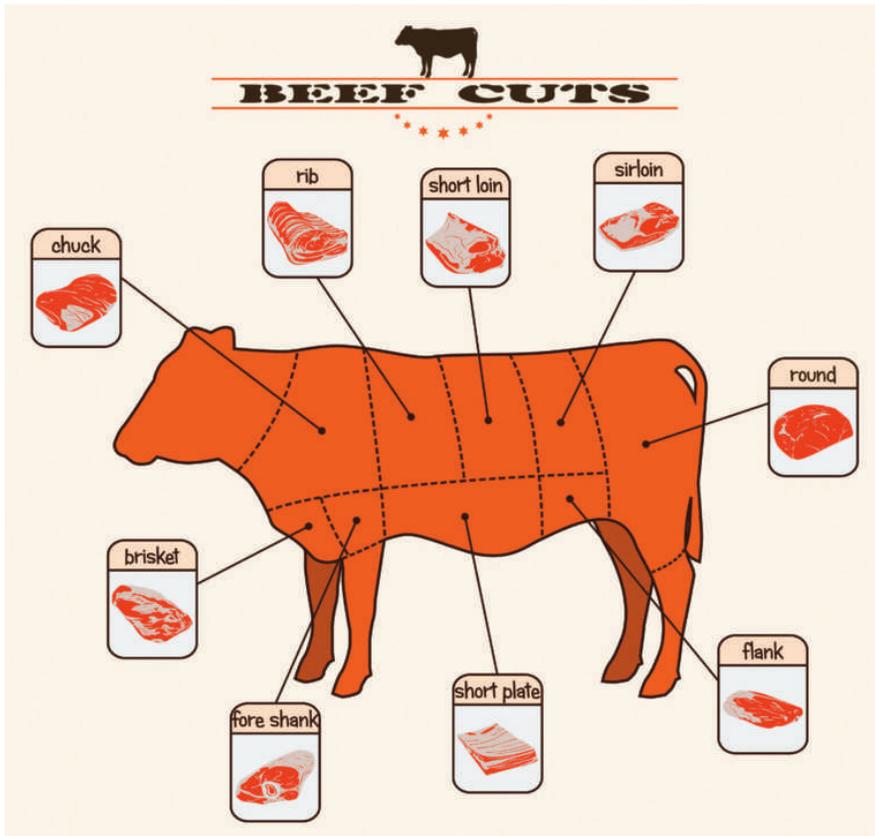


IN THE AISLES

REPORT ON MEAT & SEAFOOD, CONDIMENTS & SAUCES, FRUIT



again, and that's true across all demographics," he says.

But even with the varied number of cuts available, research finds that shoppers are uneasy about doing the preparation. According to the latest national survey from Canada Beef, 70% of Canadians want to improve their beef-cooking skills—especially those aged 20 to 34—but 50% won't buy cuts if they don't already know how to cook them.

What's more, "The Power of Meat 2015" report, sponsored by the Food Marketing Institute and American Meat Institute, reveals younger shoppers place a higher value on preparation knowledge, time and ease than price when it comes to buying meat. The report suggests educating millennials about meat basics will go a long way to growing a more loyal, long-term customer relationship.

Enter retailers such as Big Lou's Butcher Shop, in Vancouver. It's helping meat eaters conquer their fears by hosting cooking classes for groups of six to 10 people. The courses run from an hour to a half day, and range from "Sausage-making 101" to "Whole Hog Butchery" where instructors help students with tool selection, cutting techniques and handling. (Each participant takes home at least 10 pounds of fresh pork.)

"What I find is that people who take one class are coming back to take others," says owner, Karl Gregg. "The more we can teach people

MAKING SENSE OF MEAT

Ground beef, fish fillets and chicken breasts are longtime standbys for shoppers intimidated by lesser-known products. Here's how to get them excited to try new cuts

By Rosalind Stefanac

HEALTH-CONSCIOUS CONSUMERS MAY PILE veggies onto their dinner plates, but it's meat and seafood taking centre stage as a number of shoppers become intrigued by more than just ground beef and fish fillets.

"I'm seeing that the young-professional demographic is among some of the most eager to learn about meat and to eat better-quality cuts," says Dave Meli, executive butcher and co-owner of Toronto's Healthy Butcher. "They're asking great questions and a lot of them are eating a high-protein,

low-carb diet where meat is a key factor."

But it's not just millennials hankering for more meat. Meli says the boomers who grew up without access to many different cuts and varieties of meat are enticed by the broad selection now available. "Meat is cool

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what we're doing, hopefully the more meat we can sell."

Larger supermarkets, such as Loblaw and Longo's (through its Longo's Lo locations), are also appealing to a growing demand for meat and seafood preparation know-how by offering in-store cooking classes. But Brian Langley, Longo's director of meat and seafood, says convenience still trumps culinary prowess when it comes to securing the basket share of millennials. "More often than not, they're going for semi-prepared or fully prepared versions from our kitchen," he says. For example, Longo's offers a raw stuffed chicken breast and panko-crusted tilapia.

With higher meat costs, Langley says shoppers, regardless of age, are opting for smaller, premium cuts or selections for mixed grills. "They're choosing to entertain with a barbecue of sausages and kabobs—not just steaks," he says. "They're also looking for local product, so we've secured that for every meat category."

Manufacturers, too, are paying attention to consumer demand. Scarborough, Ont.-based Dom International has several flavours of grill and oven-ready cedar-planked salmon meant to make seafood less intimidating. Packaging on brands from One Earth Farms, which boasts natural, hormone-free, organic and grass-fed Canadian meat, highlights a website where consumers can get more information on the origins of the product as well as preparation ideas.

Piller's Simply Free brand is gaining attention for its all-natural, allergen-free products, as proven by its kolbassa sausage, which

consumers voted this year's best new ready-to-eat packaged meat [in a Brandspark poll]. "As a retailer, I'd want to position [meat] so people can easily navigate to those higher-quality items," says Rita Weigel, Piller's director of marketing. "Millennials, in particular, don't want anything that isn't based on natural products."

Cynthia Beretta, One Earth Farm's director of marketing, agrees that younger consumers in general are more conscious about what they eat and feed their children. "It's why sampling products is important, as is educating staff so they can answer any questions about the product."

A CUT ABOVE

A new app from Canada Beef aims to inspire shoppers to get out of their comfort zones when it comes to meat.

"Our research shows that consumers tend to be one-trick ponies—one cut always cooked in one way," says Joyce Parslow, director of consumer marketing at Canada Beef. With the Roundup app (Android and iOS compatible), consumers will be able to research different cuts, compare how tender they are and learn how to cook them properly—all while standing at the meat counter. "It's like having a mobile cuts chart with you at all times."

For retailers, Parslow says the app will be another way to talk to shoppers as they're making meat choices, and could serve as a training tool for less-experienced staff. "We're not born with the knowledge of what makes prime rib different from an outside round roast," she says. "This app will help."

The app is set to launch this spring via print and online promotional campaigns. Parslow says the goal is to get 8,000 downloads in the first month with steady growth thereafter.



LEADING THE HERD

Meat and seafood sales in Canada

	52 Weeks Ending Nov. 15, 2014		Latest 52 Weeks Year Ago
	\$(000s)	\$ Vol % Change	\$(000s)
BEEF	2,521,851.89	5	2,408,877.48
CHICKEN	2,221,664.17	8	2,080,535.17
PORK	1,043,907.50	4	1,000,811.43
LUNG-HEON MEAT - EXACT WEIGHT	993,062.74	14	870,525.26
FRESH SEAFOOD	662,770.36	6	626,533.56
BACON & SUBSTITUTES	532,867.29	17	455,537.14
SAUSAGES - EXACT WEIGHT	354,480.89	7	331,372.71
WIENERS	300,347.29	3	290,368.33
TURKEY	254,038.66	4	245,447.52
TUNA - C&B	222,874.58	4	215,021.76
HAM	173,374.50	-10	192,258.62
SAUSAGES - RANDOM WEIGHT	127,308.50	9	116,941.71
REV. FRESH MEAT	117,954.78	11	106,199.60
SALMON - C&B	96,547.51	4	92,975.34
SEAFOOD - C&B	87,241.18	3	84,403.48
VEAL	81,379.94	6	76,888.11
MEAT - C&B	78,611.39	7	73,473.29
LAMB	66,950.07	7	62,888.81
IMITATION SEAFOOD	24,340.07	-3	25,015.93
BACON - RANDOM WEIGHT	18,322.96	-3	18,961.22
MEAT SPREADS - C&B	8,373.37	2	8,231.28

Talk about bringing home the bacon. Sales are up 17%

Green eggs and sausages? Ham sales are down 10% while sausages saw a 9% uptick

Looks like consumers want the real deal. Imitation seafood is down 3% from last year

SOURCE: NIELSEN, NATIONAL ALL CHANNELS, ALL SALES (EXCEPT NEWFOUNDLAND); GROCERY/BANNER, MASS/MERCHANDISERS, DRUG, GENERAL MERCHANDISERS, WAREHOUSE CLUBS