USDA Cattle Grading

USDA Agriculture Marketing Service
Livestock & Grain Market News
Missouri Department of Agriculture
Market Information and Outreach
Why Do We Grade Cattle?
Grading / Judging
USDA grade standards are applied to:

- Feeder Cattle
- Slaughter Cattle
- Replacement Cows
- Hogs
- Sheep
- Goats
Feeder Cattle Grading
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

Medium

Small
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

“Have you seen a tall or short child?”
“How did you know?”
Frame Size – Relative to Maturity

- ✔ Length of tail (switch)
- ✔ Coarseness of hair in switch
- ✔ Width of muzzle
- ✔ Coarseness of hair on poll
- ✔ Size of feet, ears, base of horns, etc.
Muscle Thickness Grades

No. 1  No. 2  No. 3  No. 4
How to Identify Muscling

- Heavy Muscling
- Light Muscling
- Fat
USDA Feeder Cattle Grades

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 Sales
- 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 Commingled 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
Getting the Best Price For Your Feeder Cattle
Factors Impacting Feeder Cattle Pricing

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