Common Myths about Beef

**Myth #1 Methane from cattle causes a lot of global warming.**
* The entire livestock industry contributes about 3% of total U.S. greenhouse gases, and beef cattle are just a fraction of the total livestock industry.
* In Clearing the Air: Livestock’s Contribution to Climate Change, University of California, Davis Associate Professor Frank Mitloehner, an expert on livestock and greenhouse gases (GHG), and his colleagues demonstrate that many conclusions from the United Nations report Livestock’s Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options are inaccurate.
* Recent claims that diary cattle are the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the state of California are completely based on extrapolating speculations in a 1938 physiology book!

**Myth #2 Ranchers don’t care about the environment.**
* American cattle farmers and ranchers have embraced the values of stewardship and caring for the environment for generations. Those that truly care about agriculture are working to develop sustainable agriculture and pass down the lifestyle they love to future generations. Also, the land kept as open space for cattle grazing suffers much less environmental impacts than developed land.

**Myth #3 Modern agriculture is big business and no longer family farms.**
* More than 97% of U.S. beef cattle farms and ranches are family farms. Beef comes from American families, not factory farms. Caring for animals is a family tradition and a way of life that is passed down and improved upon from generation to generation.

**Myth #4 Grazing cattle is a waste of what could be good farmland.**
* Grazing cattle more than doubles the land that produces food because more than two-thirds of the land used for grazing in the United States is not suitable for raising crops.

**Myth #5 Cattle destroy native plants and compete with wildlife.**
* Properly managed cattle grazing can promote regrowth of beneficial grasses while protecting against erosion and forest fires. Land that provides food and open space for cattle also offers a home to threatened and endangered species.

**Myth #6 Beef is unhealthy and high in fat.**
* Today's beef is leaner than ever before and has good health benefits.
* Twenty-nine cuts of beef are considered lean, including tenderloin, sirloin and 95% lean ground beef. These cuts have no more than 10 grams of total fat, 95 milligrams of cholesterol, and 4.5 grams of saturated fat per 3-ounce serving. Additionally, 20 of the 29 lean beef cuts have, on average, only 1 more gram more saturated fat than a skinless chicken breast per 3-ounce serving.
* Beef is naturally has a lot of nutrients, which helps you get more nutrition from your calories. Compared to a skinless chicken breast, beef has...
  - 8 times more vitamin B12 (a vitamin only found in food products from animals)
  - 6 times more zinc and
  - 2 ½ times more iron!

**Myth #7 Conventional beef is full of hormones and antibiotics.**
* Conventional beef producers are regulated in their use of hormones and antibiotics by the USDA to
prevent residues in the meat.

* The level of hormones given to beef cattle in the feedlot is not enough to affect the meat and have health consequences for those eating it. In fact, a serving of soybeans, lettuce, or even chocolate ice cream contains significantly more estrogen than a serving of beef!

**Myth #8 Organic beef is the only humane way to raise beef.**

* In general, beef cattle are raised on pastures and open ranges for most of their life. Organic beef actually does not mean that the animal was raised on pasture for its entire life. Rather, it means the animal was fed an organic diet and not treated except with a small number of approved organic medications. Many organic beef animals are also grass fed and kept on an open range for their entire life. However, this is not a guarantee in organic systems. Some of the large organic ranches still use feedlots and grain to fatten their animals.

* When an organic animal gets sick, they are treated either with organic treatments or by permanently removing that animal from the organic program and putting it into a non-organic program so that conventional treatments can be used. This is done because conventional treatment methods are often more effective.

* Some organic producers may have more trouble treating harmful parasites if they are unable to get permission to use the most effective treatments.

Source: www.explorebeef.org