

Grades Give Uniform Mkt.



Prime Butcher Steer
By James O'Hara

This is the first in a series of articles dealing with U. S. Department of Agriculture grades of livestock and what those grades mean to the livestock producer and the housewife.

The initial U. S. Standards for grades of beef were formulated in 1916 and published in 1925. Changes have occurred through the years with changes in the livestock and meat industry. With the use of U. S. Department of Agriculture grades, a Choice steer on the East coast is also a Choice steer on the West coast, or anywhere in the United States.

There are many factors that must be taken in consideration. Conformation refers to the general body proportion of the animal and to the ratio of meat to bone.

Excellent conformation in slaughter cattle is denoted by a compact wide top, square rump, and depth in the twist.

Finish refers to the fatness of the animal, the quantity and distribution of finish. Palatability of the meat is closely related to the degree of finish. Thus, finish becomes the most important single factor affecting the grade of slaughter cattle.

Quality in a live steer or heifer refers to the refinement of hair, hide, bone and symmetry of the body. Quality is associated with carcass yield. The carcass yield

is one factor along with finish and other marketing factors that helps to determine the price.

Thus, two animals with the same degree of finish could be bought for a different price due to the yield of meat.

The yield is affected by fill before market. The greater the fill the lower will be the yield. The yield is also lowered if the animal has a heavy hide or has heavy bones.

Maturity will also affect the grading. Following are the general age limits for various grades. They are only general because of difference in maturity in animals of the same age.

Prime-36 months
Choice-42 months
Good and Standard-48 mo.
Commercial-over 18 mo. or hard boned
Utility, Cutter and Canner may be of any age.

Only steers and heifers are eligible for the Prime grade. Cattle possessing the minimum qualifications for Prime grade are definitely superior in conformation, quality, and finish.

However, individual animals may differ somewhat in appearance because of possible variations in the degree

of excellence of the individual grade factors.

They are wide over the back and loin with the width carried out squarely into the rump. The shoulders and ribs are neatly laid in and smooth. The twist is deep and full and the rounds thick and plump.

Steers and heifers over 30 months of age have a very thick covering of fat over the crops, back, ribs, loin, and rump. The brisket, rear flanks, and cod or udder are very full and distended. Some cattle may have rolls of fat over the ribs, and patches around the tailhead.

Steers and heifers under 18 months of age may have only a moderately thick but smooth covering of fat which extends over the back, ribs, loin, and rump. The brisket, rear flank, and cod or udder show a marked fullness.

ECONOMY IN HAM BUYING

To buy ham economically, consider the number of persons you will serve, the method of cooking, and leftover possibilities, suggests Mrs. Elsie Keeney, Penn State consumer education specialist. Then select the ham form best suited to your needs and plan several meals around the ham so you use every bit of the meat.

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- MANAGEMENT REPORTS ON YEAR'S OPERATIONS
- COUNTY AGENT REPORT —M. M. SMITH
- ELECTION OF DIRECTORS
- INTERESTING SPEAKER
- REPORT OF PFBCA - MARK S. HESS, MGR., FEED OPERATIONS

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