

Health VIEWS

Volume 1 • Issue 1

For the health professional

Programs offered by Alberta Pork have expanded to address health and nutrition issues. As part of our nutrition programs, we welcome you to the first issue of Health Views. The goal of which is to provide applicable information from a research perspective addressing pertinent issues and concerns surrounding food, nutrition and health.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Canada Pork joins Heart and Stroke Foundation's New Health Check™ Program

A Fresh Look

Newsletter researched and written by Andrea Smith, MSc, RD

Canada Pork joins the Heart and Stroke Foundation's New Health Check Program

In January of this year, Canada Pork became an inaugural partner in the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada's national food information program. The Heart and Stroke Foundation established the not-for-profit Health Check™ Food Information Program to help Canadians make wise food choices and to help them establish healthy eating habits.

The Health Check™ program is designed to reduce consumer confusion regarding nutrition information and labelling on food product labels. The Heart and Stroke Foundation's Health Check™ program reflects federal guidelines such as *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* and *Nutrition Recommendations for Canadians* based in the context of a total diet.

The Health Check™ program is identified by the Health Check™

symbol, a simple and recognizable logo, which will be displayed on food packages to help make it easier for consumers to make wise food choices. Every product bearing the Health Check™ symbol

will also provide a nutrient information panel and an explanatory message. The explanatory message will detail how this food product relates to *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* and *Nutrition Recommendations for Canadians*.

Various branded products have joined the Health Check™ program and are incorporating the Health Check™ symbol on their product labelling. Since pork is a generic, non-branded product, the Health Check™ program is being implemented into our health promotion materials and retail food programs.



Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating recommends Canadians eat 2 to 3 servings per day from the meat and alternatives food group, and to choose leaner meats more often. However, if a consumer does not know what constitutes a "lean" cut of meat at the meat counter, how will they know which cuts of meat to purchase?

The Health Check™ symbol will tell today's consumers that pork is a healthy choice. Pork has met criteria established by the Heart and Stroke Foundation, which is consistent with Health Canada's

nutrient content claims criteria.

Fresh meats, poultry or fish must meet the following criteria to be accepted into the Health Check™ program:

Lean contains 10% fat or less

Extra-lean contains 7.5% fat or less

As previously mentioned, every product bearing the Health Check™ symbol will also provide a nutrient information panel and an explanatory message. A nutrient information panel and explanatory message for fresh pork is presented below in *Figure 1*.

Figure 1

Nutrient Information Panel and Explanatory Message for Fresh Pork.

Nutrition Information for an average 100g serving of raw trimmed Pork

Energy 139 Cal or 580 kJ

Protein 22g

Fat 5.0g

Carbohydrate 0g

All trimmed Pork, with the exception of ribs, meets the criteria to qualify as a lean meat; choosing leaner meats, poultry and fish is part of healthy eating. Canada Pork financially supports the Health Check™ education program of the Heart and Stroke Foundation. This is not an endorsement. See www.healthcheck.org



Facts about Health Check™

- With Health Check™ being a new program, not all food products will bear the Health Check™ symbol on their product labels. Furthermore, some companies will choose to participate, while other companies will not.

- Foods that do not participate in the Health Check™ program can be just as nutritious as those foods that do participate in the Health Check™ program.

- Nutrient criteria of the Health Check™ program comply with Nutrition Recommendations for Canadians and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising.

- The Heart and Stroke Foundation's technical advisory committee is currently addressing a comprehensive evaluation plan for the Health Check™ program.

- The Health Check™ program is designed to promote healthy eating in accordance to the Nutrition Recommendations for Canadians and Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating.

More information about Health Check™ is available on the Internet at <http://www.healthcheck.org> or by contacting your provincial Heart and Stroke Foundation office toll-free at: **1-888-HSF-INFO (1-888-473-4636)**.

A Fresh Look

Alberta Pork's web site recently went through some restructuring to provide up-to-date information on the pork industry for the public and for our producers. Our objective was to restructure the site in an easy-to-follow format, with not only a completely fresh look, but to expand our information categories as well. The web site is a current source of information for recipe ideas, retail programs, foodservice programs, cooking and handling, food safety, research, technology transfer, health and nutrition.

Please visit our site at www.albertapork.com and send your comments, questions and suggestions to us.