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## MEAT YIELD AND QUALITY :

### MARITIME STUDY FINDS NO DIFFERENCE IN MEAT QUALITY BETWEEN LOCAL AND WESTERN BEEF

E. Charmley, AAFC, NS

Over 70 % of beef consumed in the Maritimes originates outside the region. This is in spite of the fact that the Maritimes has a severely underutilized land base that could easily raise more than enough beef for the plates of Atlantic Canada. The reasons for this conundrum are many fold. However, there is a belief that locally produced beef is inferior to beef "from away".

As part of a co-ordinated plan to increase consumption of Maritime beef, the three provincial departments of agriculture, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Hub Meat Packers, Moncton, conducted a comprehensive study of beef quality. A western supply beef was secured from a local supermarket chain and compared with beef from the local packer. Locally packed beef originated from three sources: Maritime finished on either potato-based rations, Maritime finished on non-potato-based rations and beef raised in Quebec. All beef was Canada grade AA and was aged for 14 days. The results gathered from almost 200 carcasses confirmed that there were no major differences in beef quality when assessed using trained taste panels and instrumental analysis. Where significant differences were found these were very small and considered too small to influence consumer preference. In addition, these differences did not consistently favour one type of beef over another. These results show convincingly that Maritime-raised beef is not inferior to other beef when grade and aging are standardized. The Maritimes can produce great beef. This information should help increase market share for Maritime beef.

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