

Relationship Between Marbling, Maturity, and Carcass Quality Grade*

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

* Assumes that firmness of lean is comparably developed with the degree of marbling and that the carcass is not a “dark cutter.”

** Maturity increases from left to right (A through E).

*** The A maturity portion of the Figure is the only portion applicable to bullock carcasses.

USDA (1996) Standards for Grades of Slaughter Cattle and Standards for Grades of Carcass Beef.