



You were asking about...

Meatless Mondays

We all want to be healthy, do things that are good for the environment and feel good about the choices that we make. So a seemingly grassroots campaign that claims to help us do all that through what we eat is a good idea, right?

Sadly, in this case that couldn't be more wrong. There's more than "meats" the eye to this campaign – check out the real dirt on Meatless Monday and decide for yourself about what choices you'd like to make.

In the beginning...

During World Wars I and II, Meatless Mondays were part of U.S. government efforts to encourage consumers to do their part on the home front by rationing and reducing consumption of certain food items. It was a patriotic way for those at home to support the war effort and the troops fighting overseas by ensuring our soldiers had access to all the nutritious food they needed, like beef.



What is old is new again – but with a twist

Today, the Meatless Monday campaign is back, but now it's the brainchild of two wealthy New York socialites who support a number of animal rights and anti-meat programs. Contrary to how it's presented, the campaign's intent is not to help consumers make well-informed healthy, environmentally-friendly or budget-conscious eating choices.

The real goal is to get people to stop eating meat – with the ultimate aim of ending animal agriculture altogether. Although the Meatless Monday campaign looks like a grassroots movement, it's really the work of a well-funded activist group pushing an anti-farming agenda with celebrity spokespeople, misleading claims and half-truths.

A healthy, balanced diet is important. We suggest it can include beef and other types of meat, but if you eat a healthy balanced diet without meat, that's okay too! What's key is that you have the ability to make that choice for yourself and for your family based on factual, credible information and not simply on the word of celebrity spokespeople.



**Meatless
Mondays
FACT SHEET**

Meatless Mondays

FACTS



Health and nutrition:

FACT: Canadian beef is recognized by Canada's Food Guide as part of a balanced diet. Lean beef is full of nutrients that Canadians need every day, including zinc for healthy growth, iron for oxygen and protein to build and repair the body.

FACT: Many Canadians aren't eating a balanced diet, getting 22 per cent of their total calories a day from foods low in nutritional value, like fats and oils, condiments, candy, chips and beverages¹.

FACT: Red meat does NOT cause cancer or heart disease. No single food causes or prevents cancer or heart disease. The European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC), a recently completed large study into meat consumption and mortality, found no association between eating red meat and any cause of death, including cancer or heart disease².

FACT: There is no scientifically valid reason to eliminate red meat from your diet. In fact, the European study mentioned above found higher mortality rates in people who consumed very little or no red meat. Experts agree that the healthiest diets consist of balance and moderation, in line with Canada's Food Guide.

FACT: Eating moderately higher levels of protein may improve heart health. The average Canadian gets less than 17 per cent of their energy from protein, which is at the lower end of the recommended range of 10 – 35 per cent. Higher protein consumption, although still within that recommended range, can help reduce hunger and lower the amount of energy consumed through carbohydrates. Studies have shown that replacing some carbs with protein may lower a number of cardiovascular risk factors³.

FACT: The three leading risk factors for disease are high blood pressure, tobacco smoke and alcohol use, according to the "Global Burden of Disease Study 2010". Red meat was ranked last out of 43 risk factors evaluated in the study, which also identified diets low in fruits and high in sodium as the most prominent dietary risk factors for disease⁴. Canadians only consume a moderate amount of red meat (74 g/day on average), but are getting too much sodium and not enough fruits and vegetables⁵. This means dietary advice to curb red meat consumption as a way to boost health is not likely to be effective.

Environment:

FACT: We're producing more with less. In the early 1900's, it took between three to five years to raise a beef animal to market weight in Canada. Today, thanks to breeding and modern technology, it takes less than two years⁶.

FACT: Yes, cows use water, but they don't use it up – they're really only borrowing it. Only a very small fraction of the water they consume stays in their bodies; most of it is released back into the environment and recycled. For example, it takes 130 litres to produce one kilogram of beef⁷ but a mature beef animal will drink between 35 and 66 litres of water each day, depending on the weather. To put that in perspective, the average Canadian uses 350 litres of water every day in normal living activities, or as much water as five to nine head of cattle⁸.

FACT: Canada's beef industry accounts for only 0.05 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions⁹. According to a Cornell University study, the world's entire beef cattle population contributes one per cent of the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The average daily production of greenhouse gas by a cow is equal to that of a car driven 3.2 kilometres. In fact, driving to the store to buy groceries produces 800 times more greenhouse gas than does the production of a hamburger¹⁰.

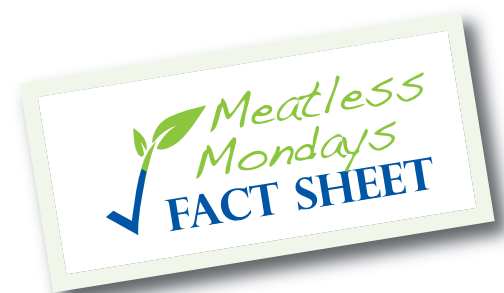
FACT: About 30 per cent of Canada's agricultural land is too hilly, rocky, cold or wet to grow crops¹¹. This land could be cultivated to try and grow food crops but this process would destroy natural habitat and wildlife. Grazing animals on this land more than doubles the land area that can be used to produce food in Canada. Eighty to 85 per cent of the feed eaten by cattle is made up of grasses and forages that are inedible by people¹².

Jobs, the economy and other benefits:

FACT: The cattle industry contributes approximately \$24.6 billion to the Canadian economy. A \$1 increase in beef cattle production results in an increase of \$4.20 of goods and services in the economy. Every job in the beef sector results in 3.56 jobs in other sectors of the economy and every million dollars in cattle sales creates approximately 27 jobs¹³.

FACT: The medical world relies on beef by-products for many life-saving or life improving medications and treatments. More than 100 medicines used by humans come from cattle¹⁴, such as burn ointment and first aid creams, insulin and anti-rejection drugs for organ transplant recipients, as example¹⁵.

FACT: Ninety-nine per cent of the beef animal is used so items made from beef by-products are all around us. This can include dish soap, gelatin, laundry pre-treatments, candles, crayons, deodorant, bandages, toilet paper and sports equipment, among other things¹⁶. One cowhide can produce enough leather to make 20 footballs, 18 soccer balls, 18 volleyballs or 12 basketballs¹⁷.



What can you do?

We hope you've learned something new and that you've got the facts, figures and information to make up your own mind about Meatless Monday.

But consider this...it's not just about eating less meat. If we end animal agriculture altogether, which is the ultimate goal of this campaign, it will have a serious impact on our daily lives. After all, livestock are an important part of our lives on many levels – from the food we eat to the products we use, the jobs we go to and the medicines we depend on.

If you're a Canadian farmer or rancher, be an ambassador for agriculture and share this fact sheet with your friends and family. Tweet it, blog it, post it, pin it or whatever else it takes to get the message out!



Curious and want to learn more?

www.virtualfarmtours.ca - Tour two Canadian beef farms from your computer, tablet or smart phone.

www.farmfoodcare.org – Facts and figures about beef and other types of farming in Canada

www.beefinfo.org – Health, nutrition, storage, handling and preparation information for Canadian beef

www.cattle.ca – Learn more about the beef industry and its environmental commitments from the Canadian Cattlemen's Association

www.animalagalliance.org – a wealth of information about livestock farming, including a handy and informative Meatless Monday guide at <http://bit.ly/122ujYr>.



Sources:

- ¹ <http://www.cattle.ca/just-facts-nutrition> - quoting data from the Canadian Community Health Survey 2004, cycle 2.2 (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/surveill/nutrition/commun/index-eng.php>)
- ² Rohrmann S et al. Meat consumption and mortality - results from the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition. BMC Medicine 2013; 11:63 (e-pub).
- ³ http://ordercentre.beefinfo.org/ca/en/consumer/default.aspx?catalogCode=RES_HEALTHPROFESSIONAL&subCatalogCode=RES_HEALTH_FORTHEHEALTHPRO
- ⁴ <http://www.thelancet.com/themed/global-burden-of-disease>
- ⁵ <http://www.cattle.ca/just-facts-nutrition>
- ⁶ <http://www.cattle.ca/stewardship-introduction>
- ⁷ <http://www.cattle.ca/just-facts-water-management>
- ⁸ <http://cowcalf.cattle.ca/water>
- ⁹ <http://www.cattle.ca/greenhouse-gas-emissions-faq>
- ¹⁰ <http://www.cattle.ca/just-facts-global-warming>
- ¹¹ <http://www.letstalkfarmanimals.ca/2012/08/16/livestock-the-original-recyclers/>
- ¹² <http://www.cattle.ca/just-facts-land-management>
- ¹³ http://www.cattle.ca/media/file/original/1227_Multiplier_Summary_Sept_2012.pdf
- ¹⁴ <http://www.farmfoodcare.org/images/pdfs/Beef%20Cattle.pdf>
- ¹⁵ <http://ardc.unl.edu/JTF-BEEFBYPRODUCTS.pdf>
- ¹⁶ <http://ardc.unl.edu/JTF-BEEFBYPRODUCTS.pdf>
- ¹⁷ <http://www.farmfoodcare.org/images/pdfs/Beef%20Cattle.pdf>



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