

degree of fatness than described as minimum for the Prime grade. Such bullocks have less width of back and loin and are less uniform in width than described as typical for the Prime grade but the muscling is firmer than described. Conversely, bullocks with lower cutability than normal for this grade are thinly muscled and have a higher degree of fatness than described as minimum for the Prime grade.

(b) *Choice*. (1) Slaughter bullocks possessing minimum qualifications for the Choice grade carry a slightly thick fat covering over the top. The brisket and flanks appear moderately full and the muscling is moderately firm.

(2) Bullocks qualifying for the minimum of the Choice grade will differ considerably in cutability because of varying combinations of muscling and degree of fatness. Bullocks with higher cutability than normal for this grade are thickly muscled and have a lower degree of fatness than described as minimum for the Choice grade but the muscling is firmer than described. Conversely, bullocks with lower cutability than normal for this grade are thinly muscled and have a higher degree of fatness than described as minimum for the Choice grade.

(c) *Select*. (1) Slaughter bullocks possessing minimum qualifications for the Select grade have a thin fat covering which is largely restricted to the back and loin. The brisket and flanks are slightly full and the muscling is slightly firm.

(2) Bullocks qualifying for the minimum of the Select grade will differ considerably in cutability because of varying combinations of muscling and degree of fatness. Bullocks with higher cutability than normal for the grade are thickly muscled and have a lower degree of fatness than described as minimum for the Select grade. Such bullocks are less uniform in width than described as typical of the grade but the muscling is firmer than described. Conversely, bullocks with lower cutability than normal for this grade have thinner muscling and a higher degree of fatness than described as minimum for the Select grade.

(d) *Standard*. (1) Slaughter bullocks possessing minimum qualifications for the Standard grade have only a very

thin covering of fat which is largely restricted to the back, loin, and upper rib.

(2) Bullocks qualifying for the minimum of this grade vary relatively little in their degree of fatness. Therefore, the range in cutability among bullocks that qualify for this grade is somewhat less than in the higher grades. Most of the cutability differences among bullocks qualifying for this grade are due to a wide range in muscling. Bullocks with higher cutability than normal for this grade may have a slightly lower degree of fatness than described but will have thick, well-rounded backs, wide loins, and prominent, thickly muscled shoulders. The width through the rounds will be greater than over the back. Bullocks with lower cutability than normal for this grade may have slightly more finish than described and will be upstanding and narrow. The loin, rump, and rounds will appear slightly sunken.

(e) *Utility*. The Utility grade includes only those bullocks that do not meet the minimum requirements specified for the Standard grade.

[42 FR 53902, Oct. 4, 1977, as amended at 52 FR 35683, Sept. 23, 1987]

§ 53.206 Specifications for official U.S. standards for grades of slaughter cattle (yield).

(a) *Yield Grade 1*. (1) Yield Grade 1 slaughter cattle produce carcasses with very high yields of boneless retail cuts. Cattle with characteristics qualifying them for the lower limits of Yield Grade 1 (near the borderline between Yield Grade 1 and Yield Grade 2) will differ considerably in appearance because of inherent differences in the development of their muscling and skeletal systems and related differences in fatness.

(2) Very thickly muscled cattle typical of the minimum of this grade have a high proportion of lean to bone. They are moderately wide and the width through the shoulders and rounds is greater than through the back. The top is well-rounded with no evidence of flatness, and the back and loin are thick and full. The rounds are deep, thick, and full and the width through the middle part of the rounds is greater than through the back. The shoulders

are slightly prominent and the forearms are thick and full. These cattle have only a thin covering of fat over the back and rump. The flanks are slightly shallow and the brisket and cod or udder have little evidence of fullness. Slaughter cattle of this description producing 600-pound carcasses usually have about 0.3 of an inch of fat over the ribeye and about 13.0 square inches of ribeye area.

(3) Because of the relatively low proportion of lean to bone, practically no thinly muscled cattle produce carcasses with an exceptionally high yield of boneless retail cuts. Therefore, it is unlikely that thinly muscled cattle will qualify for Yield Grade 1.

(4) Cattle qualifying for the minimum of Yield Grade 1 will differ widely in quality grade as a result of variations in distribution of finish and firmness of muscling. For example, young cattle which have considerable firmness of muscling and considerably greater deposits of fat in the brisket, flanks, twist, and cod or udder than described for Yield Grade 1 ordinarily will qualify for the Select or Choice grade. However, such cattle with typical or less than typical deposits of fat in the brisket, flanks, twist, and cod or udder usually will qualify for the Standard or Utility grade.

(b) *Yield Grade 2.* (1) Yield Grade 2 slaughter cattle produce carcasses with high yields of boneless retail cuts. Cattle with characteristics qualifying them for the lower limits of Yield Grade 2 (near the borderline between Yield Grade 2 and Yield Grade 3) will differ considerably in appearance because of differences in the development of their muscling and skeletal systems and related differences in fatness.

(2) Very thickly muscled cattle typical of the minimum of this grade have a high proportion of lean to bone. They are wide through the back and loin and have slightly greater width through the shoulders and rounds than through the back. The top is well-rounded with little evidence of flatness and the back and loin are thick and full. The rounds are thick, full, and deep and the thickness through the middle part of the rounds is greater than that over the top. The shoulders are slightly prominent and the forearms are thick and

full. There is a slightly thick covering of fat over the back and rump and the flanks are slightly deep. The brisket and cod or udder are slightly full. Slaughter cattle of this description producing 600-pound carcasses usually have about 0.6 of an inch of fat over the ribeye and about 12.5 square inches of ribeye area.

(3) Thinly muscled cattle typical of the minimum of this grade have a relatively low proportion of lean to bone. They tend to be flat and slightly narrow over the back and have slightly long, flat rounds. They are slightly wider over the back than through the rounds. The shoulders are slightly prominent and the forearms are only slightly thick. These cattle have a thin covering of fat over the back and rump. The flanks are slightly shallow and thin and the brisket and cod or udder have little evidence of fullness. Slaughter cattle of this description producing 600-pound carcasses usually have 0.3 of an inch of fat over the ribeye and about 10.0 square inches of ribeye area.

(4) Cattle qualifying for the minimum of Yield Grade 2 will differ greatly in quality grade as a result of variations in distribution of finish and firmness of muscling. For example, young cattle which have considerable firmness of muscling and typical or greater deposits of fat in the brisket, flanks, twist, and cod or udder than described for Yield Grade 2 ordinarily will qualify for Prime or Choice. Conversely, such cattle with less than typical deposits of fat in the brisket, flanks, twist, and cod or udder usually will qualify for the Select or Standard grade.

(c) *Yield Grade 3.* (1) Yield Grade 3 slaughter cattle produce carcasses with intermediate yields of boneless retail cuts. Cattle with characteristics qualifying them for the lower limits of Yield Grade 3 (near the borderline between Yield Grades 3 and 4) will differ considerably in appearance because of inherent differences in the development of their muscling and skeletal systems and related differences in fatness.

(2) Very thickly muscled cattle typical of the minimum of this grade have a high proportion of lean to bone. They are very wide through the back and loin and are uniform in width from

front to rear. The back or top is nearly flat with only a slight tendency toward roundness and there is a slight break into the sides. The back and loin are very full and thick. The rounds are deep, thick, and full. The shoulders are smooth and the forearms are thick and full. There is a moderately thick covering of fat over the back and rump. The flanks are deep and full and the brisket and cod or udder are full. Slaughter cattle of this description producing 600-pound carcasses usually have about 0.9 of an inch of fat over the ribeye and about 12.0 square inches of ribeye area.

(3) Thinly muscled cattle typical of the minimum of this grade have a relatively low proportion of lean to bone. They are flat and slightly wide over the back and loin and are wider over the back than through the rounds. The shoulders are slightly smooth and the forearms are only slightly thick. These cattle tend to have a slightly thick covering of fat over the back and rump. The flanks are slightly deep and full and the brisket and cod or udder are slightly full. Slaughter cattle of this description producing 600-pound carcasses usually have about 0.6 of an inch of fat over the ribeye and about 9.5 square inches of ribeye area.

(4) Cattle qualifying for the minimum of Yield Grade 3 will differ greatly in quality grade as a result of wide variations in distribution of finish and firmness of muscling. Cattle with higher quality than normal for the minimum of this grade will have very firm muscling and will have greater deposits of fat in the brisket, flanks, twist, and cod or udder than described for Yield Grade 3 and will normally qualify for the Prime or Choice grade. Conversely, cattle with lower quality than normal for the minimum of this grade will have less deposits of fat in the brisket, flanks, twist, and cod or udder than described herein, and may only qualify for the Select grade.

(d) *Yield Grade 4.* (1) Yield Grade 4 slaughter cattle produce carcasses with moderately low yields of boneless retail cuts. Cattle with characteristics qualifying them for the lower limits of Yield Grade 4 (near the borderline between Yield Grades 4 and 5) will differ considerably in appearance because of inherent differences in the develop-

ment of their muscling and skeletal systems and related differences in fatness.

(2) Very thickly muscled cattle typical of the minimum of this grade have a high proportion of lean to bone. They appear wider over the top than through the shoulders or rounds. The back and loin are very thick and full, nearly flat, and break sharply into the sides. The rounds are deep, thick, and full. The shoulders are smooth and the forearms are thick and full. These cattle have a thick covering of fat over the back and rump. The flanks are very deep and full and the brisket and cod or udder are very full. Slaughter cattle of this description producing 600-pound carcasses usually have about 1.1 inches of fat over the ribeye and about 11.5 square inches of ribeye area.

(3) Thinly muscled cattle typical of the minimum of this grade have a relatively low ratio of lean to bone. They are flat over the back and loin and much wider through the back than through the shoulders or rounds. The rounds tend to be long and flat. The shoulders are smooth and the forearms are slightly thick. These cattle have a moderately thick covering of fat over the back and rump and the back breaks sharply into the sides. The flanks are deep and full and the brisket and cod or udder are full. Slaughter cattle of this description producing 600-pound carcasses usually have about 0.9 of an inch of fat over the ribeye and about 9.0 square inches of ribeye area.

(4) Cattle qualifying for the minimum of Yield Grade 4 will differ somewhat in quality grade as a result of variations in distribution of the finish and firmness of muscling. Most cattle at the minimum of this grade will qualify for the Prime or Choice grade. However, some cattle at the minimum of Yield Grade 4 with less deposits of fat in the brisket, flanks, twist, and cod or udder than described as typical may only qualify for the Select grade.

(e) *Yield Grade 5.* (1) Yield Grade 5 slaughter cattle produce carcasses with low yields of boneless retail cuts. Cattle of this grade consist of those not meeting the minimum requirements for Yield Grade 4 because of either more fat or less muscle or a combination of these characteristics.

(2) Because of the high degree of finish required for cattle of this grade, the range in quality grades will be somewhat small. Practically all cattle of this grade will qualify for either the Prime or Choice grade.

[42 FR 53902, Oct. 4, 1977, as amended at 52 FR 35683, Sept. 23, 1987]

PART 54—MEATS, PREPARED MEATS, AND MEAT PRODUCTS (GRADING, CERTIFICATION, AND STANDARDS)

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AUTHORITY: 7 U.S.C. 1621–1627.

SOURCE: 42 FR 53921, Oct. 4, 1977, unless otherwise noted. Redesignated at 46 FR 63203, Dec. 31, 1981.

Subpart A—Regulations

DEFINITIONS

§ 54.1 Meaning of words.

Words used in this subpart in the singular form shall be deemed to import the plural, and vice versa, as the case may demand. For the purposes of such regulations, unless the context otherwise requires, the following terms shall be construed, respectively, to mean:

Administrator. The Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service, or any officer or employee of the Agricultural Marketing Service to whom authority has heretofore been delegated or to whom authority may hereafter be delegated, to act in his stead.

Agricultural Marketing Service. The Agricultural Marketing Service of the Department.

Animals. Cattle, sheep, swine, or goats.

Applicant. Any person who has applied for service under the regulations.

Branch. The Meat Grading Branch of the Division.

Carcass. The commercially prepared or dressed body of any animal intended for human food.