

## Vitamin D: Red Meat's Contribution

Vitamin D status is generally maintained by the exposure of skin to sunlight. Where exposure is inadequate or we protect ourselves from the sun's harmful rays, where in New Zealand it has been estimated UV levels are 40% higher than in equivalent Northern latitudes<sup>1</sup>, dietary sources of vitamin D become important.

National nutrition surveys of both adults<sup>2</sup> and children<sup>3</sup> have shown poor vitamin D status, particularly amongst Pacific children, which can lead to rickets or osteoporosis in the long-term.

Traditionally, food sources of vitamin D have been limited to dairy products, eggs and oily fish. New Zealand's beef and lamb can now be added to the list as a natural source.

Red meat contains a more potent form of vitamin D, 25-hydroxyvitamin D (25(OH)D), making it a nutrient-dense and effective source. As a result a serving of beef or lamb can make an important contribution to the intakes of vulnerable groups whose exposure to sunlight is low and for whom dietary sources are important.

The Food Composition Tables<sup>4</sup> now include updated figures on the vitamin D content of New Zealand beef and lamb cuts; examples include:

<b>Beef mince, lean, stewed (¾ cup)</b>	<b>0.1µg</b>
<b>Beef rump steak, lean, grilled (160g)</b>	<b>0.2µg</b>
<b>Lamb, midloin chop, lean x2 (64g)</b>	<b>0.4µg</b>
<b>Lamb, liver, fried (40g)</b>	<b>0.5µg</b>

This further strengthens red meat's power pack of nutrients of quality protein, iron, zinc and B vitamins, **as well as vitamin D**, making lean beef and lamb an important part of a healthy balanced diet. New Zealanders should enjoy lean beef and lamb three to four times a week, as part of an overall healthy lifestyle.

### References

1. Madronich, S et al. Changes in biologically active ultraviolet radiation reaching the earth's surface. *Photochem Photobiol B*. (1998), 46:5-19.
2. University of Otago and Ministry of Health. (2011). A Focus on Nutrition: Key findings of the 2008/09 New Zealand Adult Nutrition Survey. Wellington: Ministry of Health.
3. Ministry of Health. (2003b). NZ Food: NZ Children: Key results of the 2002 National Nutrition Survey. Wellington: Ministry of Health.
4. The Concise New Zealand Composition Tables, 9th Edition 2012. S Sivakumaran, S Martell, L Huffman, Palmerston North, New Zealand. The New Zealand Institute of Plant & Food Research Limited and Ministry of Health. 2012.



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