Module 3: Beef Cattle

Judging Market Steers
Judging Market Steers

- Ideal Market Steer:
  - Weighs 1,100 to 1,250 lbs.
  - Adequate size & scale:
    - To carry this weight
    - Minimum finish
  - Enough finish to:
    - Produce high quality carcass
    - Choice grade
    - Increase carcass cutability
Judging Market Steers

Ideal Market Steer:

- Heavy muscling is desired in:
  - High-priced cuts
  - Rib
  - Loin
  - Round
- Relatively trim middle
- Clean fronted
Ideal Market Steer

- Ideal Market Steer
- Uniform condition over ribs
- Long bodied
- Deep muscular, bulging quarter
- Straight topline
- Bold spring of rib
- Smooth shoulder
- Long muscular stifle
- Long level rump
- Thick meaty loin
- Uniform condition over ribs
- Muscular arm & forearm
- Correct set of rear legs
- Trim middle & flanks
- Correct set of front legs
Judging Market Steers

Steps to Judging Market Steers

- Always start at the ground & work up
- Then from rear & work forward
- Rank animals based on traits of importance
- Evaluate most important traits first
- Eliminate any easy placings first
- Place remaining class based on the volume of important traits
Judging Market Steers

 Ranking of Traits for Market Steers:

- Degree of muscling
- Degree of Finish (fat cover)
- Growth capacity
- Soundness and structural correctness
- Balance
- Frame size

Steers should be:

- Extra thick, Medium framed & Adequately finished
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- Evaluating Degree of Muscling
  - Thickness through center of rear quarter
  - Base Width (Standing & Walking)
  - Muscle expression over the top
    - “Butterfly” shape down the topline
    - Crease down the backbone
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- **Thin Muscle**
- **Average Muscle**
- **Thick Muscle**
- **Super Thick**

- **Narrow Base**
- **Average Base**
- **Wide Base**
- **Super Wide**
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Evaluating Degree of Finish

Goal of Choice grade
- Requires enough external fat to achieve adequate intramuscular fat or marbling

Excessive fat:
- Yield grade of 4 or 5
- Discounted prices

Ideal level of exterior fat is 0.4 to 0.6 inches
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**Evaluating Degree of Finish**

- Areas to evaluate degree of finish:
  - Top line
  - Underline
  - Body depth
  - Brisket
  - Tailhead
  - Cod or udder area
  - Shoulder
  - Over the ribs
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Too Fat
Judging Market Steers

Not Enough Fat
Judging Market Steers

Correct Finish

Not Enough Finish

Full brisket indicates correct amount of finish

Empty brisket indicates lack of finish
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Correct Finish

Cod fill indicates correct amount of finish

Excess Finish

Fat around tailhead indicates too much finish
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Evaluating Growth Capacity

- Steers are sold by the pound
- Important to maximize feeding capacity
- Look for good:
  - Body Width
  - Body Depth
  - Body length
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Evaluating Soundness & Structural Correctness

Lack of soundness:
- Limits trips to feed & water
- Decreases growth

Sound & structurally correct steers will have:
- Flexible, clean & flat joints
- Long powerful strides
- Strong pasterns
- Good set to hocks & knees
- Big feet that sit flatly on the ground
Judging Market Steers

Correct Structure

Long and straight top line, with a long and level rump

Poor Structure

Weak topped, with a short and steep rump
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Evaluating Balance

- Balance is having correct portions of:
  - Width
  - Depth
  - Length
- Equal proportions that blend together
Judging Market Steers

Poorly Balanced

too short

too light in hindquarters

too shallow in rear flank

heavy fronted
Test Your Skills

Place this Class of Market Steers
Official Placing

Official Placing: 2 – 4 – 3 – 1
Cuts: 3 – 5 – 6