



The healthier beef option

Today's consumers want wholesome food and ethical farming practices. Veld-reared Ngunis offer both.

Consumers' attitudes towards the quality of red meat and how it is produced have changed dramatically in recent years. Increasingly, this has to be considered in the marketing of red meat and its products.

THE MEAT OF GRASS-FED CATTLE IS LOWER IN SATURATED FATS

Today, thanks to instant online accessibility to international trends and research, consumers are better informed than ever. As a result, they are demanding meat of higher quality, and want to know its origin and production methods.

In short, consumer confidence plays a greater role in the market place than ever before. Consumers are increasingly striving

towards an improved lifestyle and are following healthier diets. They are also concerned about animal welfare and demand that animals are not be subjected to unnatural conditions.

They are equally worried about the impact of farming practices on the environment, pollution, and excessive fuel and energy consumption.

ETHICAL ALTERNATIVES

Many people vote with their wallets. If they believe that ethical norms were not followed in the production of a red meat product, they look for an alternative. Preferences and spending increasingly support sustainable and eco-friendly red meat production practices in pursuit of a cleaner and greener planet.

Consumers are more aware of the difference in the meat quality of an animal fed predominantly on a

ABOVE: Nguni cattle can be fattened on veld grazing.

RIGHT: With its legendary hardiness and disease-resistance, the Nguni is the ideal grass-fed breed.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NGUNI CATTLE BREEDERS' SOCIETY



grain diet and one grazed on grass on the veld.

RESEARCH

Studies carried out by the USA's Department of Agriculture and Clemson University in South Carolina found that the meat of cattle off the veld was healthier than that of grain-fed animals. Specifically, the meat of grass-fed cattle:

- is lower in total fat than that of feedlot cattle;
- is lower in saturated fats;
- contains more beta carotene, vitamins E, B1 and B2, calcium, magnesium and potassium;
- has a higher percentage of omega 3 fatty acids;
- has a healthier omega 6 : omega 3 fatty

acid ratio (1,65 : 4,84); • contains more CLA (conjugated linoleic acid), a potential anti-carcinogenic.

A Canadian research institute found the meat of grass-fed animals "clearly superior" and "remarkably more beneficial" and that it "should be promoted as an important part of a healthy, balanced diet".

(Source: *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, June 2008, 56:4775-4782). The Nguni's natural hardiness, adaptability and disease resistance make it one of the most suitable breeds for grass-fed beef.

– Keith Karvey, BSc Agric, BSc Agric (Hon), and MSc Agric (Sustainable Agriculture)
• Phone 051 448 7302, email info@ngunicattle.info, or visit www.ngunicattle.info.

