

# BEEF + LAMB

## NEW ZEALAND

11 March 2015

Louise McIntyre & Elizabeth Aitken  
Ministry of Health  
PO Box 5013  
WELLINGTON

To Louise and Elizabeth

### RE: FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT EATING AND ACTIVITY GUIDELINES STATEMENTS (EAGS) FOR NEW ZEALAND ADULTS

Firstly, thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the above mentioned draft document. In addition to today's email and tracked document, I would like to express my concern that the draft document currently pinpoints red meat as a food linked with cancer and the overall tone of the document does not profile lean red meat as a key, nutritious core food. Currently there are over 40 lean cuts of beef and lamb under the Heart Foundation's Two Ticks programme, of which includes healthy core foods. Alignment between the Ministry of Health and the National Heart Foundation recommendations of what constitutes a core food is paramount for consumer and health professional understanding and education.

In its current format, the document does not provide enough context for New Zealanders, given the recommendations are based on overseas research where eating patterns differ than they do here in New Zealand. In addition, the evidence base drawn from the WCRF and its recommendations around red meat intake are based on association, not cause, and has been heavily criticised, hence the references I have provided in the email and in our own Role of Red Meat in a Healthy New Zealand Diet report.

Serious consideration should be given to the recommendation which says to eat less red meat as general population advice and any future deliberation on decreasing serving size advice, when there are many New Zealanders who are not meeting an adequate intake of dietary iron; the Ministry of Health recognises and states in the draft, the issue of low iron intake, particularly amongst women. As red meat is an excellent source of well absorbed haem iron, this needs to be acknowledged in the overall guidelines statements.

I would also like to highlight the amount of work the beef and lamb industry does to contribute to a healthier New Zealand population:

*Resources for Maori* – in collaboration with Toi Tanagata, over 60,000 copies of the consumer resource *Nga Miti He Kai Reka* has been produced for over a decade by Beef + Lamb New Zealand providing advice around healthy eating, in particular recognition of the importance of iron-rich foods for Maori.

*Resources for Pacific peoples* – further to the document draft comment on the three Pacific meal posters, this was an industry-led project by Beef + Lamb New Zealand from its initiation in 2003. To date over 10,000 copies of the posters have been distributed with the latest revised version done in collaboration with the Heart Foundation's Pacific Heartbeat. See ANA abstract attached to email.

*Reduction of total and saturated fat* – in response to comment in draft document in appendix 3 on page 59 where it states mostly saturated fat from meat, the beef and lamb industry's Quality Mark programme has led to a reduction of 30% total fat and 65% less saturated fat in the meat supply. See NZ Medical Journal paper by Laugesen attached to email. The last adult nutrition survey highlights beef and lamb contributed

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only 6.8% of total fat intake, and 7.3% of saturated fat intake, both having reduced slightly from the previous national survey.

To emphasise red meat's place in a heart healthy diet for New Zealanders, Beef + Lamb New Zealand has worked closely with the Heart Foundation for the last two decades. To this end, over 40 lean beef and lamb cuts meet the criteria for Two Ticks having less than 4% saturated fat. The evolution of the Tick programme to include Two Ticks was established to recognise core foods as part of a healthy diet, of which lean red meat fits, as mentioned above.

In addition the industry has been involved with the Pie Group, which was collaboration between industry and the Heart Foundation to improve the fat and sodium content of pies in response to the Food and Beverage Classification System.

As a globally-recognised industry which provides quality, nutritious and economical options for all New Zealanders, I hope the above highlighted initiatives and the attached evidence supporting red meat's role in a healthy diet is recognised in the wording of the guidelines statements for adults.

Yours sincerely



Fiona Greig  
Nutrition Manager

Enc: Email and attachments

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