

Test to Tell Good Eating Qualities In Beef Studied

Corvallis • The age-old practice of having to bite into a beefsteak to know exactly how good it is going to taste may be in line for some updating by scientists at Oregon State college agricultural experiment station.

OSC food technologists and animal scientists hope to develop a test to predict good eating qualities of beef—juiciness, tenderness, and texture—long before it reaches the dinner table.

Beef quality tests that go beyond the capabilities of present grading methods may be linked to an animal's enzyme pattern that is distinctive for individual animals and remains fairly constant throughout a lifetime.

Enzymes, or organic catalysts, are needed for chemical reactions which play an important part in body metabolism and growth of living tissue, according to Allen F. Anglemier, OSC food technologist heading up the study.

Looking For Patterns
Anglemier and Ralph E. Bogart, OSC animal geneticists are looking for enzyme patterns in blood samples of animals for a reliable measurement of tissue formation and other key indexes to meat quality.

Since enzyme patterns appear to have a genetic link, it might be possible eventually to use the test as a guide in breeding better meat quality into livestock, Bogart believes.

Present methods of judging live beef animals or carcasses don't always provide an indication of actual quality of beef, the scientists explained. Two carcasses, both grading "choice," for example, may differ greatly in juiciness or tenderness.

First steps in the study will include measuring enzyme levels in the blood and seeing how they may differ within animals of the same grade. Studies will then look for correlations between enzyme patterns and quality of beef as judged by persons trained to compare food flavors.

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