

RED MEAT MATTERS



How much red meat are Australians really eating?

Fact **3**

As with many other foods, it's often difficult to determine accurately how much meat people are really eating. There are two ways to look at the consumption of red meat (beef, veal, lamb and mutton): Apparent and Actual Consumption.

Apparent consumption

Apparent consumption data represent the amount of meat available in the market-place, not the amount actually eaten. Apparent consumption is essentially the difference between the volume of meat produced and the amount exported. The figure is expressed in carcase weight.

Apparent consumption does not take into account the fact that the butcher removes bones and excess fat before offering meat for sale. Nor does it take into account the trimming of additional fat by people in the home, both before and after cooking. Further it doesn't take into account cooking loss which in the main cooking methods - grilling and roasting - can result in 25 per cent moisture loss.

Apparent consumption figures released in June 2007 indicated that the 50.7kg of red meat was available for consumption by each person in Australia in 2006-07.¹

Actual consumption

The last comprehensive national nutrition survey of Australians was undertaken in 1995, involving 13,858 people aged from 2 years, drawn from both metropolitan and rural areas throughout Australia.² Dietary data were collected on the basis of a one-day recall of actual consumption, plus information on the frequency of consumption for assessing usual intakes.

The results of the survey³ showed that although the majority of Australians eat red meat, they are eating less than in previous years. Australians on average are eating around 460g of red meat a week. These amounts are well within the Australian dietary guideline recommendations. However recent quantitative research commissioned by MLA, indicated that up to a third of Australian adults are eating red meat less than the recommended 3 to 4 times a week.⁴

Summary of key points:

- Australians on average are eating around 460g of red meat a week - well within the Australian dietary guideline recommendations.
- Up to a third of Australian adults eat red meat less than the recommended 3 to 4 times a week.

References:

1. MLA estimates used for 06-07 red meat consumption.*
2. Australian Bureau of Statistics and Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services, (1997): "National Nutrition Survey Selected Highlights Australia 1995," **ABS Catalogue:** No. 4802.0.
3. Record S et al, (1999): "Red meat consumption – results from the 1995/6 National Nutrition Survey," **CSIRO Health Sciences and Nutrition**, commissioned by Meat & Livestock Australia.
4. *Red meat consumption and attitudinal research* (2007), Millward Brown.



The formula used by MLA to estimate consumption is production minus carcass weight exports (including processed exports) plus carcass weight imports +/- the change in stocks. Any error in Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) records of production or Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) estimates of exports can have a disproportionate impact on consumption estimates especially beef as only around one third of beef produced is consumed locally. Production figures from ABS can be revised at any time which may affect the overall estimate.



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Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) represents the beef, sheepmeat and goatmeat producers of Australia and manages research and development, marketing and promotions on behalf of the industry. MLA has a commitment to providing Australians with accurate nutrition information and promotes the role of red meat as part of a healthy, balanced diet.