



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

Office of Communication

1300 E Avenue □ Fort Lee, VA 23801-1800

Tel: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8524 DSN: 687-8000, Ext. 4-8524

FAX: (804) 734-8248 DSN: 687-8248

www.commissaries.com

Release Number: 57-10
Date: June 4, 2010
Contact: Karen Hawkins, DeCA dietitian
Tel.: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8404
E-mail: karen.hawkins@deca.mil

Fire up the barbecue with organic meat

*By Karen Hawkins,
DeCA dietitian*

FORT LEE, Va. – The heat is on, and so is organic beef and pork – in the meat department at your commissary where you save more than 30 percent on grocery items every time you shop.

Due to the growing demand for organic meat, there are several brands available for customers to choose from. When you buy meat labeled “USDA Organic,” you are assured it was produced using the strictest organic production and handling standards in the world.

To be considered organic, livestock can never be treated with antibiotics or hormones. Synthetic pesticides, herbicides and genetically modified organisms are prohibited for inclusion in organic livestock feed. Livestock must have access to the outdoors, fresh air and water, sunshine and grass. Before a product can be labeled “organic,” a government-approved certifier must inspect the farm and facility where the food is produced and processed to make sure all necessary regulations are followed to meet U.S. Department of Agriculture organic standards.

Good for you and the environment

The National Organic Standards Board recognizes: “The primary goal of organic agriculture is to optimize the health and productivity of interdependent communities of soil life, plants, animals and people.” Organic farming is based on health and not speed. It is beneficial to both people and the environment.

Organic standards prohibit the use of antibiotics and hormones. With USDA Certified Organic meat, you are assured you and your family do not get unnecessary antibiotics and hormones.

Animals are raised according to strict standards to ensure livestock are treated humanely and allowed to live a natural life. The animals must have access to the outdoors, fresh air and water, and 100 percent organic grass. With organic farming techniques, animals are not confined to small, overcrowded pen areas where sickness and disease are commonly spread.

Here are some tips for cooking grass-fed beef as you pull out the grill this summer.

- Grass-fed beef usually takes about 30 percent less time to cook than grain-fed beef. Watch it closely to make sure it is not overcooked.
- When using grass-fed beef in your favorite recipes, lower the cooking temperature of your oven by about 25 degrees Fahrenheit. The cooking time will stay about the same.
- When cooking on the grill, use a lower flame.
- Use tongs and not a fork to turn your beef. Piercing causes juices in the meat to be lost.
- Remember to let the meat rest for a few minutes to allow the juices to redistribute before slicing.

For more information about making healthy choices, visit Ask the Dietitian on <http://www.commissaries.com> and post your questions on the DeCA Dietitian Forum. Be sure to look for other useful information in the Dietitian's Voice archive. Sign up with the DeCA Dietitian on www.twitter.com and get messages sent to your cell phone today. For delicious recipes, check out Kay's Kitchen. And to enjoy all your commissary has to offer, sign up for the *Commissary Connection*.

-DeCA-

About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,300 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*