



Top Cut: A Beef Contest

Objective: Students will work independently or as a group to develop a marketing and nutrition plan for a beef-centric product or recipe.

Background: New York Agriculture in the Classroom and the New York State Beef Council have partnered to offer an exciting cross-curricular program for middle and high school students to engage with and understand beef production. This experiential learning contest will allow your students to creatively develop a marketing strategy for a product of their choice, while learning about the multitude of agricultural careers and skills it takes to develop and sell a product. Students will also be learning about the beef production industry and beef nutrition as a result of participation.

Eligibility: 6th through 12th grade students working in groups or as a classroom in New York State are eligible to participate. Pre-registration is required in the respective grade divisions. Multiple groups or classrooms from the same school may participate. FFA chapters, home school groups, and private schools are also eligible to participate.

Divisions: Middle School (6th – 8th Grade) & High School (9th – 12th Grade)

Pre-Registration: All classrooms must pre-register to participate in the contest. With pre-registration, your classroom will receive a True Beef DVD and paired curriculum guide valued at \$30 provided at no cost courtesy of New York Agriculture in the Classroom.

True Beef: From Pasture to Plate (DVD) – This is an innovative educational documentary that follows high school students as they learn about the entire process of beef production. The documentary features culinary and agricultural high school students and is designed to teach students where their food comes from while learning the importance of farming and ranching.

True Beef Educator Guide – This series of lesson plans supports the documentary “True Beef”. The guide contains 8 lessons designed to follow along with the chapters in the documentary. STEM connections have been included for all lessons and it is easy for teachers to make connections across the curriculum.

Contest Timeline:

Pre-Registration is open from October 1-31, 2017

Contest submissions are due January 12, 2018

Winners will be announced no later than February 23, 2018

Pre-registration Link - <https://form.jotform.us/nyaitc/topcut>

Prize: The marketing plans will be judged by a panel of beef producers and educators (see rubric for judging criteria). The top three schools from each division will be listed, and two honorable mentions denoted. Prizes for this contest are generously awarded by the New York Beef Council.

- Cash prizes per division include:
 - 1st Place - \$250
 - 2nd Place - \$100
 - 3rd Place - \$50
- A banner to be displayed in the school or community
- 1st place classrooms will have a BBQ lunch brought to their school and catered by the New York Beef Council

Partnerships: You are encouraged to partner with a local beef producer to encourage your students to learn about the entire beef production system. If you would like assistance in identifying a beef producer in your area, please identify your interest on your pre-registration form or contact: Katie Carpenter kse45@cornell.edu

Additional Lessons and Classroom Tools:

[Beef Basics Lesson](#) – Students will explain the importance of the beef cattle industry including the products the cattle produce, the production process from farm to plate, and how cattle can utilize and obtain energy from grass and other forage.

[FoodMaster: Meat, Poultry and Fish](#) – In this lesson, students will learn how animals utilize nutrients and energy from food humans cannot digest and convert it to meat, a food rich in zinc, iron, and protein. Students will discover how hamburger is formulated for leanness, compare two kinds for hot dogs, and learn about fish.

[Roll of the Genes](#) – Students will learn about genes and how they affect certain traits such as growth, reproduction, disease resistance, and behavior. Students will discover the responsibilities of an animal geneticist.



Contest Procedures

Students must work together in a group, or as a classroom team, to submit a completed marketing plan of their selected beef-focused product. For each of the five sections outlined (Introduction, Product, Marketing Plan, Market Analysis, and Nutrition), students should complete the task noted per each bullet. Assign or encourage students to work on the project piece by piece.

Each section will be submitted individually through an online submission portal. You will receive submission instructions after pre-registration.

Introduction

- *Cover Page:*
 - Include name of the product, teacher's name, school name, grade, teacher contact information.
- *Classroom Information:*
 - Share the name of the students who worked on the project, and you can include any acknowledgements or special notes in this section.

Product

- *Product Description:* Students can use their creativity to develop a beef-focused product or recipe.
 - Ideas can include, but are not limited to a stand-alone product like beef jerky, grab and go meals, an entrée that would be on school lunch menu, served at a senior citizen center, or even at an upscale restaurant.
- *Recipe:*
 - Include the final recipe in your submission, including all ingredients, measurements, and the procedures for preparing this food product or recipe.
- *Local Product Acknowledgement:*
 - If you have sourced your beef or other products from local producers, include a separate list with the names of the producers and a description of the products used.

Market Analysis

- *Target Audience:*
 - Who is your ideal customer? Define their characteristics, socio-economic status, education background, family size (if applicable), etc.
 - What are their food values and interests?
 - What is the audience's most influential factors when purchasing this type of beef product? Examples include cost, low-fat or low-calorie, nutritional value, gluten free, etc.
 - Describe in order that the judges truly understand your customer.
- *Market Testing:*
 - Conduct a taste test with your target audience. Be sure to follow safe food handling guidelines, consult with your school cafeteria with questions.

- Report your test markets thoughts on your product - their likes, and dislikes.
- **Cost Analysis:**
 - Use a spreadsheet to determine the cost of the ingredients, packaging, and shipping of your product.
 - What type of container will you use? What is the cost of that container?
 - What are the shipping or transportation costs of this product?
 - Determine your preferred profit margin. What is the final price of your product?

Marketing Plan

- **Environment:**
 - What environment will customers have an opportunity to purchase your item?
 - Examples: A school cafeteria, the grocery store, a farmer's market, an upscale restaurant, etc.
 - Set the scene, and be descriptive so that the judges understand your environment.
- **Marketing Campaign:**
 - Develop a name and slogan for your product or recipe.
 - Create a label for the product. Include product name ingredients, storage recommendations, serving size, and UPC bar code.
 - Create an advertising campaign with *at least* three elements. Marketing elements can include, but are not limited to:
 - Print advertisement
 - Radio or podcast advertisement
 - Commercial
 - Celebrity endorsement
 - Website
 - Social media presence
 - And more!
 - Remember to include information about ZIP beef nutrition in one of your three marketing tools. *See the beef nutrition section for more information.*

Beef Nutrition

- **ZIP Analysis:** Zinc, Iron, and Protein are three of the most important minerals and nutrients found in beef, and it is especially important for school-aged children to increase their ZIP intake to aid in adequate body growth, healing, memory, muscle-building, and alertness.
 - Students should identify and outline three facts about the importance of each Zinc, Iron, and Protein
 - In one of your three marketing pieces, include information about ZIP as consumer education.
- **Storage & Handling:**
 - Identify the storage and safe food handling procedures which should accompany this food product.