

Ephrata Young Farmers study beef grades



Members of the Ephrata Young Farmers look on while Bill McCoy, president of the Lancaster Stockyards, explains the differences of the grades of cattle carcasses.

By KENDACE BORRY
 EHPRATA — The Ephrata Young Farmers gathered recently to learn more about beef carcasses and the meat that they are raising to sell for butchering.

After an opening talk by Bill McCoy, president of the Lancaster Stockyards, who spoke on the future trends of the beef market, the group moved to the butchering quarters of John F. Martin and Sons, Inc. Stevens R1, for a closer look at the meat.

In meat, the grading refers to quality. Meat quality is determined by factors such as age, marbling, confirmation, and the texture, firmness, and the color of the lean.

The factors in grading affect the tenderness, flavor and appearance of the meat. Grades are given to indicate to the consumer the quality of the meat.

The present grades used in USDA meat grades include: prime, choice, good, standard, commercial, utility, canner, and cutter. Good and choice are the ones that are most commonly found in retail stores, with choice making up the largest single part of the beef supply.

According to a report supplied from Penn State, the farmers learned that the different grades can be described as follows:

Prime: the lean is highly marbled, usually very tender, and the outside fat may be excessive.

Choice: the lean is moderately marbled,

generally tender, and the amount of outside fat is variable.

Good: the lean contains some marbling; tenderness is more variable than for prime and choice, outside fat may be limited.

Standard: the lean contains little or no marbling, and the tenderness is quite variable, with very little outside fat.

Commercial: the beef produced from older animals may be highly marbled but generally lacks tenderness, due to maturity, the outside fat is variable.

Utility: has very little

marbling, lacks tenderness, very little outside fat, used largely for processing.

The report stated that customers can make their own evaluations of meat quality by checking the beef themselves. High quality is shown by the beef having a high proportion of lean to bone and fat, firm, fine-textured lean, bright red color, marbling, and red, porous bones.

Besides the quality grades, there are also the yield grades. Yield grade is used to identify the yield of properly trimmed retail

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