** Country Meats**

**Questions of Wellness** Q: Are Country Meats Smoked Snack Sticks a healthy snack alternative? **A: YES.**

In an effort to improve the health of America's students the federal government has enacted regulatory wellness guidelines to help school districts develop policies that support healthy eating along with physical activity goals.

The USDA Appendix B to part 210– Categories of Foods of Minimal Nutritional value helps districts by listing foods of primary concern. Beef Jerky and Smoked Snack Sticks are not included on this list. This is good. Food choices that have sugar as the first ingredient are targeted. These foods represent “empty calories”. Unlike candy, cookies, or sodas our products are classified as a protein snack.

Each smoked snack stick is 1 oz. and range from just 70 calories each. Because of nutritional issues, many groups and organizations are choosing beef jerky and fundraising meat snacks to take the place of more traditional candy fundraisers. These meat snacks fundraisers are excellent sellers because they are nutritious, very tasty, and quite inexpensive, in addition to having long shelf lives due to being quite resistant to heat and moisture damage.

**PROTEIN** A complete protein source is one that provides all of the essential amino acids. You may also hear these sources called high quality proteins. Animal-based foods; for example, meat, poultry, fish, milk, eggs, and cheese are considered complete protein sources. -Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 1600 Clifton Rd. Atlanta, GA 30333

Protein foods include both animal (meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs) and plant (beans, peas, soy products, nuts, and seeds) sources. We all need protein—but most Americans eat enough, and some eat more than they need. How much is enough? Most people, ages 9 and older, should eat 5 to 7 ounces\* of protein foods each day.-www.choosemyplate.gov- The Ten Tips Nutrition Education Series-USDA/ United States Department of Agriculture

**ZERO Trans Fats** Trans-fat raises your "bad" (LDL) cholesterol and lowers your "good" (HDL) cholesterol. Find out more about trans-fat and how to avoid it. @ Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research Because we start with a lean pork trim with an 80/20 lean to fat ratio, our products contain just 5 grams of fat each. It’s important to remember, this is a meat/protein snack and not a full meal or a grain type food. Certain vitamin or fiber recommendations just don’t apply when you look at a smoked meat snack. In the US it is illegal to fortify meat products with certain vitamins.

**SALT?** Our products do contain sodium with a RDA of sodium at 2,400 mg (USDA Dietary guidelines for Americans 2005) our range is well within the norms.

**NITRITES?** Aren’t smoked meats high in Nitrites? Nearly 93 percent of dietary nitrite comes from leafy vegetables & tubers and our own saliva. We feel, with the alternatives available to kids today that beef jerky and Smoked Snack Sticks offer a Page 1 of 6 healthier alternative. Having talked with USDA officials and nutritionist around the country, we have found that this is a shared consensus. The wellness guidelines for districts were made to improve the health of our kids. The concerns were primarily with candy and soda and the quality of their physical activity.

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