

*Note: I enrolled and completed a market beef project. My steer Cowboy was sent to Stockman Meats to find out his actual carcass quality.*

Title: The Meat We Eat

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One of the goals for my beef project this year was to make gold performance. Did Cowboy make it? Let's find out!

Cowboy had the following carcass qualities;

- ❖ Hot carcass weight of 861 lbs,
- ❖ Back Fact of .6 inches
- ❖ Ribeye size of 16.4 square inches
- ❖ 3.5% KPH (kidney pelvic, heart fat)
- ❖ Quality Grade of MT (Choice plus)
- ❖ Yield Grade of 2.72
- ❖ Dressing percent of 63%
- ❖ A.D.G. of 3.2 lbs per day



There are five Industry Standards that Cowboy has to reach in order to achieve gold performance. As beef producers you should strive to always meet gold performance. If cattlemen achieve producing a high quality consistent meat product then the consumer will be happy, they will return to eat beef again, and provide us a market for our animals.

The performance standards are as follows.

1. Must have a quality grade of choice minus or better (Check)
2. Hot Carcass weight range of 600 to 850 lbs. (too heavy!)
3. Average daily gain minimum of 2.8 lbs per day (Check)
4. Yield grade range of 1.0 to 3.2 (Check)
5. Dressing percent of minimum of 58% (Check)



Cowboy was 11 pounds too heavy in the hot carcass weight. Feeding him for 45 days too long has cost me again! So he gets a silver performance certificate. I am happy with that, it is more important to me that he made choice quality grade, this means he will be good eating. (Refer to the Beef Quality Grades article in this newsletter.) Choice grades do not have as much marbling as prime but more than select. Steaks and roasts from choice carcasses are usually seen in restaurants, high end grocery stores and branded beef products. Prime has a higher value however only 2-3% of fed cattle receive this quality grade, 57% of carcasses are graded choice, 39% select and .4% standard. Nationwide the Industry would like to see

7% Prime, 52% Choice and 31% Select. As cattlemen we need to produce and pick more prime, less select, and no standard graded cattle.

How did your project go? Here are some questions you can ask yourself.

- ✚ What performance standard did your calf make?
- ✚ How could you improve that?
- ✚ What was the quality grade of your calf?
- ✚ Would you like to eat that quality grade?
- ✚ What type of animal will you select next year? Is selection important?
- ✚ Are you ready for next year? I think I am going to take a pig!