

Beta-Agonists and Cattle | fact sheet



Beta-agonists are Animal Feed Ingredients Safe for Cattle and Humans

- **What are they?**
 - Beta-agonists are animal feed ingredients that help cattle maintain their natural muscle building ability (ractopamine and zilpaterol are examples of beta agonists approved for use in cattle), resulting in leaner beef for consumers. They have been extensively tested and approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
- **How are they used?**
 - In consultation with an animal nutritionists and veterinarians, they are added to the feed and are just one part of a healthy, balanced diet for cattle.
- **Are they safe?**
 - Beef from cattle fed beta-agonists is safe and just as nutritious as the beef you have always enjoyed.

Beta-agonists are:

- Metabolized quickly. That means they are not stored by the body over time.
- Used in targeted ways, only in small amounts at a specific time in an animal's life.
- Approved and used in the United States, Canada, Australia and two dozen other countries across the developed world.

Raising Beef Responsibly

Cattle farmers are committed to raising cattle responsibly with respect for their well-being and for the environment. Cattle feedyard owners who choose to include beta-agonists in their animal care plans do so to ensure they are using nature's resources most efficiently.

- Cattle fed beta-agonists grow an estimated 30 more pounds of lean meat versus fat. While only a small percentage (2.2 percent¹) of the average cattle's total body weight, this translates to an estimated 780 million pounds of additional beef from the same number of animals.
- Cattle fed this feed ingredient need less grain, which means fewer acres and less water needed for farming. This results in less of a demand on natural resources.

1 2011 National Beef Quality Audit