

# BetterFed Beef conducts tenderness study with N.D. State

FARGO, N.D. — North Dakota State University's Meat Science Laboratory, a facility of the university's College of Agriculture, recently worked with Paynesville, BetterFed Beef to conduct a study measuring the tenderness of its beef.

BetterFed, a national e-commerce company, offers a specialized product, Certified ONYA® beef, which the company sources directly from farmers and producers to sell on its online storefront.

The company recently approached NDSU for their assistance in conducting a third-party, unbiased study comparing their ribeye steak against American Wagyu ribeye steak. Dr. Rob Maddock, Professor at the university and manager of its Meat Science Lab, facilitated and executed the study.

"It is rewarding having private companies come to us for our expertise and resources," says Dr. Maddock. "NDSU is a nationally recognized research university with incredible capabilities, especially in meat and animal sciences, and we are happy to assist companies like BetterFed Beef."

Ten purebred American

Wagyu ribeye steaks from various online retailers and 12 BetterFed Beef Certified ONYA® ribeye steaks were given to NDSU to conduct its comparative analysis. The facility performed a tenderness evaluation using the Warner-Bratzler Shear Force (WBSF) test; a protocol recognized and used by the United States Department of Agriculture.

"The positive for consumers is that tenderness can be objectively measured by performing the WBSF test," Maddock said. "This test is considered the 'gold standard' for tenderness analysis and gives us empirical data allowing comparison between, in this case, the American Wagyu ribeye steaks and BetterFed's Certified ONYA® ribeye steaks."

BetterFed Beef says it developed the certified ONYA® beef to be highly marbled, extremely tender and flavorful. Certified ONYA® cattle are crossbred from Jersey dams and Gelbvieh sires. They are raised in a tightly managed system to produce the specialized product.

The BetterFed system controls genetics, nutrition, health, com-



Photo courtesy of BetterFed Beef

A tenderness study conducted by the North Dakota State University Meat Lab concluded that BetterFed Beef's Certified ONYA® beef is equal in tenderness to American Wagyu beef. The e-commerce company ships its beef products directly to consumers across the nation.

fort and environment, allowing for low-stress and high-performing cattle production. All cattle harvested are males (steers). Because younger cattle are typically more tender, they are harvested prior to 18 months of age.

The objective of this study was to compare the tenderness of BetterFed Beef's Certified ONYA ribeye to Wagyu ribeye using the "gold standard" method for quan-

tifying tenderness.

The best American Wagyu beef is super tender, highly marbled, and richly flavorful. It is also costly, with prices ranging from 200-500% higher than beef in the average supermarket or grocery store. For example, the average cost of the Wagyu ribeye submitted for this comparative analysis was \$97.50 per 14-16 ounce ribeye. The average cost for the same ribeye

from BetterFed is \$37.99.

The experiment required six tests and sampling from each of the 22 Ribeye steaks to gather data. Dr. Maddock then analyzed the data to define its results. BetterFed Beef's Certified ONYA® ribeye steak was determined to be equal in tenderness to purebred American Wagyu. All samples were statistically defined as being in the WBSF's category of "extremely tender."

"BetterFed Beef came to us hoping they could authentically tell its customers their product is just as tender as some of the most expensive beef in the world," says Maddock. "The data in this study confirms and supports their hypothesis."

"Tenderness is one of the most valuable characteristics of high-quality beef," says Max Winders, Co-Founder of BetterFed Beef. Consumers overwhelmingly prefer more tender beef and we were willing to put our product on the line, comparing it to what is known as the most tender beef in the world."

— This story was submitted to the Marshall Independent by BetterFed Beef

## Beef FROM PAGE 7B

produced this beef. They take a photo of the family eating it with their friends, or whatever, and then they email it to them (Goreckis) and say, 'you know, can't believe how good your beef is.' They can ask some questions. We can use the internet for the first time to actually link people with real farms and families."

Winders and Dr. Peters believe there is a demand for that type of relationship between farms and consumers, especially with cattle.

### Not for everyone

"It's not for everyone. But we believe that more and more consumers that are stuck in cities would like to have a connection," Winders said. "They would like to know about the cattle and the people that produced them. So we believe that's going to grow this whole sort of ethic around food. We want to be prepared. We want to be able to offer that up ahead of the curve."

It's that niche market that drew Dave Eis, who operates a fourth-generation farm with his father and son near Wabasso, to become an investor. He also got involved through a working relationship with Dr. Peters.

"He had this idea in his head and he had visited with us multiple times about it," Eis said. "When they started out with this

business and they just put it out to people, a certain amount of people that they know and had faith in him. And then we decided to invest."

Eis also explained his frustration with dealing with the large meatpacking operations.

"We just want the opportunity for people to go basically from the farm, from the producer to the consumer. There is no middle people. People know exactly where it comes from and they can find out exactly how it was fed, where it was, from start to finish. From birth to the plate. There is a story and they can find out exactly what that story is," he said.

"If you go to the website, it says 'damn good American beef.'" And that is what we want. For people to enjoy it and have confidence in what they are putting on the table."

Steve Hesse is a first-generation cattle farmer in Tyler and also an investor.

"I think the BetterFed Beef is kind of a dream that everybody in the cattle industry wants. To be able to sell their own product to the consumer without using the middle man. And that is what COVID has brought on. Farm to plate type sales — whether it is vegetables, beef or pork. I think there is going to be more of these small independent options," he said.



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