

Eating high off the hog is healthier

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The pork industry says hogs have been on a "diet" for more than a decade, and new government research shows that Americans are getting a much leaner product because of it.

The National Pork Board announced Monday that feeding and breeding techniques over the past 15 years have led to cuts of pork that rival skinless chicken breasts — often revered as the leanest of meats.

A 3-ounce serving of cooked pork tenderloin, at 2.98 grams of fat, is as lean as the same size serving of skinless chicken breast, which weighs in at 3.03 grams of fat, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture analysis. The tenderloin had 120 calories for the 3-ounce serving, while skinless chicken breast contained 140 calories.

"Most people still don't consider (pork) as healthy as chicken, so I think it's going to blow the socks off of a lot of people," said Ceci Snyder, a marketing executive and registered dietitian at the Clive-based National Pork Board — the people who launched the "The Other White Meat" campaign with national checkoff dollars.

Snyder said six common cuts of

pork are 16 percent leaner than in the early 1990s.

Tenderloin ranked as the leanest of pork cuts, and meets the USDA's "extra lean" guidelines, she said. With less than 10 grams of fat per serving, the cuts that qualify as "lean" meats include boneless top loin chop, boneless top loin roast, center loin chop, center rib chop and bone-in sirloin roasts.

Snyder said saturated fat content has dropped 27 percent for those cuts, and pork has been found to have no trans fat — the type of fat making headlines for raising "bad" cholesterol and contributing to heart disease. Meanwhile, as the fat content has decreased, some essential nutrients, including niacin and vitamin B6, have increased.

That's all according to research conducted by the USDA, University of Wisconsin at Madison, and University of Maryland. The study was paid for by the National Pork Board, which wanted a comparison of nutrient data for fresh pork from 1991 to 2005.

Snyder said the animals are lower in fat now because of improved farming practices. Producers are actually paid based on the leanness of their hogs, so they breed for that trait, and use science to balance the animals' diet.

Pork rivals chicken

By The Associated Press
HEALTHIER PORK: The National Pork Board says six common cuts of pork are 16 percent leaner than in the early 1990s.

EVEN BETTER: Saturated fat content has dropped 27 percent for some cuts, pork has been found to

have no trans fat, and some essential nutrients, including niacin and vitamin B6, have increased.

WHO'S CHICKEN?: A pork tenderloin had 120 calories for a 3-ounce serving, while skinless chicken breast contains 140 calories.

"They have an incentive to raise a lean, muscular hog," she said.

The pork board is hoping the new information will peak the interest of food vendors that have added healthy items to their menus, including fast-food outlets such as McDonald's, which offers a variety of chicken salads.

"Food service outlets are probably going to take another look at pork," she said.

Gene Ver Steeg, president of the Iowa Pork Producers Association, said the new research could lead to even greater pork exports.

"It's certainly going to put us in a very good advertising position against chicken," said Ver Steeg, who raises hogs in Inwood in northwestern Iowa. "That's always been

our No. 1 competitor."

The poultry industry doesn't seem to have its feathers ruffled by the new data.

Richard Lobb, a spokesman for the National Chicken Council, said the USDA data for chicken also is outdated — having been used since about 1970. He said the council did some research of its own in the 80s, and found that chicken had about 1.5 grams of fat per 3-ounce cooked serving.

"We are proud to be the protein that the others have to work so hard to try to match," he said.

On the Net:
National Pork Board: <http://pork.org/>
USDA: <http://www.usda.gov/>

Athletic scandal trial starts

WICHITA (AP) — Former Barton County Community College track coach Lance Brauman was the only coach in the school's athletics scandal who walked away from the job when he was not comfortable with its procedures, his attorney told jurors in opening arguments Monday.

Brauman has been charged in U.S. District Court with eight counts for allegedly participating in a scheme to get athletes work-study funds and campus jobs that paid them for work they did not do and for causing false academic credentials to be sent to other schools on athletes' behalf.

A ninth count that involved lying to a grand jury was dropped.

Brauman's case is the first to go to trial in the Barton County Community College athletics scandal that spawned charges against seven coaches and the athletic director and led to the firing of the school's president.

Brauman's attorney, Lee Davis, said the government has built its case on a "rotten foundation" based on the testimony of other coaches who have repeatedly lied and made deals to reduce their own sentences.

"Lance, when he became uncomfortable with what he discovered at Barton County Commu-

nity College, left the school," Davis said.

Prosecutor Larry Welch told jurors in his opening remarks that Barton County used federal and state student employment funds to circumvent a Kansas Jayhawk Community College Conference prohibition against offering full scholarships to athletes at its 19 schools.

Welch said at times the athletes themselves did not know the money was being taken in their names. While Brauman never received any money himself, he hoped that by building a good track program at the college, he would be able to get a job at a four-year college, Welch said.

Brauman was hired by the University of Arkansas in 2002 to coach sprinters and hurdlers.

"It helped him get the job he wanted," Welch said.

An embezzlement charge against Brauman stems from allegations he helped prepare false time sheets under the work-study program, resulting in student athletes receiving nearly \$17,000 to which they were not entitled.

A theft charge involves allegations Brauman helped students receive about \$109,400 in campus employment funds for work they did not perform.

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