

**USDA, ARS, BELTSVILLE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTER
NUTRIENT DATA LABORATORY**

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“THE GROUND BEEF CALCULATOR”

Ground beef accounts for up to half of the beef consumed in the US. It has been estimated that American consumers purchase more than 5.2 billion pounds of ground beef annually from retail stores. Ground beef is unique in that it is available in a broad range of products, varying widely in fat content. To provide consumers and industry with the nutrient composition information for this variable product, a study was designed to establish the mathematical relationship between the various nutrients and the total fat content of raw ground beef. Regression equations were determined for both raw and cooked ground beef. A computer module (the Ground Beef Calculator) based on these regression equations was developed to support the dissemination of nutrient profiles for ground beef products containing any fat level between 5% and 30% fat. The computer module may be launched directly from the home page of the NDL web site (www.ars.usda.gov/nutrientdata) or from within the online search program for the USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference (SR). The user can specify the level of fat or lean for which a nutrient profile is desired. The user can also specify whether the profile is for raw or cooked product - broiled or pan-broiled patties, pan-browned crumbles, or baked loaf. The output provides estimates for moisture, protein, fat (including total, saturated and trans fatty acids), ash, minerals, B-vitamins, folate, choline, vitamins A, E, and K.

SR serves as the core for many government, commercial, and international databases, including the NHANES “What we eat in America” survey. The USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) also recognizes SR as the authoritative database for meat products. FSIS has specified SR and the Ground Beef Calculator as the source of nutrient information for labeling of ground beef products in its proposed regulation for labeling of single ingredient meats. The availability of the Ground Beef Calculator will also result in cost savings to the beef industry as vendors prepare for mandatory labeling. The Ground Beef Calculator will be used in many other settings such as clinical practice, food service, research, media relations, and in everyday life, providing Americans the nutrition information required to make healthy food choices.