

Grade Standards Change Likely Beef Quality

Secretary of Agriculture Orin L. Freeman today proposed a revision of U. S. standards for beef, in line with recent recommendations of the National Advisory Commission on Cattle as well as State and national cattlemen's organizations.

A major change proposed in the standards is a deemphasis of maturity as a factor in grading beef from young animals, Secretary Freeman said. The change, he continued, is a direct reflection of recent findings on the relationship of maturity to the eating quality of beef.

Secretary Freeman said the revision would: 1) result in some reduction of the marbling requirements for beef in the Prime, Choice, Good, and Standard grades, depending upon the grade and degree of maturity; 2) reduce the number of maturity classifications from three to two in these grades; 3) eliminate consideration of the two degrees of marbling in excess of that now classified as "abundant" in determining quality grade; and 4) require that all carcasses be graded on a ribbed basis only, that is with the hind- and forequarters separated so that the carcass ribeye muscle is visible to the grader.

Officials of the Livestock

Division of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service point out that, generally, beef quality—or palatability—tends to decrease with increased maturity of the beef animal. On the other hand, increased marbling tends to enhance palatability. Therefore, U.S. grade standards require increasing amounts of marbling to compensate for increasing maturity in carcasses.

Recent research, the Division said, indicates that the additional marbling required to offset increased maturity in cattle under about 30 months of age has been overemphasized in present grade standards. For example, it is proposed that the marbling required in Choice grade beef carcasses produced from animals about 28 to 30 months old would be reduced by one full degree. In accord with this new research, the proposed revision of the marbling-maturity requirements should increase the uniformity of eating quality within each USDA grade.

The Livestock Division also pointed out that the proposed reduction in the number of marbling and maturity classifications would simplify the application of grade standards, while grading only ribbed carcasses would make the nation-

wide grading service more accurate and uniform.

Secretary Freeman emphasized that the revision was proposed after a detailed review of all available research information on beef quality. Today's proposal is in line with the general quality recommendations of Dr. Robert W. Bray and Dr. Ernest J. Briskey, University of Wisconsin meat specialists, in their beef grading report to the American National Cattlemen's Association in January, 1964. Following the Bray-Briskey report, ANCA adopted a resolution requesting this change in the standards.

Secretary Freeman said, "The proposed revision of standards will encourage the marketing of younger cattle, at lighter weights. The changes—reflecting the most recent research results available—should result in a more uniform classification of beef and further enhance the usefulness of USDA grades to the consumer."

The proposed revision of standards is scheduled to be published in the Federal Register July 8, and interested persons are invited to submit written comments and views.

David Benner

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members or by picking up one of the attractive business cards and farm sign put out by Mrs. Benner. A lot come because of references from those who have visited their farm last year.

What is the reaction of the average tourist to the farm and Lancaster County in general? Such statements as, "We just came through and stayed a week," "We love it around here," "Atmosphere is wonderful," or "I gained twenty pounds and I've only been here two days," are common expressions.

There have been people who stayed at Ronks R. D. 1 from as far away as Turkey, India, Jerusalem, Germany and California. Mrs. Benner says they come from all around the country.

What are the disadvantages?

Mr. and Mrs. Benner couldn't think of any. They say that they like people and the work connected with this business. It is better than a college education to learn to know all these different people and there are a lot of rewards beside the extra cash.

Their dairy farm is located on Route 897 just east of Strasburg and is open for tourists from May to October.

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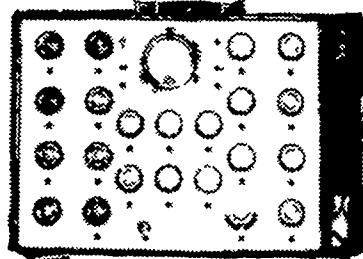
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