



**Intended Testimony of Betsy Booren, Ph.D., Vice President of Scientific Affairs
To the
Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee**

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Affiliation: American Meat Institute Foundation

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I am Dr. Betsy Booren, Vice President of Scientific Affairs for the American Meat Institute Foundation. The AMI Foundation appreciates this Committee's important role in developing nutritional recommendations that can translate into attainable and actionable nutritional policy that will measurably improve the health of Americans.

The Industry I represent produces more than 90 percent of U.S. beef, pork, veal and lamb products and 70 percent of U.S. turkey products. This includes fresh, whole-muscle meats as well as ready-to-eat products. These products provide Americans a simple, direct, and balanced dietary source of all essential amino acids and are rich sources of micronutrients such as iron, selenium, Vitamins A, B12, and folic acid. While a key trend in products today is added protein, our products are quite simply a natural, complete protein. A significant majority of Americans make meat and poultry products part of their diets and for good reason.

Per serving, meat, poultry, and fish provide more protein than dairy, eggs, legumes, or cereals, vegetables, or nuts. Protein is critical for developing, maintaining, and repairing strong muscles. And is vital for growth in children and reducing the muscle loss that often occurs with aging. The high-quality protein from meat and poultry is a "one-stop-shop" for the essential amino acids. Meat and poultry generally provide more protein per calorie than plant protein sources.

Foods from animals, including meat & poultry, are THE natural source of Vitamin B12, which is important for normal metabolism and mental clarity. Up to 16% of U.S. adults and more than 20% over 60 years old are marginally depleted in vitamin B12. Deficiency increases with age, with about 6% of those over 70 years old being deficient in vitamin B12.¹ Meat & poultry are rich in nutrients your body can use, and help people derive more nutrients from vegetables and grains when consumed in combination. Iron and zinc in beef, pork, lamb, poultry, and fish are more "bioavailable," meaning they are more easily absorbed and utilized by the body, than these minerals from grains or vegetables.

Given basic facts about the American lifestyle, cooking can be an obstacle to good nutrition, convenience meats can help encourage consumption of the complete protein that meat and poultry offer. The meat and poultry industry offers its customers a variety of convenience meat products, like marinated roasts, fully cooked home-style favorites like meatloaf or turkey breast

¹ Allen LH (2008). How common is vitamin B-12 deficiency? <http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/89/2/693S.long>.

and luncheon meats in a variety of different formulations that fit their lifestyle and nutrition needs including low fat, low sodium, gluten free and more.

- It is important to note that these convenience meats have an exemplary safety record and are affordable products that can provide nutrition and more specifically protein to people on fixed incomes, who may also be in an at-risk food safety demographic and have limited ability to prepare food.
- We ask you to consider the important role of leaner, reduced sodium convenient meats in a diet, which provide nutritious options for foods consumed by millions. In particular, the importance of these foods for sub-groups of the population who have limited options and are currently making less nutrient dense choices. These populations may currently be at higher risk for deficiencies of key nutrients that convenient meat products provide.
- We agree that a variety of protein foods should be consumed. However we also have shown that convenience meats can fit into healthy eating pattern and is an appropriate option for a healthy lifestyle. The meat and poultry industry also provides a variety of processed meats that include historical American favorites as well as whole muscle items, and many lower sodium, and leaner options.

One final note – it is commonly thought that Americans are over-consuming meat and poultry. Federal data show that on average, Americans consume within the recommended range, with men at the higher end of the range and women at the low end of the range. It is essential that you consider this fact as you make your recommendations.

I thank you for your time and consideration. AMI Foundation looks forward to providing a more detailed written comments for your consideration.