



**24-01-19NM**

**92 per cent of NI adults continue to enjoy red meat**

An omnibus survey completed on behalf of the Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland (LMC) has shown that the vast majority of local consumers continue to eat red meat.

Out of 1,024 respondents representative of the population and completed in April this year, 92 per cent said they still incorporate red meat as part of their diet.

“This statistic is very encouraging,” said LMC’s Industry Development Manager, Colin Smith. “It’s well-known that Northern Ireland produces some of the best red meat in the world and it’s great to see so many local consumers continuing to enjoy it.

“A large portion of our work at LMC is to help educate consumers about the benefits of eating red meat as part of a healthy, balanced diet. Over the years we have worked hard to communicate the benefits of red meat. Messages about quality, taste, versatility and nutritional benefits of red meat, for example, are at the heart of LMC’s education and promotion strategy and we are delighted that these messages are getting through to consumers.

“Red meat provides key nutrients, vitamins and minerals which are essential for human growth and development such as protein, B-Vitamins, zinc, potassium, phosphorus and iron.

“According to the most recent National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS) 70 per cent of women aged 19 to 64-years-old, have iron intakes below the Reference Nutrient Intake (RNI). Continually low consumption of iron can contribute to illnesses such as iron deficiency anaemia.

“Concerning statistics from the NDNS also shows that the mean intake of zinc is below the RNI for children aged four to 10-years-old and 11 to 18-years-old. Zinc is a vital micronutrient required for growth and development, as well as immune functioning in children and adults. Red meat is a valuable source of both iron and zinc amongst many other nutrients, highlighting its significance as part of a healthy balanced diet.”

Mr Smith continued to remind consumers to look for the Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBL FQAS) logo when shopping for red meat.

“Our NIBL FQAS logo means that your red meat has been produced to the highest animal welfare standards, with care for the environment and is fully traceable from farm to fork,” he added. “Always look out for the logo to ensure you’re purchasing the highest quality, locally produced red meat.”

**ENDS**