



Meat Industry Provides Essential Context for Interpretation of IARC Report

October 26, 2015 [OTTAWA] - The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has published a report on whether scientific evidence may support the classification of red and processed meat consumption as a “cancer hazard.”

Contrary to some articles in the media, it is important to note that IARC monographs do not indicate a cause and effect relationship between a substance or a profession and cancer. The Agency defines an agent that may cause cancer at some level under some circumstance as a “cancer hazard.” A “cancer hazard” is very different than a “cancer risk.” The likelihood that someone will experience cancer after being exposed to a hazard is known as “cancer risk.” The Agency identifies “cancer hazards” even when “cancer risks” are very low.

It is not unusual for IARC to determine that a substance or profession is a “cancer hazard.” Since 1971, the Agency has reviewed 982 agents. Of these, only one was classified as “probably not” carcinogenic to humans.

Among the multitude of agents that are classified as a “cancer hazard” are alcoholic beverages, outdoor air pollution, sunlight, wood dust, drinking water, caffeine, high temperature frying, and fluorescent lighting, as well as shiftwork and the occupations of barber and hairdresser.

“It is regrettable that, in arriving at its split decision, the IARC panel reportedly chose to disregard certain studies which present high quality evidence to the contrary. Furthermore, the Agency did not balance its verdict by taking into account either the proven benefits of meat or the substantive implications of removing meat from the diet,” said Canadian Meat Council President Joe Reda. “There are many scientific studies that show no correlation between meat and cancer and numerous scientific papers that confirm the health benefits of balanced diets which include meat. Risks and benefits should both be considered before recommending what people eat and drink,” added Reda.

“Meat is a complete protein that contains all the amino acids our bodies require. Non-meat proteins are incomplete and must be consumed in combination with other foods to deliver all the amino acids that we require,” said Canadian Meat Council Executive Director Jim Laws. “Meat is nutrient-dense and contains vitamins B12, B6 and D3, protein, iron and zinc. Animal products such as meat are the only natural sources of vitamin B12, which is essential for brain development and brain function throughout a lifetime,” added Laws.

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MEAT...

GOOD FOR YOU.
GOOD FOR CANADA.

LA VIANDE...

BONNE POUR VOUS.
BONNE POUR LE CANADA.

Meat has provided an important source of nutrients throughout human evolution and the industry takes pride in providing high quality protein, vitamins and minerals to Canadian consumers. The best advice the industry can offer is that consumers follow a balanced diet as recommended in Canada's Food Guide.

Canada's meat processing industry includes some 400 federally registered establishments, providing safe, high quality protein for Canadian consumers as well as adding jobs and contributing to economic activity in both rural and urban communities across Canada. With annual sales of \$23.6 billion, beef exports of \$1.9 billion, pork exports of \$3.7 billion and 65,000 jobs, the Canadian meat industry is the largest component of this country's food processing sector.

The Canadian Meat Council has been representing Canada's federally inspected meat processing industry since 1919.

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