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ALBERTA
BEEF
CANADA'S
FINEST

Alberta
CANADA

DDN 5935320

The Marketing Sector of the Alberta
Department of Agriculture presents this
Alberta Beef Brochure as a reference for
buyers of Alberta Beef.

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or to:

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Introduction

Beef is important to Alberta. It provides about one-third of farm incomes. It uses large areas of grazing land not suitable for cultivation. It complements grain production through soil enrichment, crop clean up and the use of forage in a crop rotation cycle.

Albertans are good at raising beef. Alberta has cold winters and warm, dry summers. This hardy climate, combined with tough health standards, excellent genetics, and knowledgeable producers, makes Alberta's beef industry the world's best. Producers are rewarded for their efforts by a grading system that pays a premium for a lean, high quality animal.

Breeding

Alberta beef combines the best of the British breeds with the best of "exotic" breeds. The result is lean, fast-growing animals that maximize the yield of the best beef in the world.

Alberta's pool of beef genetics is unmatched in the quality and variety of beef and dairy stock available. A major export trade in beef genetics has developed as the world has come to recognize the quality and convenience of buying breeding stock in Alberta.

Ranching

In the late 1880s, free range grazing was a major industry in southern Alberta. As settlers arrived, much of the land was plowed. Ranching was confined to range areas of dry or rugged land in the foothills or in the far south.

Since that time, Alberta's beef industry has evolved into a two-stage system: the cow/calf industry and the feedlot industry.

The most important determinant for success in a cow/calf industry is a large land base suitable for forage production. Alberta has such a land base. Many of the large ranches of yesterday are still operating but now about half of the cow herd is part of mixed farming operations. On mixed farms, a cow herd complements grain production by cleaning up crop residues and using marginal land. The same attention to breeding and health is paid whether the cow is part of a large herd on a southern Alberta ranch or part of a smaller herd on a mixed farm in northern Alberta.

Feedlots

Feedlots not only produce a meat with better eating qualities, but also offer numerous production advantages. Feedlots bring animals to market faster. They also enable the producer to control when the animal is ready for market in order to take advantage of seasonal prices. The feedlots sort the animals so that no animal is offered until it can maximize its grade. The feedlots also perform a marketing function, making it easier for packers to buy direct at the feedlot and making the trucking function as efficient as possible.

Feedlots need a good supply of feed grain and a good supply of feeder cattle to succeed. Alberta has both. Very few areas in the world have ideal grain land close to large areas of forage production.

Alberta's feedlots take top quality calves and feed them some of the best barley in the world to produce the best beef in the world.

Feedlots are a "high tech" industry in Alberta. Computers formulate rations on a day-to-day basis for each batch of animals. The rations are designed to maximize lean meat gain which minimizes costs.

Meat Packers

The beef packing industry is the largest food processing industry in Alberta. Eight modern and efficient slaughter facilities, as well as six of the finest beef processing plants in the world, serve the beef industry in Alberta.

Alberta produces over 40 per cent of Canada's beef but consumes only 25 per cent of what it produces. The remaining 75 per cent is consumed in Quebec, British Columbia, Ontario, the U.S.A. or in Japan. This factor makes Alberta packers skilled at shipping over long distances and at meeting customers' needs.

Typical plants kill 90-head per hour or approximately 3,500 per week. All plants have ready access to rail, road or air shipping facilities.

Federal Meat Inspection

Federal inspection is compulsory for all meat and meat products entering interprovincial or export trade in Canada. It assures consumers of a supply of meat and meat products from healthy animals slaughtered and processed in sanitary establishments operating under government supervision. The presence of resident inspectors in every federally inspected plant assures an export customer that Canadian beef is as reliable and wholesome as any available in the world. Once approved, a

Canada inspection stamp is applied certifying the product is fit for human consumption and is from an approved and inspected plant.

Very few countries maintain as large and as broadly based an inspection system as in Canada. Major plants have a staff of resident inspectors paid and controlled by the federal government. They provide absolute assurance to the Canadian consumer and the export customer that meat bearing the federal inspection stamp is wholesome and safe.

Beef Grading System

All beef slaughtered in Canada which is destined for interprovincial or international movement is graded. The grading system is administered by the federal department of agriculture. Grading is done in the slaughter plant by federal government employees.

Canada's beef grading system has proven accurate and reliable in helping producers maximize their returns while providing consumers with a product of assured quality. The Canadian grading system categorizes the carcass in two ways. The letters, A, B, C, D, and E, refer to the meat quality of the carcass as determined by color, texture, conformity and maturity. The numbers, 1, 2, 3, and 4, refer to the fat cover as a measure of lean meat yield.

Canada's E grade covers mature bulls and stags. These are used only for manufacturing material and are not available in large enough quantities for independent export.

Canada's D grade covers mature cows of five different conformity classes. These carcasses are used for boneless manufacturing beef. A substantial volume of these carcasses move to boners in the U.S.A. Individual negotiations between slaughterer and boner generally determine which D grades best suit the boner's needs.

A L B E R T A B E E F

Canada's C grade covers intermediate-aged heifers and steers. This grade is not available in sufficient volume for independent export.

Canada's B grade covers animals which, while still youthful, are flawed by dark colored meat, coarse texture, insufficient fat, yellow fat, poor fat coverage, or a marked muscling deficiency. These animals are not available in sufficient volume for independent export.

Canada's best beef is Canada A grade. Between 75 and 80 per cent of Alberta's beef falls into Canada grade A1 and A2. Albertans proudly claim this to be the best eating beef in the world.

In order to qualify for Canada's A grade, a beef carcass must be youthful, firm, fine grained and have bright red meat, at least slight marbling, white fat, an even fat covering and no muscling deficiencies. Canada A1 must have between four mm and nine mm of fat when measured at the ribeye. A2 must have nine mm to 14 mm of fat. A3 must have 14 mm to 19 mm of fat. A3s and A4s are substantially discounted in Canada and as such are not available in large quantities. A1s and A2s of all weight ranges are available in large quantities for export.

Yields

Canadian beef may appear to cost a little more than other beef but in return the buyer gets more lean meat than in other grain-fed varieties. The eating quality of Alberta beef is better than European, Oceanic or South American beef.

The higher percentage of lean meat can be seen in the following figures. A 1975 estimate of United States carcass composition showed:

- Prime — 47 per cent lean meat
 — 39 per cent total fat content
Choice — 51 per cent lean meat
 — 34 per cent total fat content
Good — 56 per cent lean meat
 — 28 per cent total fat content

In contrast, in 1982, the Canadian beef grades yielded as follows:

- A1 — 57.8 per cent fat-free lean
 — 23.4 per cent total fat content
 A2 — 54.9 per cent fat-free lean
 — 27.1 per cent total fat content
 A3 — 51.4 per cent fat-free lean
 — 31.1 per cent total fat content
 A4 — 48.5 per cent fat-free lean
 — 34.8 per cent total fat content

Tests at boxed beef plants in the United States confirm a general yield advantage of four to five per cent over U.S. Choice depending on the specifications of the boxed product.

Retail cutting tests conducted on the product from boxed beef to finished counter cuts have shown that the Canadian product yields between three and seven per cent more retail product than U.S. boxed beef. The exact yield premium that can be achieved from Canadian beef varies according to the boxed and retail specifications. Only by doing tests to different buyers' cutting specifications can the individual yield premium be determined. In general, the more closely beef is trimmed, the greater the yield premium beef will provide.

A1 Grade Beef

A2 Grade Beef

Eating Qualities

Canada's current grading system was introduced in 1972. Researchers had known for decades that North American beef had more fat than was necessary for good eating quality. Before introducing the beef grading system in 1972, some questions regarding fat were considered: How much fat is enough? When is there too much fat?

Canadian research had found that consumers bought on the basis of leanness, price and color. After purchase, the key factors in enjoyment were tenderness and flavor. Obviously the consumer did not want to buy fat. The retailer and the packer did not wish to incur the cost of trimming the fat off and the producer was not anxious to incur the cost of putting the fat on.

Further research found that:

- fat cover was not a reliable measure of tenderness.
- intramuscular fat (marbling) did not affect tenderness. (Marbling did not make any difference in the firmness or fineness of texture).
- as fat cover and marbling decreased on steer beef, shear values (tenderness) did not decrease.

All of these factors are dealt with in the Canadian grading system. The system requires there be at least slight marbling in order to ensure good eating quality. At the same time it encourages efficiency by penalizing external fat over a certain base minimum. The system requires the bright red color consumers prefer in beef. The minimal marbling and fat cover required by the system, combined with the use of superior beef breeds, grass fed cows and calves, and barley finishing, ensures Alberta beef has the flavor and color that the consumer wants. While consumers have a preference for some marbling, excessive marbling is a factor that North American consumers avoid when purchasing meat.

Try some Canadian beef soon. Canadian beef varies slightly from American and Japanese beef. It varies greatly from British, Australian or Argentine beef. Its tenderness, texture and flavor have proven to be acceptable around the world. Try it. Tasting is believing!

Product Specifications

Chuck

Boneless Chuck Roll

Boneless Shoulder Clod

Chuck

4 Piece Bone-in Chuck

4 Piece Boneless Chuck

Rib

Rib

Prime Rib

Steak Style Prime Rib

Rib Eye

Short Ribs

Loin

Tenderloin

Longloin

Strip Loin

Top Sirloin Butt

Short Loin

Hip

Hip

Boneless Retail-Ready Hip

Top Round

Bottom Round

Sirloin Tip

Cutting Chart

Cutting chart courtesy
of Beef Information Centre

Beef Slaughtering Plants

Canada Packers Inc.

Box 548, 3929 - 1st Avenue S.

Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada T1J 3Z4

Telephone: 403/329-4044

Product: Carcass beef, fancy meats

Canada Packers Inc.

Box 548, 4201 - 2 Avenue N.

Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada T1J 3Z4

Telephone: 403/328-8541

Product: Carcass beef, fancy meats

Canada Packers Inc.

Box 829, 4120 - 77 Street

Red Deer, Alberta, Canada T4N 5H2

Telephone: 403/347-7781

Product: Carcass beef, boneless beef, fancy meats

Canadian Dressed Meats Ltd.

Box 1118

Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada T1J 4A4

Telephone: 403/328-1756

Telex: 038-49137

Product: Carcass beef and cuts, boxed beef, fancy meats

Dvorkin Meat Packers Ltd.

4211 - 13A Street S.E.

Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2G 3J6

Telephone: 403/261-0770

Telex: 038-21875

Product: Carcass beef, fancy meats

Gainers Inc.

Western Head Office & Edmonton Plant

66 Street and 124 Avenue

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5J 2H8

Telephone: 403/471-0611

Telex: 037-2539

Product: Carcass beef and cuts, boxed beef, fancy meats

Lakeside Packers Ltd.

Box 800

Brooks, Alberta, Canada T0J 0J0

Telephone: 403/362-3326

Telex: 038-48180

Product: Carcass beef, fancy meats

XL Beef Ltd.

5101 - 11 Street S.E.

Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2H 1M7

Telephone: 403/243-6280

Telex: 038-22612

Product: Carcass beef, fancy meats

Beef Processing Plants

Canada Packers Inc.

Box 820, 1235 - 26 Avenue S.E.
Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2G 1R7
Telephone: 403/265-6310
Telex: 038-24537
Product: Boxed beef

Canadian Dressed Meats Ltd.

Box 1118
Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada T1J 4A4
Telephone: 403/328-1756
Telex: 038-49137
Product: Beef carcasses and cuts, boxed beef, fancy meats

Centennial Packers Ltd.

4043 Brandon Street S.E.
Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2G 4A7
Telephone: 403/287-2525
Telex: 038-26629
Product: Beef cuts (boxed)

F.G. Bradley Inc.

4120 - 98 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6E 5A2
Telephone: 403/462-4630
Telex: 037-3309
Product: Beef for hotel, restaurant and institutional trade

Gainers Inc.

Western Head Office & Edmonton Plant
66 Street & 124 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5J 2H8
Telephone: 403/471-0611
Telex: 037-2539
Product: Beef, pork, processed meats, fancy meats

Lucerne Foods Ltd.

Meat Processing Plant
3440 - 56 Avenue S.E.
P.O. Box 1950
Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 2M2
Telephone: 403/279-2555
Product: Boxed beef

Montagne Meats Ltd.

4240 - 75 Avenue S.E.
Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2C 2H8
Telephone: 403/236-2424
Telex: 038-21097
Product: Boxed beef

Montagne Meats Ltd. #2

2825 Bonnybrook Road S.E.
Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2G 4N1
Telephone: 403/294-1300
Telex: 038-21097
Product: Boneless beef

Premier Meats

4013 Brandon Street S.E.
Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2G 4A7
Telephone: 403/287-3550
Product: Boxed beef

N.L.C. - B.N.C.

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