

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 (1997) Standards for Grades of Slaughter Cattle and Standards for Grades of Carcass Beef.