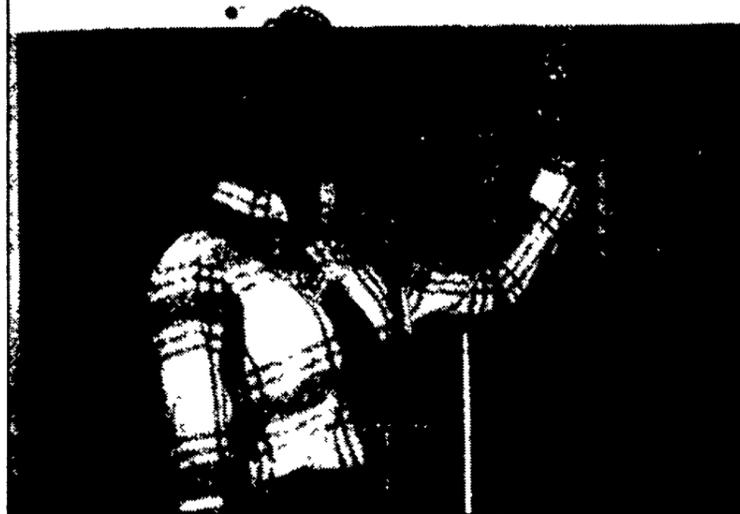
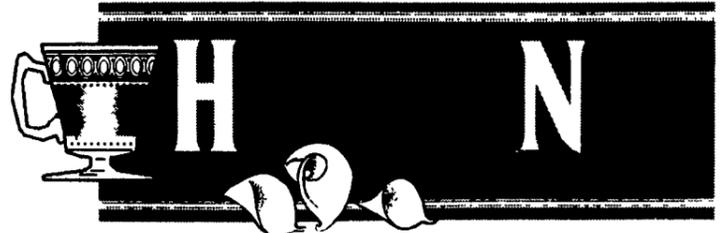


Beef: It's What's For Dinner — Virginia Beef Expo



On Friday April 18, in Harrisonburg Amie Knick was named Virginia Beef Queen at the Va. Beef Expo. Aimi said that beef is nature's best "multi-vitamin," and moreover, is a great-tasting, healthy choice for dinner because it contains iron, zinc, proteins and B-vitamins.

GAY BROWNLEE
Virginia Correspondent
HARRISONBURG, Va. — At the 2003 Virginia Beef Expo, April 18-19 at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds, it was hardly surprising to find stations where the Virginia Cattle Women and their helpers were serving various samples of beef, including the "famous" ribeye sandwich.

One promoter doing a share of the work because she had just inherited a new title was Amie Knick, the 2003 Virginia Beef Queen who shows open cattle and lives on a Simmental farm comprised of about 40 head, in a cow/calf operation.

In the fall, Knick will be completing the studies necessary to receive her degree in ag education from Virginia Tech.

"I'm required to travel across Virginia to promote the beef industry," Knick said.

"Beef," she said, "is nature's best multi-vitamin because it contains, iron, zinc, protein and B vitamins."

Winning the state title was a gratifying experience for Knick after being thwarted twice in previous attempts to earn the title. This time she pulled together a speech that emphasized the positive phase of the beef industry and focused on factual information to impress the judges with

her knowledge about her product.

Knick said the Beef Check-Off Program is an important promotional tool that receives \$1 anytime a beef animal is sold.

The beef queen was anticipating interacting with the public and didn't have long to wait for the first opportunity. Almost immediately she was directed to the table where hamburger sandwich halves to offer to passers-by had been prepared. The burgers were made from irradiated beef, so Knick found herself answering questions about food irradiation issues.

According to an educational brochure developed by the Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture in cooperation with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Minn. Dept. of Health and the Minn. Beef Council, food irradiation is the process of exposing food products to ionizing radiation for a specified length of time. The amount of exposure is controlled to produce various preservation effects, such as retarding spoilage or killing any harmful bacteria.

Some skeptical consumers continue to reserve judgment and still are not ready to wholeheartedly endorse the idea of using irradiation to kill food-borne bacteria, by moving the food through a radiant energy field that, according to the brochure, never touches the energy source.

At the 2003 Va. Beef Expo in Harrisonburg, between the times for her scheduled cooking demonstrations, Shirley Simmons of WTVR Ch. 6, Richmond, displays the "On Your Menu" cookbook. The cookbook project evolved by popular request of viewers watching her cooking segment and attending her community appearances. A number of excellent recipes in it list beef amongst the necessary ingredients.

But researchers say that food irradiation has been studied for more than 40 years and has neither been found to cause harm to human beings, nor make the food radioactive.

Shirley Simmons from WTVR-TV6, Richmond was doing cooking demonstrations at the Expo as well as offering the stations 50th anniversary cookbook, "On Your Menu" to visitors. In conjunction with the station's noon news that every Monday features a segment with Simmons, the cookbook carries over the title. "On Your Menu" contains a number of recipes that call for beef in the ingredients list. Several of these are printed as follows:

ORIENTAL EXPRESS BEEF (Lettuce Wraps)

- 1½ pounds ground beef chuck
- ½ cup hoisin sauce
- ½ cup Asian peanut sauce
- 1 medium cucumber, seeded, chopped
- ¼ cup torn fresh mint leaves
- Salt and pepper
- 12 large Boston lettuce leaves (about 2 heads) or iceberg or romaine lettuce
- Fresh mint leaves
- In a large nonstick skillet over medium heat, brown the ground

beef 8-10 minutes or until meat is not pink, breaking into small crumbles. Pour off drippings. Stir in hoisin sauce and peanut sauce. Heat through.

Just before serving, add cucumber and torn mint, toss gently. Season with salt and pepper. Serve beef mixture in lettuce leaves. Garnish with fresh mint.

SWEET AND SPICY CHINESE MEATBALLS (on Brown Rice)

- 1 (18 ounce) package frozen fully cooked beef meatballs
- 2 cups uncooked instant long-grain brown rice
- 1 can (20 ounces) pineapple chunks in juice
- ½ cup prepared medium picante sauce
- 1 cup sugar-free apricot preserves
- Sliced green onions
- Microwave meatballs according to package directions. Cook rice according to package directions. Measure ½ cup of juice from the pineapple and place in large sauce pan.

Reserve remaining juice for some other use. Stir in picante sauce and preserves, bring to a boil. Add meatballs and pineapple chunks. Reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serve over the rice. Sprinkle with green onions.

MEAT LOAF POT ROAST

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- ½ cup evaporated milk
- ½ cup Italian-style bread crumbs
- ¼ cup thick and chunky picante salsa
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 3 medium potatoes, peeled and sliced ¼-in. thick
- 2 medium onions sliced ¼-inch thick and quartered
- 3 medium carrots quartered and cut lengthwise
- 3 teaspoons dried parsley flakes

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Mix together the first 7 ingredients in a bowl.

Shape into a loaf and place in center of a 13x9x2-inch pan that has been sprayed with nonstick cooking spray. Around the meat-loaf layer the potatoes, carrots and onions. Sprinkle with salt, pepper and parsley flakes.

Cover with aluminum foil. Bake one hour or until vegetables are tender. Uncover and bake 10 minutes longer to brown the meat. Serves 4.

MUFFIN TIN MEAT LOAVES

- 1½ pounds lean ground beef
- 1½ cup zucchini, shredded
- 1 cup soft bread crumbs
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup ketchup

Heat oven to 400 degrees. In large bowl, combine all ingredients except ketchup, mixing lightly but thoroughly. Place approximately ½ cup beef into each of 12 muffin cups, pressing lightly. Spread ketchup over the tops. Bake 20 minutes or until centers are no longer pink. Remove meat loaves from pan. Serve with mashed potatoes if desired. Serves 6.

MEXICAN BEEF STIR-FRY

- 1 pound top sirloin steak
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano leaves
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into thin strips
- 1 medium onion, cut into thin wedges
- 1 jalapeno pepper, cut into slivers
- 3 cups romaine lettuce, sliced ¼-inch strips

Cut beef into ½-inch strips. Combine oil, cumin, oregano and garlic setting aside half. In a large nonstick frying pan, heat half the seasoned oil over medium heat until hot. Add red pepper, onion and jalapeno pepper. Stir-fry 2-3 minutes or until crisp-tender. Remove and reserve. In same pan stir-fry beef strips in reserved oil 1-2 minutes. Return vegetables to pan and heat through. Serve beef mixture over lettuce. Serves 4.

Garden Reproduction: Birds, Bees, Flowers, Trees

COLLEGEVILLE (Montgomery Co.) — Did you know that the center of some flowers will change color after they are pollinated to let other bees know not to stop?

Learn everything there is to know about plant pollination in this educational and humorous presentation by Jim Bobb, Montgomery County

Master Gardener and vice-president of Montgomery County Beekeeper Association.

Free, no pre-registration required for class scheduled Monday, May 19, 7 p.m. at the Montgomery County 4-H Center at 1015 Bridge Road in Creamery (Rt. 113, between Skippack and Collegeville).