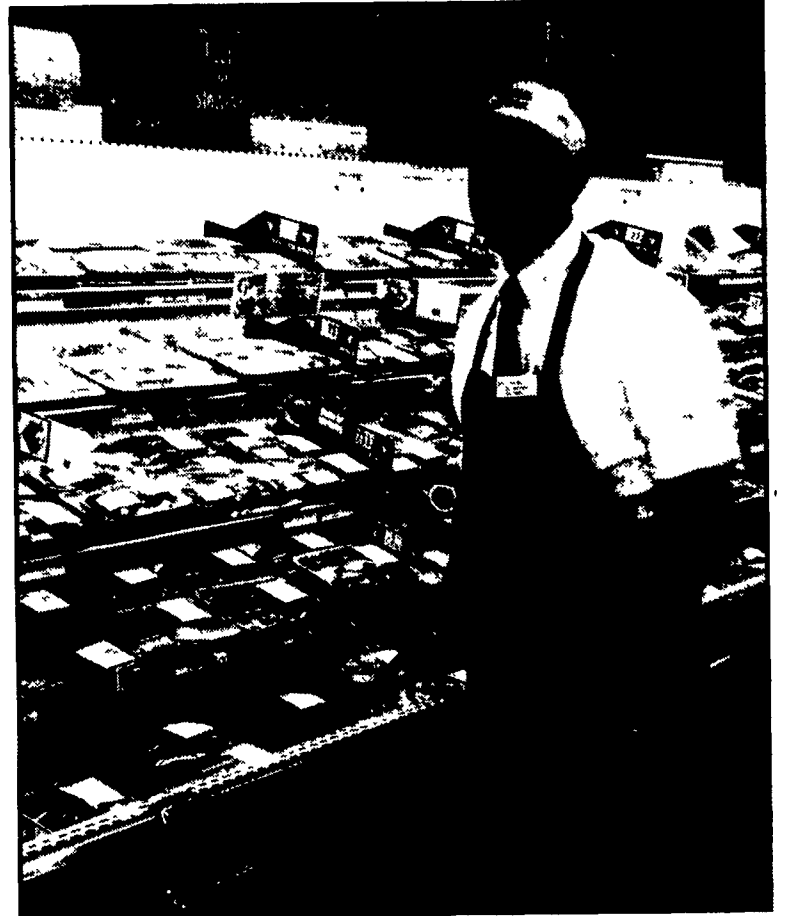


# 'Beef Made Easy' Brings Convenience To The Case For Today's Consumers



Research indicates that consumers do not think about names of cuts when shopping for fresh meat, they think about meal solutions. "I'll certainly pay more attention to it now that I know about it," said Carol Franklin, Carlisle. Photo by Michelle Ranck

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 director of promotions. Bomgardner has introduced the program to 260 grocery store meat cases across Pennsylvania and Maryland, beginning in June 1999. Weis, Giant, and 30 independent stores now have the program.

"The customers have changed, they're not as educated as consumers as we had years ago, and this is a way to help them understand. The instructions are on the package so they can say, 'Hey, I can do that,'" said Mike Sonberg, senior category manager for Giant meat department. "They may order it in a restaurant but not buy it to take home and make it. This helps them understand that they can do it themselves. There is a need for education and a simple way to provide it, and that fits right in with the Beef Made Easy program."

After two years of market research with the supermarket giants Kroger and Safeway, the

National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) unveiled the program in April 1999. To kick off the program NCBA visited the top 25 grocery chains in the country.

"Pennsylvania is unique in that we have a lot of stores that don't fall into the top 25 larger chains," said Bomgardner.

This translated into more legwork for her, as she preferred to make personal visits to not only pitch the idea to meat managers but also place the labels on the beef during the initial rollout for each store.

Dan Feathers, meat manager for Nell's Shurfine, has the program running in the store. He estimates that Nell's Shurfine uses between 3,500 and 4,000 labels per week.

"The grilling label is definitely the one we use most," he said, adding that the sauteing label is also popular now. "Over winter the pot roasts and other roast labels will increase."

Feathers believes that the

meat wrappers, who are crucial to the success of the program, are finding the labels to be less time-consuming than they had originally thought. A poster color-coordinated with the labels aids the meat wrappers in placing the label on the corresponding cut of meat.

The Weis stores now substitute the label for the "Choice" label. Additionally Bomgardner provides posters as a reference tool for the meat wrappers and as an educational aid for the consumers.

The program has changed the placement of the items in the case to group the cuts more closely according to cooking method, said Feathers, who believes that the "Beef. It's What's For Dinner" case dividers add a lot to the look of the case.

Currently, Pennsylvania retailers are looking at having labels customized for a particular store with a peel-off A-1 Steak Sauce recipe that corresponds with the cut.

One of four test stores for meat supplier Associated Wholesalers Inc. (AWI), Carlisle's Shurfine has taken on the Beef Made Easy program, complete with rail strips and color-coded pictures clipped to the rail.

"With the labels they (customers) can see how to prepare the meat. It's easier since it's on the pack versus if the meat manager has to talk to them and they have to remember how to cook the cuts," said Dan Feathers, meat manager at Nell's Shurfine store.

"It keeps the program fresh and is an added value for the customers," said Bomgardner. "It's encouraging that a national company like A-1 would see the value in teaming up with the program, that they're willing to invest their time and resource and they think it's a quality consumer program." Safeway and Kroger have come up with another way to keep the program in front of customers by running pictures of the labels in ads.

Bomgardner's future plans for the "Beef Made Easy" program include promotion at the meat case, talking to customers, and calling on or auditing stores that have implemented the program.

"I could have a full time job

just calling on meat managers and still not have enough time in the day," said Bomgardner.

"The key is going to be a way to keep it fresh, like the A-1 recipe, making sure that labels get advertised, and sales are run on it," said Bomgardner, who remains enthusiastic about the program. "In my mind, I think it's one of the most exciting programs that the Beef Council has ever rolled out."

In the coming months Bomgardner will be evaluating the program by comparing sales data and looking at the sales percentages for an increase in profit.

"The bottom line is — are we impacting producers?" said Bomgardner.

## Top Lancaster DHIA Cows By Protein For June

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HERBERT H BENNER		GAP		MARLIN R BEILER		PARADISE			
RITZY	26,690	859	823	TONYA	22,536	876	810	60	27,200 1102 850
SEVENU	26,973	1040	802	ELMER P. RIEHL		LEOLA		105	27,310 890 811
JAY & JOANNE WISE		STEVENS		VONNIE	28,924	1079	809	ADAM & LISA SONNEN	
ETHEL	24,828	868	822	FAHNSTOCK FARMS		MANHEIM		CHINA	29,862 1199 988
JOSEPH N ZEISET		NARVON		499	24,122	942	808	MEADOW-WOOD FARM	
610	26,317	985	822	AMOS M STOLTZFUS		MORGANTOWN		749	30,815 1178 962
DANIEL B ZOOK JR		GORDONVILLE		TRUDY	25,109	988	808	801	27,168 963 886
RUBY	25,677	846	822	EMANUEL S ESH		PARADISE		16	26,255 575 829
KING-RIDGE FARM		LEOLA		RECIPE	23,748	879	807	20	26,239 808 810
MARSHA	27,244	929	821	JAMES+JANET ZIMMERMAN		EPHRATA		GLEN + LINDA KRALL	
WILMER R MARTIN		STEVENS		252	26,546	870	807	67	30,774 1207 930
BERRY	25,284	938	819	CHARLES L WISE		DENVER		R BRYAN BALMER	
BETSY	26,408	887	803	ADA	25,553	856	806	234	LEBANON 885 923
DWIGHT L MARTIN		STEVENS		AMOS K KING		DRUMORE		51	28,291 1125 889
MACEY	24,028	913	819	NAOMI	24,160	817	806	ARLIN W HIGH	
JOHN & VELMA WENGER		LEOLA		TOM ZARTMAN		EPHRATA		42	LEBANON 950 893
197	25,741	865	816	98	25,919	1033	805	56	27,710 867 890
GIDEON S. SWAREY		RONKS		JOHN S KING		GAP		FERNDALE FARMS	
LICORI	23,488	960	816	ALISON	24,435	748	805	46	LEBANON 823 853
MILKY SPRINGS DAIRY		QUARRYVILLE		SKY VIEW FARM		MANHEIM		WILMER H LEHMAN	
3096	25,023	1126	815	64	25,084	850	805	17	LEBANON 864 836
EPHRAIM K FISHER		PARADISE		REUBEN S STOLTZFUS		NARVON		367	24,145 946 831
FAYE	24,742	870	815	ESTHER	27,426	1032	805	WHITE BIRCH FARM	
ABNER S ESH		PARADISE		CLAIR N OBERHOLTZER		ELIZABETHTOWN		30	MYERSTOWN 850 831
MARGE	28,072	760	815	IVY	25,365	950	804		
THOMAS C LAPP		GAP		STEPHEN & DEB SHERTZER		MILLERSVILLE			
115	24,447	1007	813	EVIE-2	23,634	728	802		
138	25,133	997	800	SAMUEL F RIEHL		LEOLA			
DENNIS H FREY		ELIZABETHTOWN		PET	27,386	919	802		
29	26,731	836	813	KENNETH R MARTIN		QUARRYVILLE			
SAMUEL S STOLTZFUS		BIRD IN HAND		85	25,261	1010	802		
115	28,389	1057	812	LEE NOME FARM		GORDONVILLE			
134	24,426	858	805	SARAH	26,081	812	800		
GLENN H WENGER		EPHRATA		STEVEN M HERR		NEW PROVIDENCE			
42	24,571	1009	812	1303	26,842	910	800		
CHRIST E BEILER		LEOLA							
26	23,909	927	811	LEBANON COUNTY					
GARY & JENNY BOWMAN		QUARRYVILLE		CURVE ACRES FARM		NEWMANSTOWN			
DORIE	29,301	1110	810	21	35,260	1051	1013		
				15	29,014	1046	871		

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