UPDATED NUTRIENT DATA ON DANISH BEEF AND VEAL

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Abstract:
Background and objectives: The forthcoming EU nutrition labelling rules valid from 2014/2016 require a mandatory declaration of energy, fat, saturated fat, carbohydrates, sugars, protein and salt on packed food. In the Danish Food Composition database, nutrient data on fat and saturated fat for beef and veal are based on 30-40 years old data sources and are therefore outdated regarding modern production, commercial cuts and more extensive trimming. The objective of this study was to document up-to-date nutrient data on total and saturated fat as well as protein and salt content in Danish veal and beef cuts.

Method: Based on Danish slaughter statistics, representative and average veal (n=8) and beef (n=8) carcasses were selected to generate a complete set of commercial cuts. Mean values of total fat, saturated fat, protein and sodium were determined by accredited analyses.

Results: A clear linear relationship between total and saturated fat was established on subsamples of veal and beef cuts as well as ground beef. Based on this relationship, the saturated fat content in veal and beef products can be easily calculated from the equation: 0.42 x total fat (g per 100 g) - 0.19. For total fat, the levels differed between veal and beef as veal has a lower fat content, nevertheless, the majority of Danish red meat cuts contained less than 10 g fat per 100 g. The updated nutrient data can be used as documentation for nutrition labelling at cut level.

Conclusion: Updated nutrient data on Danish veal and beef offer numerous products with ≤10 g fat per 100 g. The low levels of fat reflect the changes in animal production and product trimming that have occurred during the last 20-30 years. These updated data will benefit consumers, health professionals and scientists to make appropriate dietary decisions.

Keywords:
Beef, labelling, nutrient composition