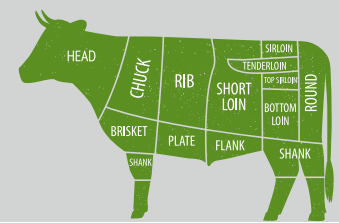


FROM BIRTH TO STEAK

A Look At Where Your Beef Comes From

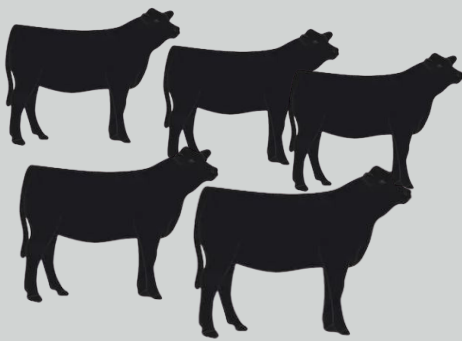


CALVES



- A cow gives birth 285 days after she becomes pregnant.
- Most calves are born in either the Fall (September-November) or Spring (January-March) although some cattle producers will calve all year long
- At birth, most calves will weigh between 65 and 90 lbs.
- Calves will stay with their dams (mothers) for 6-9 months.
- During this time their primary source of food is milk from their dam, and the grass or roughage (hay) that is available.
- Some producers will provide some supplemental feed for calves (usually referred to creep feed)

WEANING



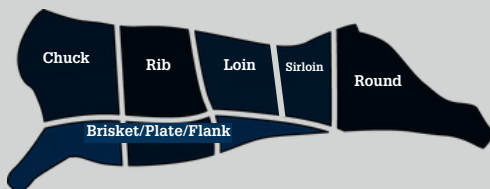
- At 6-9 months of age the calves are weaned off their dams and placed in a field or pen with other calves of a similar age and weight.
- Most calves will weigh 500-700 lbs at weaning.
- These calves will be backgrounded for several months. Backgrounding simply means feeding calves mostly on forage (grass or hay), with some supplemental feed if needed. This is an economical way to add pounds to the calf without having to spend a lot of money on feed so that they can enter the feedlot at a higher weight.
- Calves will generally stay here until they are approximately 900 lbs.

FINISHING



- At approximately 900 lbs, or about 12 months of age, grain-finished cattle destined for beef go on feed (a balanced ration of grain and roughage). This can be either on the farm or in a feedlot.
- Grain-finished cattle are put on feed to help them efficiently gain weight, with a goal of about 2 lbs of gain a day.
- They will stay on feed until they reach about 1200 lbs, approximately 14-15 months of age. They will be ready to process when they have a certain amount of external fat.
- Grass-finished cattle will continue to be fed forage (grass and hay) until they reach the proper amount of fat cover and weight. Generally, these cattle will take longer to reach the proper stage.
- For both grass and grain-finished cattle, the breed (Angus, Simmental, etc.) will have an effect on how long it takes to reach the proper stage, so weight and age will vary some between breeds.

PROCESSING



- Once steers (and sometimes heifers) reach the proper weight and fat cover, they are then processed. On average, these animals will weight approximately 1200-1300 lbs, though this weight will vary - anywhere from 1000-1500 lbs and rarely more or less.
- On average, beef cattle have a dressing percentage of 60-62%, meaning a 1200 lbs live steer will have a carcass weight of about 720 lbs (1200x0.60).
- As the carcass is processed, some of the fat and bone will be trimmed away. Because of this, a 720 lb carcass will yield about 468 lbs of meat (depending on the amount of fat and bone left).
- The carcass will be cut into steaks, roasts, ground beef and other cuts. It can be sold as a whole or half beef or can be sold as individual retail cuts like you see in a grocery store.