



Meat the Future

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"Meat Tenderness"

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This week I would like to share an article with you that I found interesting. It was written by Taylor Jamison, K-State Research and Extension News Writer.

Kansas State University meat scientist, Michael Chao, said a recent study on eight cuts of meat could help consumers identify more tender products in the grocery store, and better utilize less tender cuts at home.

“As less people possess the knowledge to properly handle tougher beef cuts today, this research can certainly provide consumers the confidence needed to handle those cuts,” Chao said. “Hopefully, it will also increase sales of lower quality beef cuts.”

Chao said the study analyzed eight meat cuts – ribeye roll, knuckle, flank, shoulder clod, chuck tender, eye of round, brisket and top sirloin butt – for tenderness, based on three components: muscle fiber, fat content, and connective tissue.

Then, a trained panel of meat evaluators rated the cuts on their perception of tenderness.

Results from the study found that the three tenderness components did indeed correlate with the tenderness ratings from the panelists. Chao’s report included some notable examples:

- Ribeye, flank, eye of round, and shoulder clod tenderness was heavily influenced by aging.
- Brisket tenderness was affected by density of connective tissue within the muscle.
- Top sirloin butt tenderness was affected by fat content.

“By understanding the main tenderness contributing factors of each cut, the industry can utilize this information to teach consumers the proper tenderness management strategy for each cut,” Chao said.

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He said the findings could alter the way consumers prepare or cook your beef cuts. For example, Chao recommended not aging a tougher meat cut like brisket, but instead cook the cut in a pressure cooker to make it more tender.

Chao's work was included in the research report for the 2022 K-State Cattlemen's Day, held on March 4 in Manhattan. The report is available to view online through the K-State Research and Extension bookstore.

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