BEEF GRADING

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

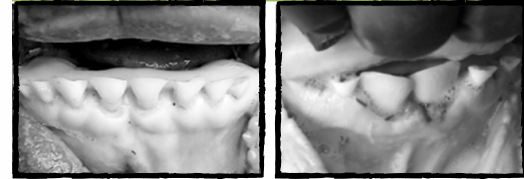Quality Grade: Predicts palatability, or the flavor, juiciness and tenderness of the final product.

Carcass maturity refers to the age of the animal at harvest. Maturity of beef carcasses is based on dentition. Less than 3 permanent incisors indicate "A" maturity (<30 months of age) and are eligible for the top quality grades.
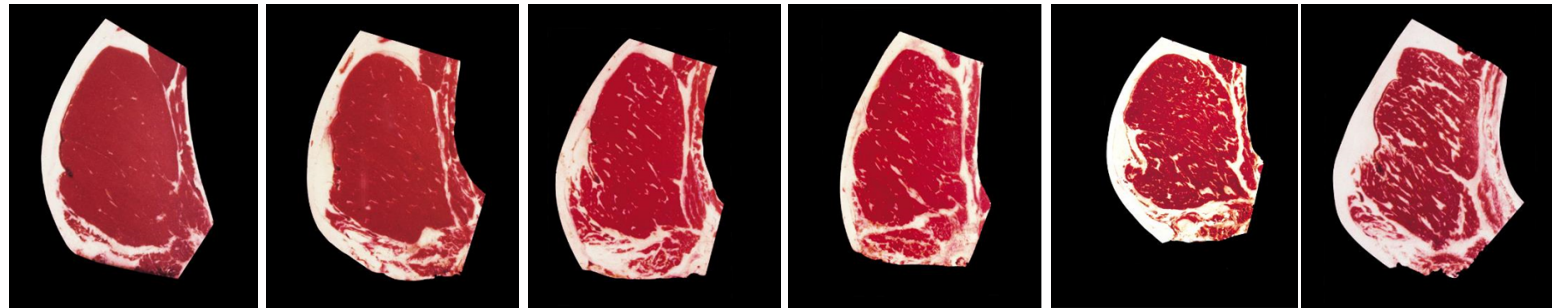
Dentition showing "A" Maturity

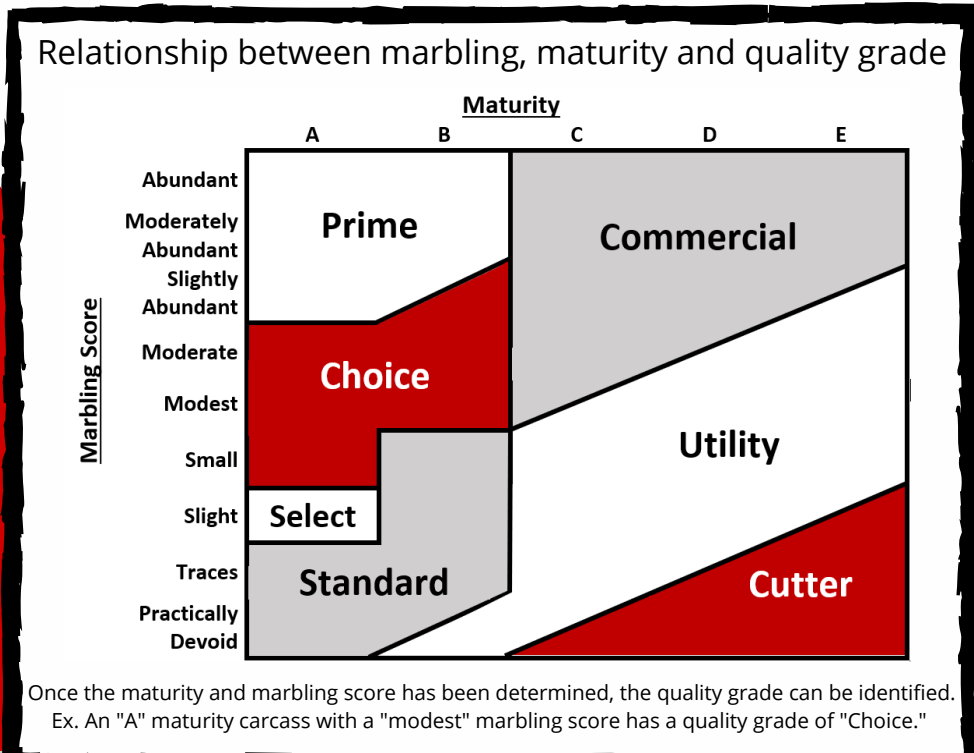## DETERMINED BY: MATURITY AND MARBLING

USDA Select   USDA Choice   USDA Prime

Marbling score is an estimate of the amount of marbling, or intramuscular fat, within the ribeye. Higher levels of marbling can improve flavor, juiciness and tenderness and qualifies the carcass for a higher quality grade.

Relationship between marbling, maturity and quality grade

Marbling Score	Maturity				
	A	B	C	D	E
Abundant	Prime		Commercial		
Moderately Abundant					
Slightly Abundant					
Moderate	Choice				
Modest				Utility	
Small					
Slight	Select				
Traces	Standard			Cutter	
Practically Devoid					

Once the maturity and marbling score has been determined, the quality grade can be identified. Ex. An "A" maturity carcass with a "modest" marbling score has a quality grade of "Choice."

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Yield Grading: Estimates the cutability, or the amount of boneless, closely trimmed, retail cuts (BCTRC) from the Round, Loin, Rib and Chuck
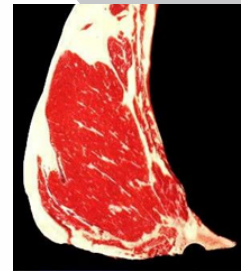
Yield Grade is measured on a 1-5 scale, with a lower number indicating a higher cutability.
A trimmer, heavier muscled carcass will have a better yield grade than a fatter, lighter muscled carcass.
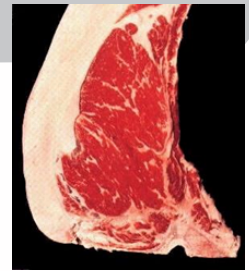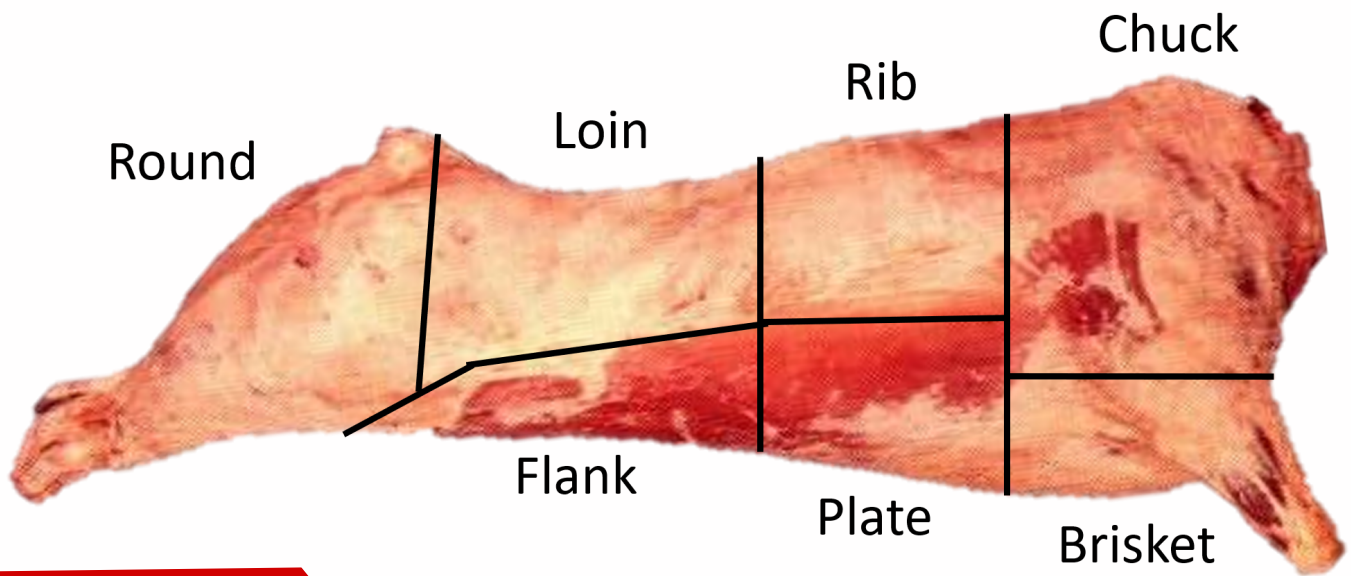

YG 1   YG 5

Chuck

Rib

Loin

Round

Flank

Plate

Brisket

Beef Yield Grade is determined by the 12th rib backfat, ribeye area, carcass weight and the estimated percent kidney, pelvic and heart fat within the carcass.

Yield Grade:	Estimated Cutability:	Example:
1	>53%	Live Weight: 1400 lbs
2	51-52%	Dressing Percent: 63%
3	48-50%	Carcass Weight: 880 lbs
4	45-48%	YG: 3
5	<45%	Cutability: 50%
		BCTRC: 440 lbs*

*This number does not include weight from the Flank, Plate and Brisket. Weight will also vary based on bone in vs. boneless cuts.

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