

# chefs collaborative

local. sustainable. delicious.

## What's your beef?

At Chefs Collaborative, we realize it's not always easy to decipher labels, especially when it comes to meat. We hope that this **Meat Lovers' Glossary** helps chefs and consumers to make healthier and more sustainable purchases.

**All-Natural:** This term sounds great, but may be the most confusing of all. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), a 'natural' or 'all-natural' labeling on meat means that it has been "minimally processed and contains no artificial ingredients." However, a natural label does not prohibit the use of growth-promoting hormones or antibiotics.

**Grain-fed/Corn-fed:** Most meat found in supermarkets and restaurants across the country are fed a diet of specially formulated feed, based on corn or other grains. This diet is typical in large scale beef production and speeds up the growth and fat distribution (marbling) of the beef. Cows are grass-eaters by nature, and an intense grain diet can be difficult on their digestive systems, often requiring antibiotics to be administered on a large scale.

**Grass-fed:** According to the American Grassfed Association (AGA)'s 100% Grassfed Ruminant Program, a grass-fed cow must eat only herbaceous plants and/or mother's milk during its entire life cycle. The natural diet of cattle, grass is lower in saturated fats and higher in essential nutrients, like omega 3-fatty acids and vitamin E, creating a healthier, leaner product. Grassfed beef tends to have a meatier flavor and a cleaner finish. To be certified by the AGA, animals must not be given any antibiotics or hormones.

**Grain-finished:** This term refers to feeding pastured animals a grain diet before slaughter to provide a more marbled finish in the end.