

## **FEATURE – USDA STUDYING MUSCLE POWER LOSS IN THE ELDERLY**

INTRO: A U-S-D-A/Tufts University study in Boston looks at how the elderly can be helped with exercise and better nutrition. The USDA's Bob Ellison has more. (1:31)

REVERSING AGE-RELATED MUSCLE MASS LOSS IS THE OBJECT OF A COLLABORATIVE STUDY BETWEEN TUFTS UNIVERSITY AND THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. THE STUDY BEING DONE AT U-S-D-A'S AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE LABS AT TUFTS LOOKS AT HOW AGING AFFECTS MUSCLE POWER.

Dr. Roger Fielding, USDA ARS Funded Researcher for Tufts University: One thing that we do know is that our society in general is getting older. So there are many, many more older people than there have ever been before. And as people age, not only do they lose muscle, but their muscle strength and muscle function declines. And this has several consequences for their functional ability and for their ability to live independently.

SO FAR THE STUDY HAS SHOWN THAT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITON DO AFFECT MUSCLE POWER IN THE ELDERLY.

Fielding: Their level of physical activity and changes in their diet can really have dramatic effects on their overall health and independence as they grow older.

FIELDING SAYS MUSCLE POWER IS THE WORK A MUSCLE CAN PERFORM AND THAT IS IMPORTANT IN SITUATIONS LIKE REGAINING BALANCE TO KEEP FROM FALLING.

Fielding: So in our lab we're trying to understand whether exercise and physical activity and certain nutritional interventions can prevent or delay this age related decline in skeletal muscle loss. So we've really taken a lot of things we've learned from exercise physiology and sports medicine and applied them to a more geriatric or older population.

FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE I'M BOB ELLISON.