

BEEF

Educator | VermontHarvestoftheMonth.org

Harvest of the Month provides resources for the cafeteria, classroom, and community to promote the use of local, seasonal foods.

Benefits

Beef is an excellent source of 10 essential nutrients: Protein, zinc, vitamin B12, selenium, phosphorus, choline, niacin, vitamin B6, iron and riboflavin.

History of Cattle

Cows have been used for many centuries for meat, milk, and labor. Cows are descendents of their wild ancestors called Aurochs [awr-oks], which originated in India but spread to China, the Middle East, Africa and Europe. The Aurochs were then domesticated and brought to the West by Christopher Columbus in 1493. Now cows are found all over the world and their meat is used in many different types of cuisine.

Fun Facts

There are 5 terms to describe cattle:

Bull - Male animal

Steer - Male animal that was castrated and cannot breed

Cow - Female animal that has had a calf

Heifer - Female animal that has not had a calf

Calf - Young male or female animal

- The hide from one cow can make 144 baseballs or 12 basketballs.
- The average American eats about 200 pounds of beef each year.
- Cows are Ruminants which means their stomachs have four separate compartments to digest their food multiple times.
- Beef is a great source of protein and amino acids to help you grow.

Reading Corner

» *The Cow on the Roof*, by Eric Maddern

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

Science | Chew It Twice

Supplies needed:

2 paper plates, cut grass, beef jerky (small pieces, enough for the class), 2 magnets (one with a pompom glued to it), poster board with cow stomach drawn or printed

Directions:

- Place the grass on one plate and the beef jerky on the other. Tell your students you have a snack for them and place the plates on either side of a table or desk.
- Now ask your student to stand on the side of the table or desk that has the snack they would prefer to eat. Discuss if anyone chose the grass and why or why not they made that choice.
- Explain that humans don't usually eat grass because it contains cellulose that is hard to digest.
- Now have your student help make a list of different kinds of foods made with beef. Explain how we have those foods because cows eat grass lands that cannot be used for crops and converts the cellulose into meat.
- Now bring out the poster board and magnets, use the magnet with the pompom as "grass" and the other magnet on the opposite side of the poster board to move the "grass" from one chamber of the stomach to the next.
- Explain to your students that cows are ruminants meaning they have multiple compartments in their stomach to help them digest food better and demonstrate the moment of food through their digestive system with the magnets.