

Meat, Millennials, Meal Kits

Online food sales are reshaping how consumers buy beef

BY WYATT BECHTEL

Online food sales are growing, and beef marketers are using innovative ideas to put beef on consumers' plates.

"With online purchases, millennials are quickly changing how we are going to get food," says Kari Underly, a master butcher in Chicago and owner of Range Partners a meat merchandising consultant.

Online retailer Amazon made headlines with its purchase of Whole Foods this summer. Amazon was already venturing into the meal kit market with a test run in Seattle the past few months.

Meal kits deliver food ingredients directly to consumers in individually packaged proportions. The ingredients are cooked at home with a full step-by-step recipe. Meal kits also

eliminate the need for subscribers to go grocery shopping.

"The meal kit phenomenon is going to continue," Underly says. Trying some of these meal kits herself, Underly believes they might be expensive for some consumers but they provide everything someone needs to cook a quality meal.

"They get the instructions, it is an event where they are touching and making their food instead of going out. I think that is pretty powerful," Underly says.

Beef is featured in many of the offerings by meal kit providers like Blue Apron and Plated. Some of the recipes include stir fry, kebabs, burgers and more traditional steaks.

"It is exposing people to new ways to eat beef," Underly adds.

Meal kit company HelloFresh has partnered with Greater Omaha Packing Co. to source its beef.



"As we looked to source high-quality beef to our customers, we came across Greater Omaha who is not only packing high-quality beef, but also cutting steaks under one roof," says Carl Montgomery, protein strategy manager at HelloFresh US. "This ensures consistent high-quality beef to our customers week over week."

HelloFresh beef has a branded private label and comes in a package serving two people. Included on the labeling is nutrition information, safe handling instructions and a best use by date within seven days of receipt.

Three HelloFresh distribution centers, located in New Jersey, Texas and California, receive beef from Greater Omaha. >



Meal kits sold online are changing the way people eat beef. The majority of beef marketed by meal kit provider HelloFresh grades upper 2/3 Choice.



PHOTOS: HELLOFRESH



Extended-Release Injectable Parasiticide
5% Sterile Solution

NADA 141-327, Approved by FDA for subcutaneous injection
For the Treatment and Control of Internal and External
Parasites of Cattle on Pasture with Persistent Effectiveness

CAUTION: Federal law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

INDICATIONS FOR USE

LONGRANGE, when administered at the recommended dose volume of 1 mL per 110 lb (50 kg) body weight, is effective in the treatment and control of 20 species and stages of internal and external parasites of cattle:

Gastrointestinal Roundworms	Lungworms
<i>Bunostomum phlebotomum</i> – Adults and L ₁	<i>Dictyoaculus viviparus</i> – Adults
<i>Cooperia oncophora</i> – Adults and L ₁	
<i>Cooperia punctata</i> – Adults and L ₁	
<i>Cooperia sunabada</i> – Adults and L ₁	
<i>Haemonchus placei</i> – Adults	Grubs
<i>Oesophagostomum radiatum</i> – Adults	<i>Hypoderma bovis</i>
<i>Ostertagia lyrata</i> – Adults	
<i>Ostertagia ostertagi</i> – Adults, L ₁ and inhibited L ₁	
<i>Trichostrongylus axei</i> – Adults and L ₁	Mites
<i>Trichostrongylus colubriformis</i> – Adults	<i>Sarcoptes scabiei</i> var. <i>bovis</i>

Parasites	Durations of Persistent Effectiveness
Gastrointestinal Roundworms	
<i>Bunostomum phlebotomum</i>	150 days
<i>Cooperia oncophora</i>	100 days
<i>Cooperia punctata</i>	100 days
<i>Haemonchus placei</i>	120 days
<i>Oesophagostomum radiatum</i>	120 days
<i>Ostertagia lyrata</i>	120 days
<i>Ostertagia ostertagi</i>	120 days
<i>Trichostrongylus axei</i>	100 days
Lungworms	
<i>Dictyoaculus viviparus</i>	150 days

DOSEAGE AND ADMINISTRATION

LONGRANGE® (eprinomectin) should be given only by subcutaneous injection in front of the shoulder at the recommended dosage level of 1 mg eprinomectin per kg body weight (1 mL per 110 lb body weight).

WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS

Withdrawal Periods and Residue Warnings

Animals intended for human consumption must not be slaughtered within 48 days of the last treatment.

This drug product is not approved for use in female dairy cattle 20 months of age or older, including dry dairy cows. Use in these cattle may cause drug residues in milk and/or in calves born to these cows.

A withdrawal period has not been established for pre-ruminating calves. Do not use in calves to be processed for veal.

Animal Safety Warnings and Precautions

The product is likely to cause tissue damage at the site of injection, including possible granulomas and necrosis. These reactions have disappeared without treatment. Local tissue reaction may result in trim loss of edible tissue at slaughter.

Observe cattle for injection site reactions. If injection site reactions are suspected, consult your veterinarian. This product is not for intravenous or intramuscular use. Protect product from light. LONGRANGE® (eprinomectin) has been developed specifically for use in cattle only. This product should not be used in other animal species.

When to Treat Cattle with Grubs

LONGRANGE effectively controls all stages of cattle grubs. However, proper timing of treatment is important. For the most effective results, cattle should be treated as soon as possible after the end of the heel fly (warble fly) season.

Environmental Hazards

Not for use in cattle managed in feedlots or under intensive rotational grazing because the environmental impact has not been evaluated for these scenarios.

Other Warnings: Underdosing and/or subtherapeutic concentrations of extended-release anthelmintic products may encourage the development of parasite resistance. It is recommended that parasite resistance be monitored following the use of any anthelmintic with the use of a fecal egg count reduction test program.

TARGET ANIMAL SAFETY

Clinical studies have demonstrated the wide margin of safety of LONGRANGE® (eprinomectin). Overdosing at 3 to 5 times the recommended dose resulted in a statistically significant reduction in average weight gain when compared to the group treated at label dose.

Treatment-related lesions observed in most cattle administered the product included swelling, hyperemia, or necrosis in the subcutaneous tissue of the skin. The administration of LONGRANGE at 3 times the recommended therapeutic dose had no adverse reproductive effects on beef cows at all stages of breeding or pregnancy or on their calves.

Not for use in bulls, as reproductive safety testing has not been conducted in males intended for breeding or actively breeding. Not for use in calves less than 3 months of age because safety testing has not been conducted in calves less than 3 months of age.

STORAGE

Store at 77°F (25°C) with excursions between 59°F and 86°F (15° and 30° C). Protect from light.

Made in Canada.

Manufactured for Merial, Inc., Duluth, GA, USA.

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Montgomery says a majority of the beef is upper ⅔ Choice, while Sirloin and New York Strip steaks remain popular cuts. “And we do know consumers also love burgers.”

Going forward, meal kits could serve as an interim step to new food delivery systems, says Mack Graves, who runs Latigo Management & Marketing Consultants, a meat consulting business.

Several companies have experimented with drone delivery for food distribution, but it’s unlikely to include fresh meat. However, there are plenty of services that offer more traditional door-to-door drop-offs.

“These kinds of things will provide more convenience for millennials and the next generation coming along ...

they don’t want to spend time doing mundane cooking tasks,” Graves says.

Graves, the former president and CEO of Coleman Natural Meats Inc., isn’t sure what will happen at the retail level in the future with online players like Amazon entering the grocery business. “I suspect that in 50 years there might not be any retail stores,” he says.

However, Graves does think restaurants will still play a role in providing meals to people in the coming years.

“People still like to go out and have someone prepare a meal for them,” Graves says. “A lot of those meals include beef.”

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Checkoff Targets Online Shoppers

The Beef Checkoff has been working on the problem of consumers not being able to physically interact with the beef they are buying online like they would in a store.

“One of the biggest barriers with e-commerce is you can’t see the meat in person,” says Season Solorio, senior executive director of brand marketing and communications for the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA), contractor for the Beef Checkoff.

Using sensory words and adjectives to entice consumers with beef in food descriptions might be a step toward this for meal kit providers and online beef sellers.

This past year, several in-market tests have been performed with e-commerce companies and the Beef Checkoff to show different cooking recipes for beef. The short, hands-on videos give cooking directions and share images and messages about beef. After using the content the companies involved saw an increase in beef sales.

“This tells us that there are creative ways to market to the consumer, at e-commerce or a point of sale online,” Solorio says. The Beef Checkoff plans to continue to work through “new paths to purchase,” such as meal kit providers to help them answer questions about beef.

For the past year NCBA has been updating the “Beef: It’s What’s For Dinner” website. The October relaunch of the www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com consolidates eight different Beef Checkoff properties to make things more user friendly.

