

## AMSA Issues FYI: IARC Cancer Risk of Red and Processed Meats

AMSA is providing you with information on the following media coverage about the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) recent news release and article regarding the cancer risk of red and processed meat. If you need additional information or have questions please contact Deidrea Mabry (dmabry@meatscience.org ).

This Document is: OK for Distribution among AMSA Members

Status of Situation: Ongoing Monitoring as of *10/26/2015*

*The Lancet published IARC's official Carcinogenicity of consumption of red and processed meat*

### **Overview:**

- ***What is IARC?***
  - The International Agency for Research on Cancer is a part of the United Nations World Health Organization. IARC has evaluated more than 900 chemicals (e.g. formaldehyde), complex mixtures (e.g. air pollution), occupational exposures, physical agents (e.g. solar radiation), biological agents (e.g. hepatitis B virus), and personal habits (e.g. tobacco smoking). [A helpful infographic from GMO Answers](#) shows how some substances have been categorized by IARC.
  - IARC does not specialize in food evaluation -the few foods they have evaluated include coffee, pickled vegetables, and salted fish.
  - IARC classifies compounds into four groups based on their interpretation of available scientific evidence for increasing cancer risk in animals and humans. The four classifications are Groups 1, 2A, 2B, 3, and 4, which correspond to decreasing available evidence for cancer risk.
- ***What does IARC say about meat?***
  - In November 2014, IARC announced it would evaluate the carcinogenicity of red and processed meats.
  - In October 2015, IARC held an expert panel meeting with 22 participants in Lyon, France. The panel considered the evidence for red and processed meats as possible human carcinogens. Several individuals from the USA served as members on this expert panel and there were six observers from the USA that were selected to participate.
  - IARC findings which were made public this morning (10/26) classified processed meat as a Group 1, carcinogenic to humans, and red meat was classified as Group 2A, probably carcinogenic to humans. The complete monograph defining the full details of the report and the studies it considered will be published in 2016.
    - *IARC defines red and processed meats as the following:*
      - Red meat refers to unprocessed mammalian muscle meat—for example, beef, veal, pork, lamb, mutton, horse, or goat meat—including minced or frozen meat; it is usually consumed cooked.
      - Processed meat refers to meat that has been transformed through salting, curing, fermentation, smoking, or other processes to enhance flavor or improve preservation. Most processed meats contain pork or beef, but might also contain other red meats, poultry, offal (eg, liver), or meat byproducts such as blood.

## **Media and Social Media Impact**

- So far today, there have been 1,719 news stories reaching up to 5.6 billion traditional media impressions.
- Biggest Impact
  - Washington Post: [Hot dogs, bacon and other processed meats cause cancer, World Health Organization declares](#)
  - NBC News/Today Show: [Processed Meat Causes Cancer; Red Meat Probably Does, Too, WHO Group Says](#)
  - The Guardian US: [Processed meats rank alongside smoking as cancer causes – WHO](#)
  - BBC News: [Processed meats do cause cancer - WHO](#)
  - CNBC: [WHO cares about bacon? Body to slap cancer label on meat: Daily Mail](#)
  - ABC News/Good Morning America: [Report Links Processed and Red Meats to Cancer](#)

## **Key Meat Nutrition Facts**

- Meat, including red and processed meat, are an important part of the diet because they are protein-rich foods that supply all nine of the essential amino acids needed for good health.
- Protein plays an important role in human health and well-being. As nutrient-rich high quality protein foods, red meats can play an important role in helping people meet their essential nutrient needs.
- Red meat also contains a variety of highly bioavailable nutrients, including heme iron, zinc, and B-vitamins. Red meat is a natural and significant source of a number of B vitamins: thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, B<sub>6</sub> and B<sub>12</sub>. Vitamin B<sub>12</sub> which is important for healthy red blood cells, growth and the production of energy.
- Collectively, research shows healthy dietary patterns with a higher percent of calories from protein, including meat protein, than currently recommended in the USDA Food Patterns are associated with positive health outcomes including cardiovascular health, achieving and maintaining a healthy body weight and composition, and improving vitality and stamina.
  - McNeill, S. H. (2014). Inclusion of Red Meat in Healthful Dietary Patterns. *Meat Science*. (98): 452-460.

## **Resources:**

### **AMSA**

[Meat in a Healthy Diet](#)

## **What does "Probably Cause Cancer" actually mean?**

### **International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation Resources:**

- [How Red Meat Can Beef Up Your Nutrition](#)
- [Beefing up the Facts on Red Meat \(infographic\)](#)
- [What is IARC?](#)

- [IARC, Red & Processed Meats, and Your Diet](#)

### **National Cattlemen's Beef Association and the Cattlemen's Beef Board**

- [Science Does Not Support International Agency Opinion on Red Meat and Cancer](#)
- [Understanding the Evidence on Red Meat and Cancer Risk](#)
- [IARC Scientific Evidence Submissions](#)

### **National Pork Board and the National Pork Producers Council**

- [Benefits of Pork in Your Diet](#)

### **North American Meat Institute**

- [IARC Meat Vote Is Dramatic and Alarmist Overreach](#)
- [Meat & Poultry Scientific Studies](#)
- [12 Good Reasons Meat and Poultry Should be Part of Your Balanced diet.](#)