

## Beef Grading

Getting your money's worth is important -- especially when buying meat. But unless you shop with an eagle-eye for quality as well as price, you risk making an unsatisfactory purchase. If you're not quality-conscious, you may end up with beef that is either lower than the quality you wanted, or not worth the price you paid.

In fact, even a U. S. Department of Agriculture meat grader would have trouble evaluating the quality of a single retail beef cut. He makes his evaluations by checking only whole carcasses or large wholesale cuts because the important quality grade factors cannot be evaluated in smaller cuts or retail cuts. And, once he has determined the grade, he rolls the distinctive shield-shaped USDA grade shield all along the carcass with a special roller.

Although about 80 percent of all beef sold at retail is federally graded, the con-

sumer may come upon beef that is not graded. Since grading is a voluntary USDA service, packers are not required to have their meat graded. If you come upon beef that doesn't bear the distinctive USDA grade shield, what should that mean to you?

Basically it means that you are on your own when buying ungraded beef. You cannot benefit from the USDA grader's impartial and highly skilled judgment on quality grades. Furthermore, you are not assured of getting consistent quality over a period of time.

According to the USDA, shoppers should realize that the odds are good that non-federally graded meat (including meat bearing private brands) is lower in quality than meat of the top two USDA grades, Prime and Choice. This is because the majority of beef that qualifies for Prime or Choice is graded and marked accordingly. Much of the non-federally graded beef sold

under private brands or "house grades" would qualify for the USDA Good Grade (the third highest grade) although even lower grade beef is sometimes also sold this way. You may find the quality of non-federally graded beef acceptable, but very often its price is the same as federally graded beef of a higher quality.

When buying beef look for the USDA grade shield, your assurance of quality. You can rely on it to mean the same wherever and whenever you see it. USDA quality grades for beef are your guides to its tenderness, juiciness, and flavor. These factors vary so widely in beef that it would be impossible for consumers to determine the differences without USDA grades.

Described below are the characteristics of the same cut in each of the top three USDA grades of beef:

USDA PRIME offers the

ultimate in tenderness, juiciness, and flavor. It has abundant marbling -- flecks of fat within the lean -- which enhances flavor and juiciness. It is the highest grade available and is most often sold to hotels and restaurants.

USDA CHOICE is very tender, juicy, and flavorful. It has slightly less marbling than Prime, but is still of very high quality. It is the grade most often found in retail stores.

USDA GOOD is only slightly less tender than Choice, but because it has less marbling, it lacks some of the juiciness and flavor of the higher grades. Beef bearing the USDA Good grade shield is only occasionally found in retail stores, but it often pleases thrifty shoppers because it is usually sold at lower prices and is slightly more lean than Prime or Choice.

## Devereux School Hosts 4-H Beef Show

John Holloway, 13 and his sister Rachel, 10, of Crebilly Farm, West Chester, Pa. captured the Grand Champion and Reserve Champion honors at the annual Devereux 4-H Beef Show held on July 13 at Devereux-Soleil Farm, Downingtown, Pa. Both steers were also named Champion and Reserve Champion in the Angus class.

Other placings were: Class 1, Angus & Herefords - Lightweight; 1st - Debbie Coleman, 2nd - Mark Tonascia, 3rd - Jay Brad-

ford, 4th - Joan Anderson, and 5th - Cheryl Wojtowicz. Mediumweight; 1st - Rachel Holloway, 2nd - Ed Wylie, 3rd - Barbara Sickler, 4th - David Anderson, and 5th - Donald Stoltzfus. Heavyweight; 1st - John Holloway, 2nd - Nelson Beam, 3rd - Bill Wylie, 4th - Esther Howe, and 5th - Bill Groves.

Class, Crossbreds & Charolais - Lightweight; 1st - Jim Wylie, 2nd - Howard Stoltzfus, 3rd - Chris Ambler, and 4th - Gary Barrett. Heavyweight; 1st - David Wylie, 2nd - Gordon Smith, 3rd - Ginger Stokes and 4th - Lori Smith.

Class 3, Angus Heifers - 1st John Holloway, 2nd - Barbara Sickler, and 3rd - Cheryl Wojtowicz.

Class 4, Charolais Heifers - 1st - Lori Smith and 2nd - Gordon Smith.

In the fitting and showing contest first place honors went to David Wylie, senior division; Rachel Holloway, junior division; and Joan Anderson, 1st year member. Other placings in the senior division were: 2nd - Cheryl Wojtowicz, 3rd - Barbara Sickler, 4th - Esther Howe, and 5th - Howard Stoltzfus. In the junior division 2nd place went to Ed Wylie, 3rd - Barbara Bartram, 4th - John Holloway, and 5th - Nelson Beam. First year members were: 2nd - Chris Ambler, 3rd - Bob Atherton, 4th - Donald Stoltzfus, and 5th - Bill Groves.

Other participants in the show were: Tricia Bartram, Jim Goold, Suzanna Howe, Darrel Stoltzfus, Fred Wojtowicz, Robert Ambler, Jr. and Richard Coleman.

This activity is part of the Chester County 4-H Beef Club, whose leaders are: Conrad Grove, Mr. & Mrs. William Holloway and Milton Howe.

TRY A CLASSIFIED AD



Borage, an herb, was once believed to reduce fevers!

## McCraken Begins Purina Dealership

Peter McCracken, co-owner of O. Kenneth McCracken and son has announced that he will operate his feed business as a Purina Franchise dealership with the Ralston Purina Company, effective July 15th.

The store will also carry most Purina Specialty Products such as rabbit, pigeon, fish and dog food and cat chow.

In addition to his feed business, Mr. McCracken offers a full line of fertilizer and custom grinding and mixing and has a large grain banking operation.

### Riddle?

What's the name of the man who answers complaints at the gas station? Answer A shock absorber.

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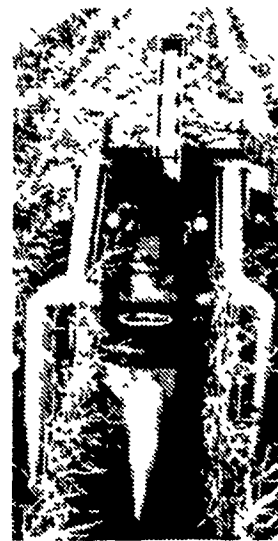
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