

Thursday, April 18, 1991

The Battalion

Scientists study meat trend

Marbled fat has better taste, A&M beef researcher says

By Karen Praslicka
The Battalion

Texas A&M research scientists are studying the development of a breed of cattle that produces meat with a special flavor and can sell for up to \$183 per pound on the Japanese market.

Dr. David Lunt, an A&M research scientist at the McGregor Research Center, said A&M has been studying "marbling" in cattle for five years.

Marbling describes the flecks of fat in the lean muscle tissue of beef. Marbled fat is what gives the meat its taste. The Japanese prefer meat with marbled fat because of its flavor and juiciness, which Lunt said cannot be found in any other beef.

"This is the first time a steak like this has been produced outside of Japan anywhere in the world," Lunt said.

He said there were severe restrictions on exporting beef to Japan when research began five years ago. The University, however, was interested only in researching what controls marbling in cattle.

Lunt said after A&M began research, the Japanese market liberalized, and exportation of beef to Japan became easier.

Though A&M's primary goal is still research, a new interest is to develop a breeding and management system allowing American producers to grow beef specifically for the Japanese market, he said.

"It's a large market in terms of dollars, not in terms of volume," he said.

This kind of meat would not be popular in the United States because of its high calorie content, Lunt said.

"The choice beef we're used to eating is only about 8 percent fat," he said. "This beef is about 22 percent fat."

Each gram of fat has about nine calories, so a 12-ounce steak with 22 percent fat would contain 674 calories from the fat alone.

Lunt said the price for regular choice beef in Japan is between \$8 and \$10 per pound. Only top quality marbled beef sells for more than \$100.

Only 6 or 7 percent of the meat consumed in Japan is this type of beef, he said. Marbled beef is usually consumed by businessmen who give it to associates as gifts or is eaten at business dinners.

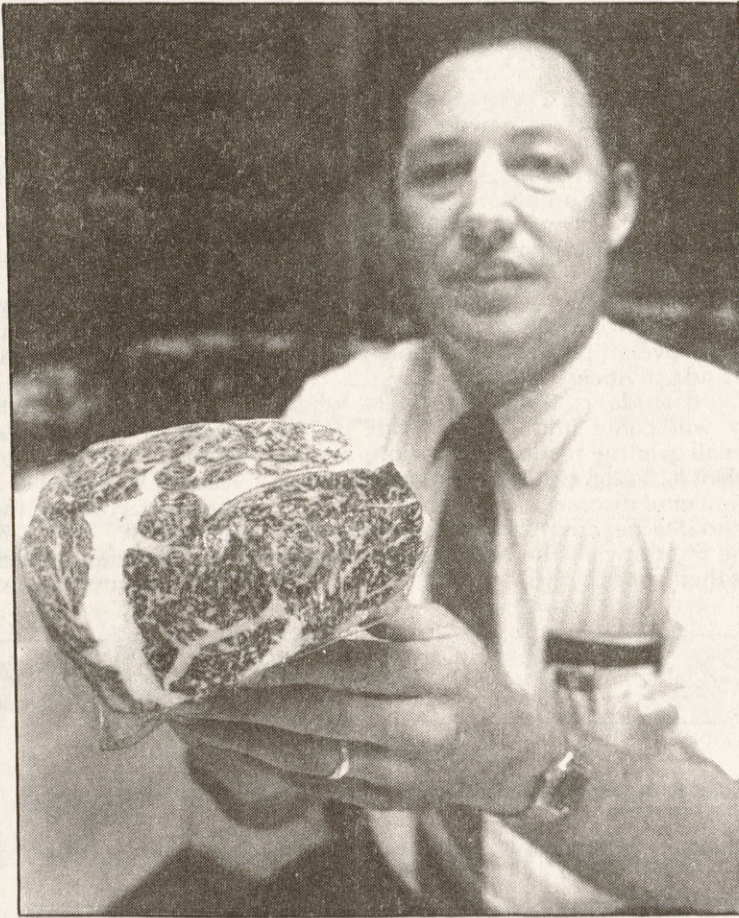
"This is not table beef or beef you would buy and take home to fix at your house," Lunt said. "The Japanese would never do that because it's just too expensive."

Zennoh, the Japanese agricultural trade union, has exported shipments of marbled beef to New York for sale for \$100 per pound, Lunt said.

"But we've shown now with our research that we can produce it here for far less than \$100 per pound," he said.

Lunt said A&M is only researching and not producing the beef for commercial use.

"We'll probably be in this area of research for another decade," he said. "We still want to know what controls marbling and develop a production and manage-



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Dr. David Lunt, an A&M researcher at the McGregor Research Center, shows an example of the steak from one of his special cattle. Lunt says the fat content of this "marbled" beef creates flavor and juiciness that can't be found in other beef. This steak has a price tag of more than \$130 in Japan, where it is popular. A&M scientists have been studying marbled beef for five years, and are researching a new beef production program.

ment system whereby we can produce meat that doesn't have quite this much marbling."

Researchers are hoping to develop a quality beef between the \$183 per pound quality and U.S.D.A. choice beef. It could be produced and sold in large quantities, Lunt said.

"Marbled beef is so expensive

there isn't a lot of market potential for it," he said.

There are also political considerations, Lunt said. The liberalization of the market is not popular with the Japanese cattle industry.

"This beef also sells because of

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Officer gives tips to prepare for theft

Mark property with I.D., don't leave backpacks unattended to prevent loss

By Julie Hedderman
The Battalion

Texas A&M's University Police Department is warning students to prepare for an increased number of thefts on campus as the semester winds down.

Cpl. Betty LeMay, crime prevention specialist at UPD, said students should be aware that anyone — students, staff, faculty or professionals — can be a thief.

Even people who normally are not thieves sometimes cannot resist the temptation of an unattended backpack, she said.

"This is the time of year when thefts increase," she said. "It's like a last-minute dash to grab anything they can get their hands on."

"It's the time of the year when students need to hang on to their backpacks," LeMay said. "When you consider what is inside the backpack, you're not just losing the backpack and books and supplies inside it, you may be losing your degree."

LeMay said the average monetary loss of a backpack is about \$250 to \$1,500.

She said students must be careful with their property.

Some of the places where backpacks and wallets often are stolen are the Sterling C. Evans Library, Kyle Field, DeWare Fieldhouse, Reed Building and the MSC Bookstore.

"Don't leave them lying for a minute by themselves," she

said. "Students should carry only the minimum amount of things they have to have. Don't



put anything of value in the backpack, if at all possible."

For additional protection, LeMay suggested marking property with a driver's license number or student I.D. number. She said students should put some identification on a page they will remember.

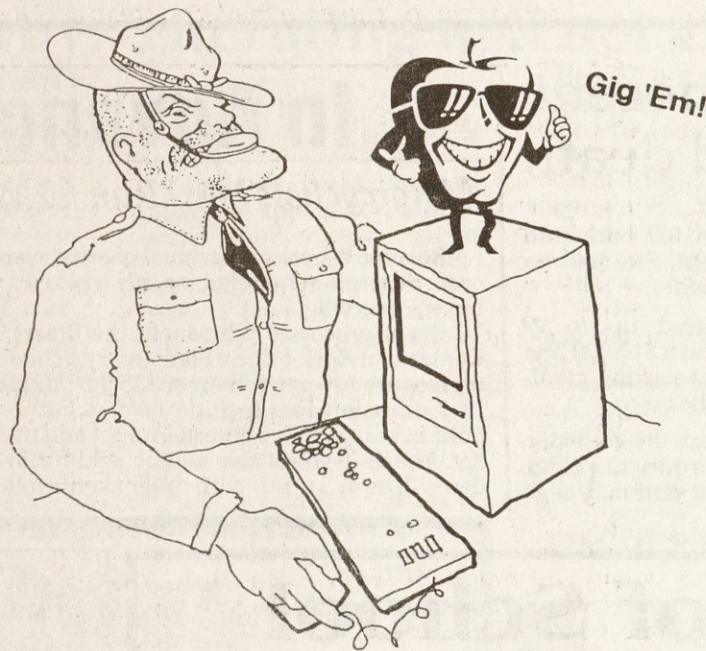
If the student's books are stolen, they then can be identified when the thief tries to sell them back to a bookstore, she said.

LeMay said students appear more careful and aware this year than last year. During the 1989-1990 school year, 205 backpacks and wallets were stolen. This year, only 75 have been reported stolen.

"Awareness helps," she said. "Students are more informed about life around them than they were two years ago."

She said the decline in thefts results from a total concentration of education from UPD, the Office of Student Affairs, media and outside agencies like the Bryan and College Station police departments.

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