

Beef Plays Vital Role in Marathon Training

By Kendra Davis

Sioux Falls, SD - Beef is the number one food source for protein, zinc, and vitamin B12, so it is no wonder that many athletes consider it to be a very important part of their diet.

More than 2,000 runners from across the nation competed in this year's Sioux Falls Marathon Sept. 11. Of those runners, a select group sported flashy red "Team BEEF" jerseys.

Team BEEF South Dakota is a program created by the South Dakota Beef Council. The team is made up of about 100 runners who recognize the nutritional importance lean beef can have in the diet. Many of the athletes running for team beef participate to promote the protein source.

"If I don't get enough beef in me, I can definitely feel it," said Shannon Newman of Freeman, S.D. "I up my beef intake, I speed up."

Newman has been a part of Team Beef for three years and competes in at least two full marathons a year. Her biggest races are the Boston Marathon and the San Francisco Marathon. She is often asked how to become a part of Team BEEF.

Newman is not the only person who depends on beef to fuel her training diet. Trent and Shannon Kubik competed in the half marathon in Sioux Falls. The Kubiks are farmers from Parkston, S.D.

"[Beef] is a one-stop shop for a lot of things besides protein," Shannon Kubik said. "My mom is a dietician, so nutrition has always been important to me."

Shirley Thompson of Mitchell, S.D. said, "We run, eat beef, and then run again."

Thompson and her husband, David, participated in the marathon, along with Laurie Johnson of South Shore, S.D.

"As far as nutrition, the better you eat, the better you feel," Johnson said.

All the runners agree beef plays a vital role in their training. A three-ounce serving of beef contains more than 10 percent of nine essential nutrients. According to the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, you would have to eat three cups of spinach to equal the amount of iron in three ounces of beef. You would also have to eat 11 cans of tuna and at least seven chicken breasts to equal the amount of zinc, vitamin B12, riboflavin, and thiamin in just three ounces of lean beef.

"You can't train without adequate nutrition," Daniel Scholl said. "Lean protein builds muscle."

Scholl and his wife, Nancy, live in Brookings, S.D. where he is working as the interim dean of the College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences at South Dakota State University. It is their first year running for Team BEEF. Nancy Scholl's biggest race has been the Boston Marathon.

They are cautious of what they eat while training, with one long run every day, along with interval training and an easy day here and there.

"The iron [from lean beef] is very important in keeping your hemoglobin up," she said.

The Anderson family from Vermillion, S.D. all ran some form of the Sioux Falls race. Angela and Bill, along with their two oldest children, Henry and Lydia, have an active lifestyle. Even the children talked about how important it is to eat beef.

"It has protein," Henry said.

He then added that beef is a big part of his nutrition, along with a lot of vegetables. He and his sister ran the 5K.

Being one of the largest segments of American agriculture in terms of dollars, beef cattle production is important to many South Dakotans. The state is also home to more than 15,000 beef producers. Many of the members of South Dakota Team BEEF are beef producers.

The members are proud to run for a team that represents their livelihood. The Thompsons, Andersons, Kubiks, and Johnson are all beef producers.

"It [beef] is a concentrated form of protein," Bill Anderson said. "Lean beef is great for you and it's good for our economy, too, which we love."

South Dakota ranks fifth in the nation for the number of beef cows in a state, according to the South Dakota Beef Council.

"As a beef producer, it is important for us to be able to promote our own product that we are producing," Johnson said.

Many people see the bright red Team BEEF jerseys that the members wear while they are running the races. Most of the runners are prompted to answer questions about what team beef is, why they are running for it, and how they, too, can be a part of the team. Some of the runners spark conversations with Team BEEF members about their cattle, and how they are raised.

"All over the course people were yelling 'yay team beef,'" Daniel Scholl said.

The athletes talked about how many people notice the jerseys and how they often cheer them on by yelling things such as, "go team beef" or, "go beefinators." Hearing that kind of

encouragement helped them keep going and continue to be excited about the race. Many of them are simply happy to run for something they believe in.

To enroll in Team BEEF

Enrollment for the 2017 season opens soon. More information about how to sign up will be available on the South Dakota Beef Industry Council website, and Facebook page in the next few weeks. Anyone interested in promoting the health benefits of beef in an active healthy lifestyle is welcome to join. Benefits of being a member of Team beef include receiving a SD Team BEEF Under Armour jersey, getting access to fitness and nutrition tips, incentive programs and much more.