Why Do We Grade Cattle?

Grading / Judging

USDA grade standards are applied to:
- Feeder Cattle
- Slaughter Cattle
- Replacement Cows
- Hogs
- Sheep
- Goats

Factors to Evaluate

Frame Size
You Must Take Maturity into Consideration

Muscling
You Must Take Flesh or Fat into Consideration
USDA Feeder Cattle Grades

**Frame Size**

- **Large Frame**
  - **Steers** - Should have a $\frac{1}{2}$" of finish or a good chance of grading Choice at a weight over 1250 lbs.
  - **Heifers** - Should grade Choice over 1150 lbs.

- **Medium Frame**
  - **Steers** - Should have a $\frac{1}{2}$" of finish or a good chance of grading Choice at a weight between 1100-1250 lbs.
  - **Heifers** - Should grade Choice between 1000-1150 lbs.

- **Small Frame**
  - **Steers** - Should have a $\frac{1}{2}$" of finish or a good chance of grading Choice prior to 1100 lbs.
  - **Heifers** - Should grade Choice prior to 1000 lbs.

**Frame Size – Relative to Potential**

- **Large Frame**
  - Length of tail
  - Coarseness of hair in switch
  - Width of muzzle
  - Coarseness of hair on poll
  - Size of feet, ears, base of horns, etc.

**Medium Frame**

- "Have you seen a tall or short child?"
  - "How did you know?"

**Small Frame**
USDA Feeder Cattle Grades

Muscle Thickness Grades

No. 1  No. 2  No. 3  No. 4

How to Identify Muscling

Heavy Muscling  Light Muscling  Fat

Inferior

Sick / Disabled  Double-Muscled

Missouri Federal-State Market News & Grading Service

Market Reporting: Timely, Unbiased, Accurate and Detailed.
Missouri Fed-State Market News Program

- Regular Weekly Livestock Markets
- Daily Market News Broadcast from Jefferson City, Mo
- 24 Hour Market News Hotline
- Weekly Newspapers and Market Publications

Missouri Fed-State Market News Program

In Addition
- Missouri Direct Slaughter Cattle
- Interior Missouri Direct Slaughter Hogs
- Special Monthly Dairy Cattle Auctions
- Special Monthly Sheep & Goat Sales
- Missouri Direct Weaner and Feeder Pigs
- Show-Me-Select Replacement Heifer Pigs
- Daily Missouri Grain Markets
- Weekly Missouri Hay Summary
- Seasonal Fescue Summary

Missouri Fed-State Market News Program

Livestock Grading: Official USDA Livestock Grade Standards
- Show-Me-Select Replacement Heifer Grading & Inspection
- Ranch to Rail Comingled Feeder Cattle Programs
- Meat Goat and Sheep Grading for Buying Station
- FFA & 4-H Livestock Grading and Evaluation Programs

*** Missouri Youth Livestock Grading & Judging Contest and Workshop

Missouri Livestock Markets

Factors Impacting Feeder Cattle Pricing

- Health
- Steers vs. Heifers
- Weight
- Flesh Condition
- Lot Size
- Muscling

Getting the Best Price For Your Feeder Cattle
Factors Impacting Feeder Cattle Pricing

- Frame Size
- Fill
- Bulls
- Breed
- Weather

Adding Value to Your Feeder Cattle

- Wean-Vac Programs
- Buy the best possible genetics
- Crossbreeding
- Castrate bull calves
- De-horn
- Tighten-up your calving season
- Have a working relationship with Livestock Market manager or fieldman

24 Hour Market News Hotline

573.522.9244

mda.mo.gov

Questions/Comments