;" "Always Vegetarian Fed;" and "Free Range."</li> <li>• Many claims, such as "raised without hormones," "no antibiotics," "free-range," "pasture-raised," "grass-finished" or "grain-fed" have to be approved by USDA's FSIS before they can be used on a label (Dr. Steve Blezinger, Nutritional and Management Consultant).</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Natural Beef Market</b></p>	<p>Many large processors and retail/foodservice outlets now offer "natural" beef products, such as Tyson, Wal-Mart, Good Times Burgers and Chipotle. The "natural" and organic beef market segment, though growing, remains a small portion of total beef dollar and volume sales in retail.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The volume of "natural" and organic beef sales in the fourth quarter 2005 comprised 1.1 percent of all fresh beef sold in retail supermarkets during the time period (FreshLook Marketing scanner data).</li> <li>• FreshLook data estimates that there were 11 million pounds of "natural" and organic beef purchased in retail supermarkets in the fourth quarter of 2005 compared to 1 billion pounds in total beef sales.</li> </ul>

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