WHAT'S SUSTAINABILITY?
Producing safe, nutritious beef while balancing environmental stewardship, social responsibility and economic viability.

Typical U.S. Cattle Lifecycle

- **Cow-calf**
  - Diet: Grass, Other Human-inedible Plants
  - Duration: 6 - 10 Months

- **Stocker/backgrounder**
  - Diet: Mostly Grass, Other Human-inedible Plants
  - Duration: 2 - 6 Months

- **Finishing**
  - Diet: Grain, Other Human-inedible Plants
  - Duration: 4 - 6 Mos. Grain or 6 - 10 Mos. Grass

How'd they do it?
Compared to 1977, today's beef farmers and ranchers produce the same amount of beef with 33% fewer cattle.

- Better Animal Health & Welfare
- Better Animal Nutrition
- Better Animal Genetics

More with Less
U.S. farmers and ranchers produce 18% of the world's beef with only 8% of the world's cattle.

Fewer Cattle, Less Emissions
U.S. beef has one of the lowest carbon footprints in the world, 10 to 50 times lower than some nations. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from cattle only account for 2% of U.S. GHG emissions.
Sustainability is about balancing multiple economic, social, and environmental issues at once, while recognizing tradeoffs.

Cattle have 4 stomach compartments, and the largest is the rumen, which is why cattle are referred to as ruminant animals.

Rumen microbes give cattle their upcycling super-power – cattle upgrade plants of little to no nutritional value to people to high-quality protein, micronutrients, and other important products.

Relative differences in carbon footprints between animal vs. plant foods don’t add up to significant GHG-emissions differences at the national level.

One 3-ounce cooked serving of a composite, trimmed, retail beef cut contributes less than 10% of calories to a 2000-calorie diet, yet it supplies more than 10% of the Daily Value for 10 essential nutrients including protein, iron, zinc and many B vitamins.

Reference list for Quick Facts on Beef Sustainability:
Broocks, A. et al.; Does grass-finished beef leave a lower carbon footprint than grain-finished beef? Available: beefresearch.org/beefsustainability.aspx (Tough Question #6)
NASEM, 2016. Nutrient Req. of Beef Cattle. 8th revised ed. DOI: https://doi.org/10.17226/19014
USDA 2012 Ag Census. Available at: https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/#full_report
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