



November 28, 2017

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20250

RE: 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans Listening Session

Dear Secretary Perdue;

On behalf of the United States Cattlemen's Association (USCA) and its nationwide membership of cow-calf producers, backgrounders and feedlot operators, we thank you for the opportunity to comment on the *2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

During the process of writing the *2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, USCA participated in stakeholder discussions hosted by the U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Historically, the nutrition guides have been used to adopt new scientific findings and public health marketing techniques into the diets of American citizens. Unfortunately, as we witnessed in the findings of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, these nutrition guides can stray from the sound science they are built on if we do not make it a clear priority to support guidelines that are based on current science and research.

Our citizens benefit from the most bountiful and safest food supplies in the world and the dietary guidelines ensure that Americans seek out and take advantage of those foods that provide the best nutrition. As we look ahead to the *2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, it is important that we provide multiple opportunities for Americans to 'get it right' when it comes to consuming the correct amount of macro- and micro-nutrients.

Of the three macronutrients, protein serves as the building block of life. Protein's basic structure is a chain of amino acids that are used in every cell of the human body. Obtaining a more complete amino acid profile can be accomplished through the consumption of animal products. In particular, beef provides 22 grams of protein per 3 ounce serving, including micronutrients such as iron, zinc and B vitamins that cannot be found in plant-based foods. These nutrients are essential for the cognitive health and brain function of the U.S. population.

The guidelines should refer specifically to the consumption of beef and other red meat as a proven choice of quality protein. We were disappointed to see the only mention of red meat in the *2015 Dietary Guidelines* was contained within a footnote and not within the actual text of the document. The *2020 Dietary Guidelines* need to expand on this mention by acknowledging that meat is a protein source. Additionally, the importance of "whole foods" should be included in the

next set of guidelines as opposed to laboratory-grown meat that is mechanically made. A focus on achieving a sustainable micronutrient balance through nutrient dense “whole foods” such as animal products will be essential in the next edition of the guidelines.

As stated by the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, “..., as demonstrated in the food pattern modeling of the Healthy-U.S.-style and Healthy Mediterranean-style patterns, lean meats can be a part of a healthy dietary pattern.” Lean cuts of red meat remain one of the best sources of protein and essential micronutrients. The *2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* should follow the recommendations made by peer-reviewed and published scientific research that demonstrate the role of red meats in a healthy diet.

### **Conclusion**

USCA looks forward to participating in the discussions that will shape the *2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. We remain in support of guidelines that are committed to following sound science and best available research, not political ideals and philosophies. USCA requests that the dietary guidelines remain within the scope of nutrition and diet, and reflect that red meat is an essential part of a healthy whole food diet. Recent research supports this conclusion and we hope the next edition of the guidelines will stress the value and importance of red meat nutrition.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you require additional information or wish to discuss this issue further. You may reach out to USCA's Washington, D.C. office at (202) 546-4064.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kenny Graner". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Kenny Graner  
President  
United States Cattlemen's Association