

# from the office

## LEAD IN

by Dick Spader  
Executive Vice President  
American Angus Assn.

How will the proposed USDA beef grading revisions affect your Angus operation and the cattle business in general if they are adopted?

This is a question that each Angus breeder should answer. Then, when you have reached a decision, you need to register your opinion with the USDA as well as the American Angus Assn.

The proposals, as published by the USDA in the Federal Register on Dec. 30, would allow beef with less marbling than at present to qualify for the prime, choice and good grades. The standard grade would be eliminated. The top part of what is now standard would be included in the good grade and the rest would be graded utility.

The proposal is the result of petitions for change received by the USDA in recent months, according to John Ford, deputy assistant secretary of agriculture for marketing and inspection services. He also stated that they came about partly as a result of research findings.

A USDA report states that the changes would "not significantly lower" the palatability (eating quality and consumer acceptability) of either the prime or choice grades, but that the good grade with only traces to just slight marbling, would not taste as good as beef in the present good grade.

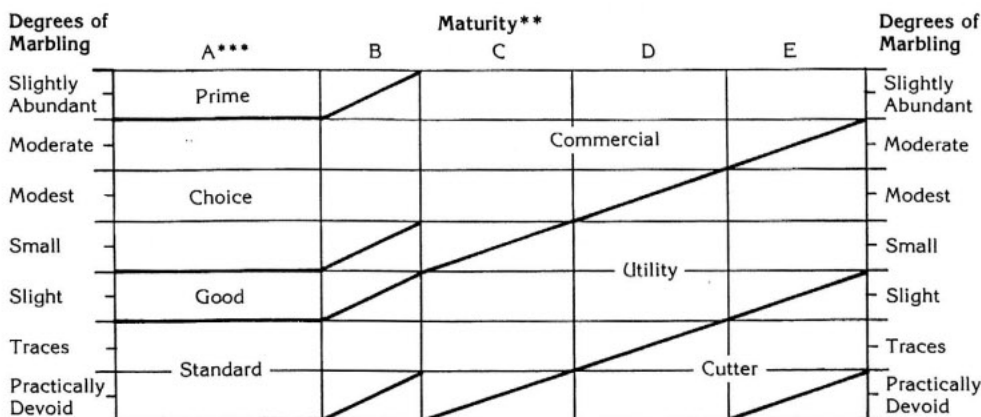
Briefly, for "A" maturity carcasses (those under 30 months of age) the marbling requirements for the prime grade would be dropped one full degree to include carcasses with moderate marbling designation, with the good grade including the bottom half of slight and trace. (See accompanying chart.)

Most beef industry people who support the changes are convinced that the lowered marbling requirements will allow leaner beef to be produced while not "significantly" changing the palatability of beef in the choice and prime grades. On the other hand, opponents point out that nearly all research projects have shown a positive correlation between increased degrees of marbling and increased palatability of beef. In fact, recent University of Iowa research results show that steaks with a "small" degree of marbling were more tender and desirable than steaks with "slight" marbling.

The American Angus Assn. would like to know your opinion of the proposed grading changes. If your letters (no telephone calls, please) reach the association by March 12,

### PRESENT STANDARDS

#### Relationship Between Marbling, Maturity and Carcass Quality Grade\*



\*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.

they will be summarized for board members to consider at their regular quarterly meeting beginning March 14.

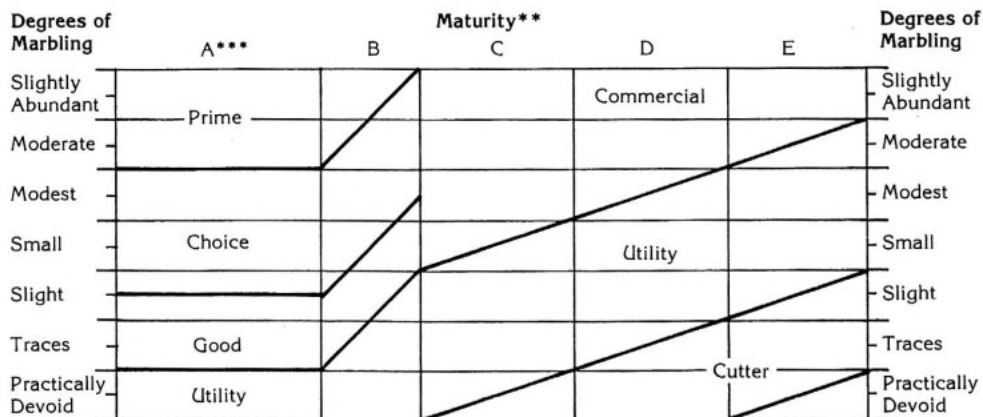
If you would like to submit written comments to the USDA concerning the proposed revisions, they should be sent to the Livestock, Meat, Grain & Seed Division,

AMS 2M-Annes, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250, by March 31.

Your comments can help guide the board of directors in any possible course of action they might want to take and will certainly influence the final decision made by USDA. 

### PROPOSED STANDARDS

#### Relationship Between Marbling, Maturity and Carcass Quality Grade\*



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