

# Beef grading revised, studies to continue

Revised U.S. grade standards for carcass beef, designed to improve their accuracy for measuring eating quality and identifying yield of saleable beef went into effect Feb. 23.

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) point out that although the changes are not drastic, they will add precision and efficiency to beef production and marketing.

changes to the consumer-buyer will be threefold according to AMS officials. There will be slightly leaner beef in the Prime and Choice grades, a redesigned and more restrictive Good grade, and more uniform

AMS officials cited the most significant effect, however, as a long range one - a possible reduction in the amount of excess fat on high quality beef. This could result from the requirement that all federally graded beef be identified for both quality and grade and yield grade. Previously, beef could be graded for either quality or yield, or both.

of the factors affecting carcass value and this could provide the guidance and financial incentive needed to encourage the increased production of meat-type cattle. Such high-value cattle have thickly muscled carcasses with high quality lean and a minimum of excess fat.

tion that involves USDA's evaluation of information from its own research and that of State experiment stations and private industry. New studies also are initiated as specific needs for information are identified. One study planned after the revised standards have become fully established will be to determine their economic effects under market conditions.

AMS officials emphasize that the revised beef grade standards will be under close surveillance to determine their use and effectiveness. Development and improvement of grade standards is a continuing func-

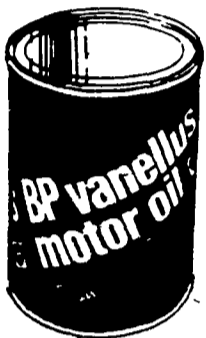
The changes were previously scheduled to become effective in April 1975, but were postponed by a series of court actions.



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## Price index drops

HARRISBURG — The February 15, 1976 Index of Prices Received by Pennsylvania farmers was one percent below the previous month but 15 percent above a year earlier, according to the Crop Reporting Service.

Higher prices for hay, potatoes, apples and most grains were more than offset by the decrease in prices received for hogs, steers and heifers, lambs and dairy and poultry products.

The purchasing power of prices received was one percentage point below January but still six percentage points above a year ago.

Nationally the Index of Prices Received increased about one percent over the past month and was 11 percent above a year ago. Contributing most to the increase since mid-January were higher prices for wheat, cattle, calves, hogs and potatoes. The purchasing power at the U.S. level increased one percentage point since mid-January and was four percent above a year ago.

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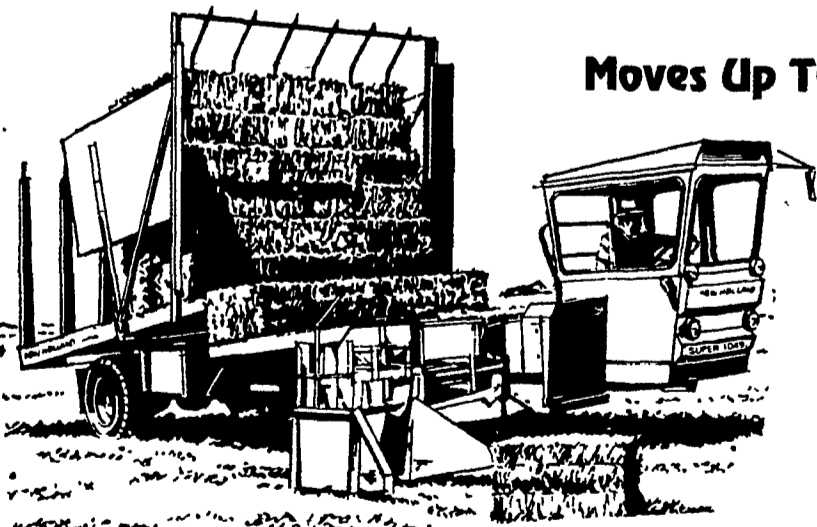
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