

Are you
getting it 3-4 times
a week?



How red meat ads turned general practitioners on.

Summary

Client:

Meat and Livestock Australia

Brand:

Red meat

Objective:

To establish red meat as a healthy food in the face of increasingly negative perceptions of the category among general practitioners (GPs).

The GP campaign was designed to work synergistically with Meat and Livestock Australia's (MLA) consumer nutrition campaign. GPs are key influencers of the public's beliefs on diet and health. The aim was to change GPs' attitudes to red meat, thereby creating a positive environment for the consumer campaign launch.

Results:

In 14 months (March 2001-May 2002), with a relatively small budget, the long-standing trend for GPs to recommend their patients eat less red meat was stopped.

GPs' attitudes to the brand became more positive such that they were significantly more likely to agree red meat was a healthy food and needed in the management of a number of key medical conditions.

The GP advertising successfully paved the way for the MLA consumer nutrition campaign and was a key contributor towards the \$1 billion increase in annual consumer expenditure on red meat.

Business context:

MLA's GP Communication Campaign is a part of its overall nutrition strategy aimed at rebuilding public confidence in and demand for red meat.

Erroneous health attitudes to red meat (via the media, health professionals and cultural myths/misconceptions) have steadily undermined the product and industry.

MLA consumer research in 1999 showed that red meat was not generally perceived as being a healthy food. For example, 46% of people said that for healthy eating, they actively tried to reduce their red meat consumption. And when asked about what they would cut down on in order to achieve a healthy diet, people were more likely to nominate red meat than sugar, salt or alcohol.

It was clear that the significant nutritional benefits of red meat were virtually unknown. In contrast to many other foods, red meat had no clear health proposition.

MLA's strategy therefore aims to provide the public with positive reasons to eat red meat via endorsement from GPs and direct communication to consumers.



The nutrition strategy has four phases, the GP campaign is phase three:

Phase I	Launch of an independent, evidence-based report <i>The Role of Red Meat in Healthy Australian Diets</i> .	February 2001
Phase II	Relationship building with government and non-government influencers.	2000-early 2001
Phase III	GP communication campaign launch.	March 2001
Phase IV	Consumer campaign promoting the health benefits of red meat.	February 2002

Why communicate to GPs?

The GP advertising aimed to change GPs' attitudes to red meat and the recommendations they make to patients, providing a positive environment for the launch of MLA's consumer nutrition campaign.

Rationale:

The public rate GPs as *the* key providers of credible information on diet and health.¹

- Most credible sources: doctors (41% of respondents), dietitians (33%), diet books (13%).¹
- Most frequent sources: GPs (21%); TV programs (12%); friends/relatives (10%).¹
- For most people, GPs are the first port in the health care system - in 2000, 82% of Australians saw their GP at least once.²

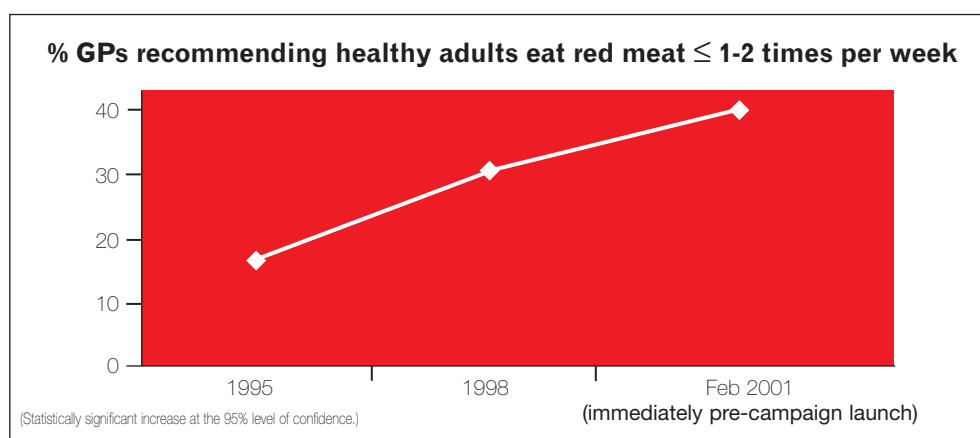


GPs - the challenges

1. GPs' attitudes to red meat had become progressively more negative.

Commonwealth Health Department guidelines recommend we eat red meat 3-4 times per week.³ Yet, over time, an increasing proportion of GPs advocated a consumption less than this.⁴

MLA had not communicated to general practitioners for a number of years preceding the launch of the GP campaign.



2. GPs don't prioritise nutrition

Good nutrition is a vital component of good health - nutritional factors play a major role in many disease processes. Yet research shows many GPs have inadequate nutrition knowledge⁵ and do not discuss the subject as often with patients as they could.⁶ GPs estimate they discuss diet with only two in five patients.⁷ The lack of nutrition teaching in medical school is a major barrier.⁶

3. GPs require credible, unbiased information on which to base patient management decisions.

The GP campaign launch was preceded by an independent, expert committee report on the role of red meat in the diet. The report, commissioned by MLA, provided an evidence-based platform for the campaign and was launched by the then Minister of Health and Aged Care, The Hon Dr Michael Wooldridge. The report's key conclusions were also supported by the Heart Foundation and the Dietitians Association of Australia.

Briefly, the report's findings included:⁸

- Lean Australian red meat has an important place in a healthy diet.
- It is an important source of protein and other nutrients, such as iron, zinc and vitamin B₁₂.
- Australian red meat, trimmed of visible fat, is generally lean and contains low cholesterol levels.
- Lean red meat can have a place in the diet of people with heart disease or at risk of heart disease.
- It can also be included in strategies for preventing and treating obesity.
- Evidence indicates that lean red meat, cooked without charring or heavy browning, is not linked to the development of colorectal cancer.

Expert report rationale:

GPs are often cynical about industry; information from an expert peer, as opposed to a commercial organisation, is more credible. The solid evidence supporting red meat's health credentials underpinned MLA's campaign and was a major driver in the development of the creative strategy (see on).



4. Tiny share of voice in a crowded market

MLA is competing in a market dominated by pharmaceutical companies with multimillion dollar GP promotion budgets and large numbers of product representatives who sell to GPs face-to-face. MLA has a relatively small budget and no sales force.

While it's difficult to generalise about comparative budgets, the media spend for a pharmaceutical product launch might be 4-5 times that allocated to the MLA GP campaign.

GP campaign - key objectives

To halt the trend for GPs to recommend patients cut down on red meat, and to change GPs' attitudes, so they are more positive about the brand.

Specific communications messages were:

- For optimum vitality and performance, red meat should be eaten 3-4 times per week.
- There are medical conditions, eg high cholesterol, for which an increase in red meat consumption is necessary.

Research tracking GPs' attitudes to red meat was carried out immediately pre-launch in February 2001 (n=150), and in July 2001 (n=150) and May 2002 (n=150). The telephone surveys used a consistent methodology and involved representative samples of GPs in Melbourne and Sydney.

Budget - March 2001-May 2002

- Advertising

Media	\$343,660
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Production	\$165,302
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- Direct mail

The integrated campaign also included two major direct mail pieces - budget \$191,788.



Campaign description

Creative strategy

A distinct brand personality for red meat was created that had cut through in the crowded GP market.

The creative approach was headline driven, with simple visuals of raw lean red meat on a plate, sitting above a single column of copy.

Why raw red meat?

Raw red meat was used rather than traditionally more appetising images, such as cooked meat embellished with vegetables, because the ads were selling nutritional benefit rather than taste. Red meat's excellent health credentials meant it could speak for itself, strongly and unambiguously, like a pill on a plate, rather than hidden behind a lettuce leaf.

The creative approach was confirmed and fine tuned following pre-launch qualitative GP research (n=30, November 2000).

All the executions included a formula that talks in doctors' language and summarises the health benefits of red meat:

{ Protein + Zn + Fe + B₁₂ + ... } - Fat = LEAN RED MEAT³ The vital formula.

This formula was later amended to "Rx 3-4 times per week." (Rx means prescribe):

{ Protein + Zn + Fe + B₁₂ + ... } - Fat = LEAN RED MEAT³ Rx 3 - 4 times per week.

The use of a campaignable template: i) headline; ii) plate with raw red meat on it; iii) column of body copy; iv) formula, allowed executions about a range of medical subjects to be produced while maintaining continuity.

To add to the personality of the campaign and increase stopping power/ relevance tactical executions with tailored messages that tied in with events were produced. These events were: the Federal election, HSC exams, Valentine's Day and Christmas.

Two advertorials with relatively more detail about the evidence underpinning the campaign were also produced.

The executions therefore comprised three types: core ads, tactical ads and advertorials.



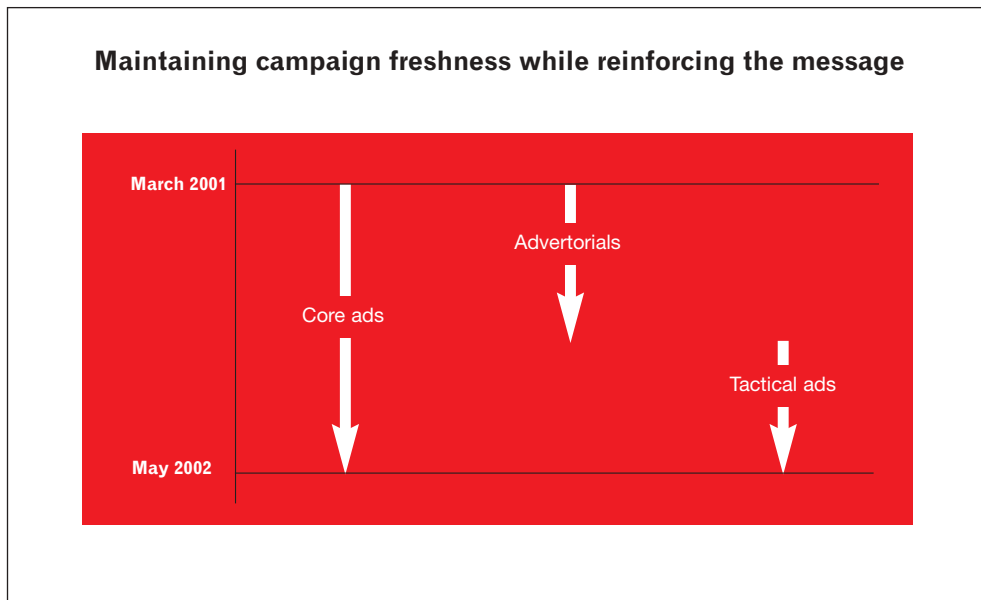
Media strategy - March 2001-May 2002

GPs were targeted via two specialist medical newspapers.

The three types of executions (as mentioned above) were planned to run at specific times throughout the year, as follows:

- **Core ads** – ran consistently during the year to underpin the core campaign messages.
- **Advertorials** – ran initially to reinforce the evidence-based approach to the campaign.
- **Tactical event-based ads** – introduced during the second half of the year, once the campaign was established.

This plan allowed the campaign to reinforce and repeat the communications messages while keeping executions fresh and entertaining.



Campaign elements - March 2001-May 2002
A. Core ads

We are what we (m)eat.



It's said we are what we eat, and indeed, the essential nutrients in red meat help make us what we are and keep us healthy. Our cells need vitamin B₁₂ to synthesise DNA. Our immune system relies on zinc, and iron is vital for the production of energy from glucose and the synthesis of key neurotransmitters. Red meat is one of the best sources of these nutrients. It's a nutrient-dense package that also contains omega-3 fatty acids, selenium, and other B-group vitamins. We are what we eat, thanks to red meat.

{Protein + Zn + Fe + B₁₂+...}-Fat = LEAN RED MEAT³ The vital formula.

Source: The Role of Red Meat in Healthy Australian Diets. Meat and Health Expert Advisory Committee 2001. For copies telephone 1800 550 018 or go to www.meatandhealth.com.au. Red meat refers to beef, veal and lamb. ©2001 MLC&D/HS Meat and Livestock Australia.

R_x
3-4 times per week with meals.



This nutritional supplement is worth making a meal of. Red meat contributes 20% of the daily protein in the average Australian adult's diet, 24% of the vitamin B₁₂, 27% of the zinc, 52% of the haem iron, and 10% of the monounsaturated fat, but only 8% of total fat intake. Commonwealth Department of Health guidelines recommend we eat it 3-4 times per week.¹ Lean red meat, make a meal of it.


{Protein + Zn + Fe + B₁₂+...}-Fat = LEAN RED MEAT³ The vital formula.

Source: The Role of Red Meat in Healthy Australian Diets. Meat and Health Expert Advisory Committee 2001. For copies telephone 1800 550 018 or go to www.meatandhealth.com.au. Red meat refers to beef, veal and lamb. ©2001 MLC&D/HS Meat and Livestock Australia.

We are what we (m)eat.
 – outlining the range of nutrients in red meat and their health benefits.

Rx 3–4 times per week with meals.
 – reinforcing that health guidelines recommend we eat red meat 3–4 times per week (Rx means prescribe).

Red meat. The natural lipid lowerer?




This is a story of fat and fiction. Fat, because people with high cholesterol are often told to reduce their saturated fat intake. And fiction, because cutting down on red meat is often touted as the solution. But lean red meat is not a major source of fat.¹ And studies show that diets rich in lean red meat and low in saturated fat lead to cholesterol reductions in people with high levels of cholesterol.² Including lean red meat in cholesterol lowering advice may improve long term adherence.³ That's a fact.

{Protein + Zn + Fe + B₁₂+...}-Fat = LEAN RED MEAT³ The vital formula.

Source: 1. Aust J Nutr 2000; 27 (4 Suppl): S2-S36. 2. The Role of Red Meat in Healthy Australian Diets. Meat and Health Expert Advisory Committee 2001. For copies of The Role of Red Meat in Healthy Australian Diets telephone 1800 550 018 or go to www.meatandhealth.com.au. Red meat refers to beef, veal and lamb. ©2001 MLC&D/HS Meat and Livestock Australia.

Red meat. The natural lipid lowerer?
 – emphasising the role red meat can play in a cholesterol-lowering diet (lipids are fats).

Can red meat help patients meet cholesterol targets?



There's a tasty upside to the Government's crackdown on lipid-lowerer prescribing. Patients need dietary therapy before they're eligible for a script, so why not help them enjoy the experience? Recommend lean red meat, because diets low in saturated fat and rich in lean red meat lead to cholesterol reductions in people with hypercholesterolaemia. Including lean red meat in cholesterol-lowering advice may also improve long-term dietary adherence. Lean red meat, the tasty upside to getting cholesterol down.


{Protein + Zn + Fe + B₁₂+...}-Fat = LEAN RED MEAT³ R_x 3-4 times per week.

Source: The Role of Red Meat in Healthy Australian Diets. Meat and Health Expert Advisory Committee 2001. For copies telephone 1800 550 018 or go to www.meatandhealth.com.au. Red meat refers to beef, veal and lamb. ©2001 MLC&D/HS Meat and Livestock Australia.

Can red meat help patients meet cholesterol targets?
 – the lipid lower ad (left) amended following a government announcement aimed at curbing prescribing of cholesterol-lowering drugs.

C. Tactical ads

Red meat.
The (neuro)logical choice
at exam time.



If we'd spent the last 2 million years not eating red meat, would we be *Homo sapiens*? Without the nutrients in red meat vital for neurological function, we wouldn't have lived up to our species' name: "wise man". Lean red meat is a great source of vitamin B₁₂ and iron, which are vital for cognitive performance. Kids need them to grow into intelligent adults. Yet up to 35% of Australian children may be iron depleted, which makes red meat a wise choice, especially at exam time.

{Protein + Zn + Fe + B₁₂ + ...} - Fat = LEAN RED MEAT³ R_x 3-4 times per week.

Source: The Role of Red Meat in Healthy Australian Diets. Red Meat and Health Expert Advisory Committee 2021. For copies, telephone 1800 550 018 or go to www.meatandhealth.com.au. Red meat refers to lean beef, veal and lamb. ISBN 978 0 85202 014 4. Meat and Livestock Australia.

Red meat. The (neuro)logical choice at exam time.
 – HSC exams - reinforcing the role nutrients in red meat play in brain function and learning.

Are you
getting it 3-4 times
per week?



This Valentine's Day, red meat lovers will be getting it ... on a plate. Because, when it comes to matters of the heart, lean red meat's got what it takes. It's full of nutrients and not a major source of fat, so it's good for heart health, and studies have shown it's useful in cholesterol-lowering diets.¹ Government health guidelines recommend we eat it 3-4 times per week.² So red meat lovers do it on Valentine's Day, and 3-4 times every week.

{Protein + Zn + Fe + B₁₂ + ...} - Fat = LEAN RED MEAT³ R_x 3-4 times per week.

1. The Role of Red Meat in Healthy Australian Diets. Red Meat and Health Expert Advisory Committee 2021. For copies, telephone 1800 550 018 or go to www.meatandhealth.com.au. 2. Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services 1998. Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. ISBN 0 842 27257 9. Red meat refers to lean beef, veal and lamb. ISBN 978 0 85202 014 4. Meat and Livestock Australia.

Are you getting it 3-4 times per week?
 – Valentine's Day - reinforcing the 3-4 times per week consumption message.

Red meat.
Why it should have
your preferences.



Suffering from election dysfunction? Need a pick-me-up to get you through the last days of this torrid election campaign? Look no further than lean red meat. It's full of protein and iron for energy, vitamin B₁₂ for the nervous system, and zinc for the immune system. And it's not a major source of fat in the Aussie diet,¹ so it's great for people with high cholesterol and those trying to slim. Red meat helps take the pain out of election campaigns.

{Protein + Zn + Fe + B₁₂ + ...} - Fat = LEAN RED MEAT³ R_x 3-4 times per week.

Source: The Role of Red Meat in Healthy Australian Diets. Red Meat and Health Expert Advisory Committee 2021. For copies, telephone 1800 550 018 or go to www.meatandhealth.com.au. 1. AUS-FLA Diet 2000. 07 14 54469. 01 026. Red meat refers to lean beef, veal and lamb. ISBN 978 0 85202 014 4. Meat and Livestock Australia.

Red meat. Why it should have your preferences.
 – Federal election - outlining the range of nutrients in red meat and their health benefits.

Stuff the turkey
this Xmas!



It's not only turkeys that get fatter at Xmas - most of us overindulge and put on weight. This festive season we can celebrate by fair means or fowl, so why not recommend fare with flair - lean red meat. It's great for slimmers because it's protein-rich and not a major source of fat. Protein-rich foods make slimming more satisfying because they leave people feeling fuller than high-fat or high-sucrose meals, research suggests. So this Xmas, gobble gobble lean red meat - the slimmer's friend.

{Protein + Zn + Fe + B₁₂ + ...} - Fat = LEAN RED MEAT³ R_x 3-4 times per week.

Source: The Role of Red Meat in Healthy Australian Diets. Red Meat and Health Expert Advisory Committee 2021. For copies, telephone 1800 550 018 or go to www.meatandhealth.com.au. Red meat refers to lean beef, veal and lamb. ISBN 978 0 85202 014 4. Meat and Livestock Australia.

Stuff the turkey this Xmas!
 – Christmas - outlining how lean red meat can help people trying to lose weight.

D. Additional elements - Direct mail



Plate mailer (launch)

– GPs received a plate with a die cut hole the size of a portion of red meat – illustrating the point that if you cut out red meat, you leave a hole in your diet. This was for use when counselling patients. The mailer also included a summary of the evidence-based report outlining red meat’s health credentials and a BRC offering a recipe book.



Recipe mailer

– GPs received a pack of plate-shaped booklets containing healthy red meat recipes for their patients, plus a BRC offering a BBQ set.

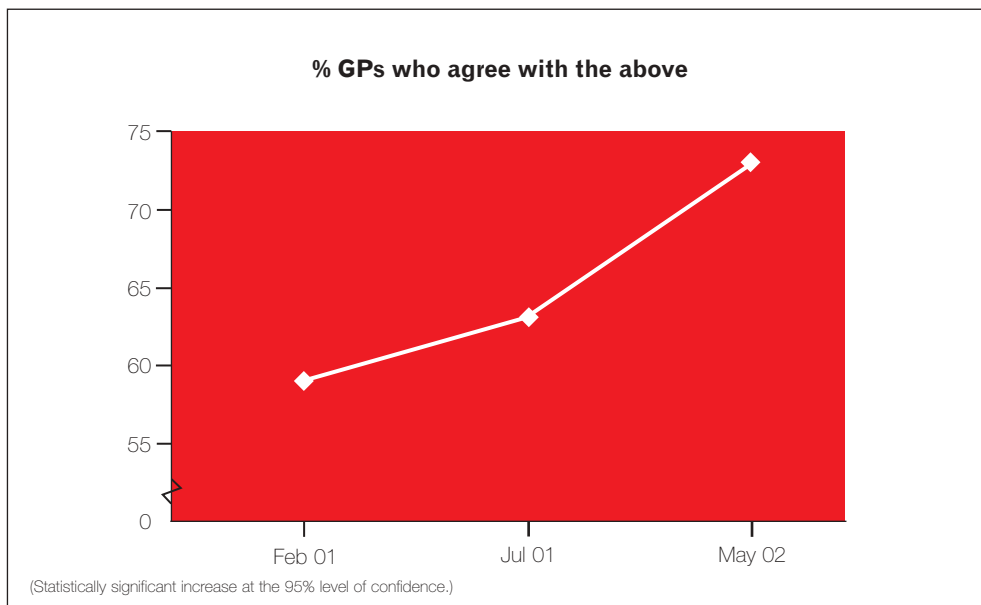


Results

The following results are derived from the GP tracking research carried out pre-launch (February 2001) and up to early May 2002 (latest available data).

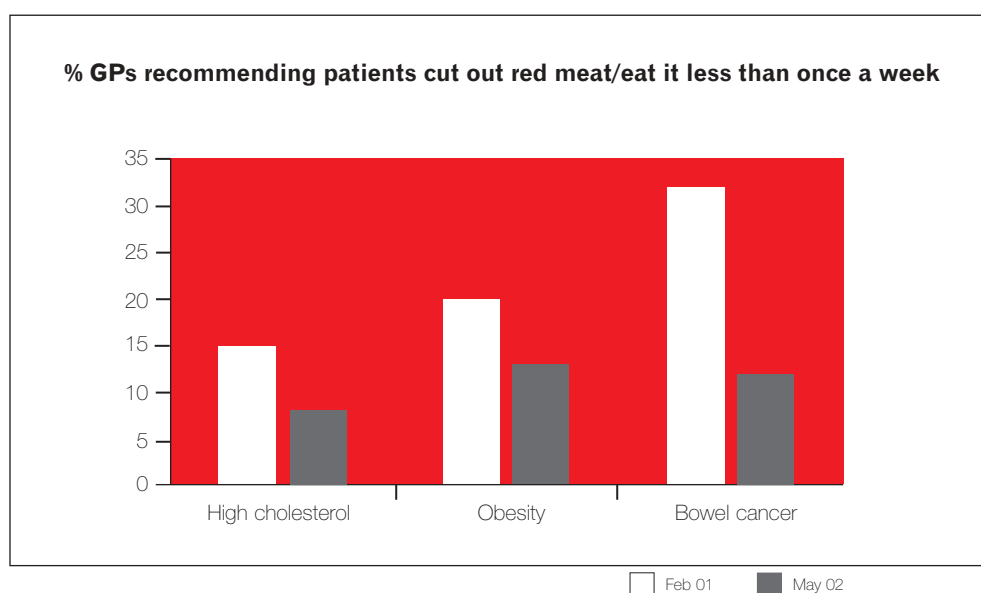
1. GPs embraced the key recommendation re frequency of consumption:

“For optimal vitality and performance, red meat should be eaten three to four times a week.”

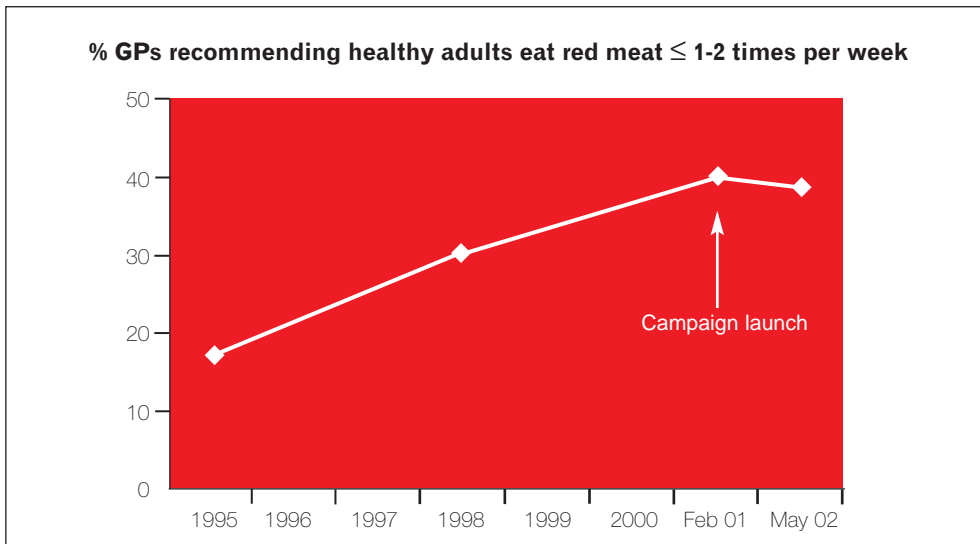


2. Positive change in GP dietary counselling behaviour.

A. GPs were less likely to recommend patients cut out red meat when discussing specific medical conditions.

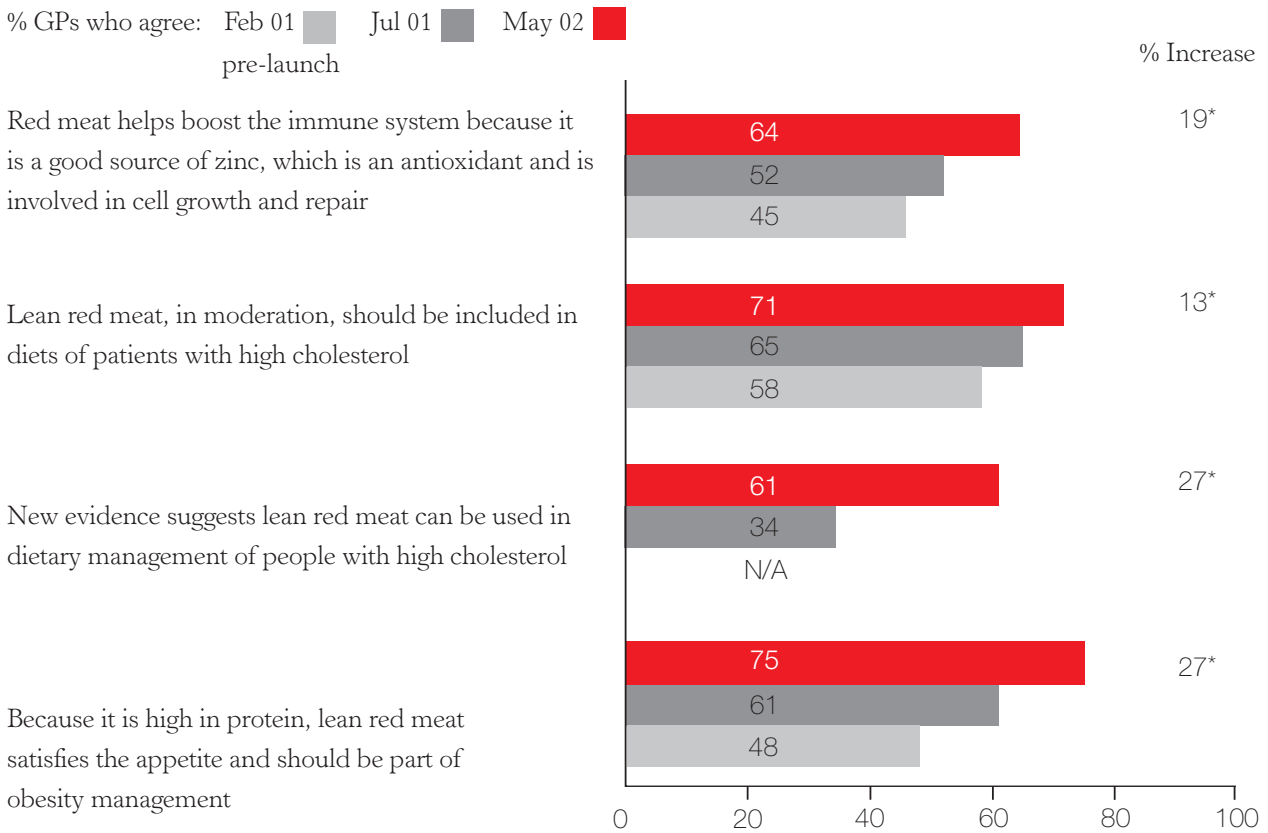


B. The steady increase in GPs advising patients to eat fewer than the recommended 3-4 serves of red meat a week was halted.



3. Significant positive shift in GPs' attitudes to red meat.

The campaign was associated with significant attitudinal change. While GPs were more likely to acknowledge red meat is a healthy food, they were also significantly more likely to see it as important in the management of a number of medical conditions:



(*Statistically significant increase at the 95% level of confidence.)



4. The advertising had very high impact among GPs, as confirmed by an independent page traffic survey.

One of the target publications commissioned an independent page traffic survey (n=500 GPs) that ranked the ads appearing in one issue according to overall impact.

In that issue, two different red meat ads ran. They were ranked 2nd and 3rd respectively out of all the ads in the paper.

5. The campaign worked in combination with MLA consumer communications to significantly increase the retail value of red meat.

The GP advertising successfully paved the way for the MLA consumer nutrition campaign and was a key contributor towards the \$1 billion increase in annual consumer expenditure on red meat.

Discounting other variables

1. Medical research

During this time there was no major scientific research published that could have contributed to the above GP behavioural/attitudinal change.

2. Direct mail

The two direct mail pieces were part of the integrated campaign and it can be assumed they contributed to its success.

3. Public relations

Media analysis shows that volume of coverage of red meat issues spiked to coincide with the launch of the GP and consumer advertising campaigns.⁹ However, overall favourability of coverage remained relatively static during the GP campaign pre-launch phase and over the following year.⁹

4. MLA consumer campaign

The consumer nutrition campaign launched in February 2002 and would have had an effect on GPs' attitudes, as measured in our May 2002 tracking survey. However, the significant changes in GPs' behaviour/attitudes were seen well before this (July 2001).



Contribution to knowledge

1. Success in nutrition marketing to healthcare professionals requires honest, scientifically credible communication

Fads and unsubstantiated claims are common in nutrition communications to the general public. GPs are in a difficult position in that they have to make sense of all this on behalf of their patients.

This campaign therefore communicates nutrition information to GPs in a medically appropriate manner.

The communication is based on strong evidence using published scientific data; the language is medical; and the tone is clinical (albeit with an engaging personality). Crucially, the visuals featuring raw red meat on a plate reinforce this clinical tone.

The evidence-based expert committee report on red meat was a vital prerequisite for the campaign, as it provided a summary of the substantiating evidence.

2. GPs are people too

It's not enough just to provide good evidence to GPs and expect them to take notice, particularly in relation to nutrition information. The evidence has to be communicated in an engaging and relevant way. The campaign is testament to the adage that a great personality can get you a long way.

Conclusions

- **The campaign resulted in significant positive changes to GPs' attitudes and patient counselling behaviour, halting a long-standing negative trend.**
- **This was achieved with a relatively small budget in a highly competitive and crowded market.**
- **GPs are key influencers of the general public's attitudes to diet and health, and the results seen in GPs would have favourably affected the public's attitudes/ buying behaviour/ consumption.**
- **During 2002, consumer expenditure on red meat grew by \$1 billion compared with 2001.**
- **Creating a positive GP environment was a critical prerequisite for the consumer nutrition campaign launch, thereby significantly contributing to the additional industry revenue.**

References: 1. MLA 2000. 2. General Practice Activity in Australia 2001-02, AIHW. 3. Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services (1998). *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*, ISBN 0 642 27257 3. 4. Wendy Bloom & Associates, Quantitative Tracking Research 1995, 1998, 2001. 5. *Am J Clin Nutr*, 1997; 65 (6 Suppl): 1939S-1942S. 6. *Am J Clin Nutr*, 2000; 71: 6-12. 7. Wendy Bloom & Associates, Quantitative Tracking Research 2001. 8. *The Role of Red Meat in Healthy Australian Diets*. Red Meat and Health Expert Advisory Committee 2001. 9. MLA 2002.

