

New Beef Standards To Reflect Changing Consumer Preferences

Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman has announced that quality standards for beef grades were being revised to reflect consumer preferences more accurately.

The principal effect of the revision will be to reduce the amount of fat, or marbling, which has been considered a factor in determining the grade of beef.

In a parallel action to encourage production of beef animals which will reflect consumer preferences for more lean type beef, the Department also is instituting a separate and optional standard which can be used to determine the amount of closely trimmed retail cuts of meat that a beef carcass can produce.

These cutability standards, if employed on a wide scale in the industry can contribute significantly to lower marketing costs, Freeman noted.

He said the new beef grade standards — which will leave the prime, choice, good and standard classifications unchanged — are "the most forward looking step taken in beef grading since the official standards were adopted. They

put beef grade standards in line with actual distinctions the consumer market demands."

"The cattle industry — producers and feeders alike — has been moving toward producing a meatier beef animal. The new grade standards will recognize and encourage that trend.

"The simplified application of quality grade standards will make the USDA grade mark an even more accurate and reliable buying guide for the consumer. Production of greater numbers of 'meat-type' cattle — stimulated by use of the cutability standards — can mean larger quantities of high quality beef at lower marketing costs as production, shipping, and trimming of excess waste fat is reduced. The resulting economic gains will be beneficial to the entire marketing system."

He said the revised quality grade standards for carcass beef and the establishment of separate cutability standards for beef would be effective June 1, 1965.

Beef grading (based on quality and conformation factors) will continue to be avail-

able, as in the past, under the voluntary Federal meat grading program. Official cutability standards for optional and separate use will be available for the first time.

The revised quality standards will: reduce the marbling requirements for beef in the USDA Prime, Choice, Good, and Standard grades, depending on the grade and degree of maturity; reduce the number of maturity classifications from three to two in these grades; eliminate consideration of the two degrees of marbling in excess of that classified as "abundant," and require that all beef carcasses offered for grading be "ribbed" (that is, with the hind-and-forequarters separated so that the carcass ribeye muscle is visible to the grader).

It was explained that, other grade factors being equal, the eating quality of beef tends to decrease with increased maturity of the beef animal. At the same time, increasing amounts of marbling tend to enhance eating quality. As a result, official grade standards historically have required increasing amounts of marbling to offset increasing maturity in carcasses.

Recent research indicates that too great an increase in marbling has been required to offset increased maturity in cattle from about 18 to 30 months of age. Under the re-

vised standards, marbling requirements have been reduced about one full degree for carcasses produced from animals about 28 to 30 months old. Progressively smaller reductions have been made for carcasses from younger animals.

The cutability standards, proposed in September 1963, establish five classifications to identify differences in the percentage of trimmed retail beef cuts which can be produced from various kinds of beef carcasses. These classifications range from 1 to 5. They are based on fat thickness over the carcass ribeye muscle; the size of the ribeye; the quantity of internal carcass fat; and the carcass weight. The number 1 will identify carcasses with the highest retail cut-out, and the number 5 will identify those with the lowest.

The cutability classifications will provide reliable estimates of the amount of closely-trimmed retail cuts that can be produced from a beef carcass. The quantity of waste fat which must be trimmed from carcasses in making retail cuts affects carcass value, but past grade standards have given no consideration to the amount of this waste fat. The lack of some system of providing a uniform distinction between carcasses with varying amounts of excess fat has seriously limited the usefulness of the grades as a basis for establishing prices. Beef carcasses of the same grade and weight are often traded at nearly uniform market prices in spite of wide variations in the amounts of waste fat.

Identification of cutability differences in beef carcasses — and slaughter cattle — can provide the basis on which competition may establish prices reflecting true market value. Division officials pointed out, "Price differentials between carcasses and cattle of varying cutability would reward the producer of superior 'meat-type' cattle, and should encourage the production of such animals."

The revised quality grade standards and the cutability have been published in the Federal Register. Copies of the standards may be obtained from the Livestock Division, Consumer and Marketing Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.

Groff, Brubaker Named To ABC Sire Committees

Earl L. Groff, Strasburg, and Milton Brubaker, Litz, were appointed to serve on Sire Approving Committees for 1965 according to Mark N.

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Outstanding Egg Production Record By Donald Miller, R. D. 2, Halifax, Pa. With Musser M327 Leghorns

- 1200 pullets hatched April 27, 1964
- The pullets were raised in confinement in an uninsulated single deck house.

- At 6 months they were laying up to 590 eggs per day.
- Culling and loss 4.17% — 1150 pullets housed

	Average Production	Dozen Large	Dozen Medium	Dozen Pullets and Peewees
1st two weeks of November	52.80%	122	224	302
Last two weeks of November	74.34%	275	607	114
December 1st they peaked at 92.50% — for one week in December at 90%.				
Entire month of Dec. (28 day period)	84.79%	1241	964	60
January (35 day period)	74.75 %	2055	357	—
February (28 day period)	67.01%	1617	111	—
March (31 day period)				
1st floor	74.82%	1056	10	—
2nd floor	58.12%	807	20*	—

*2nd floor out of water 1 day due to pump failure

- The loss averaged 1% per month.

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MUSSER LEGHORN FARMS, R. D. 1, Mt. Joy, Pa.