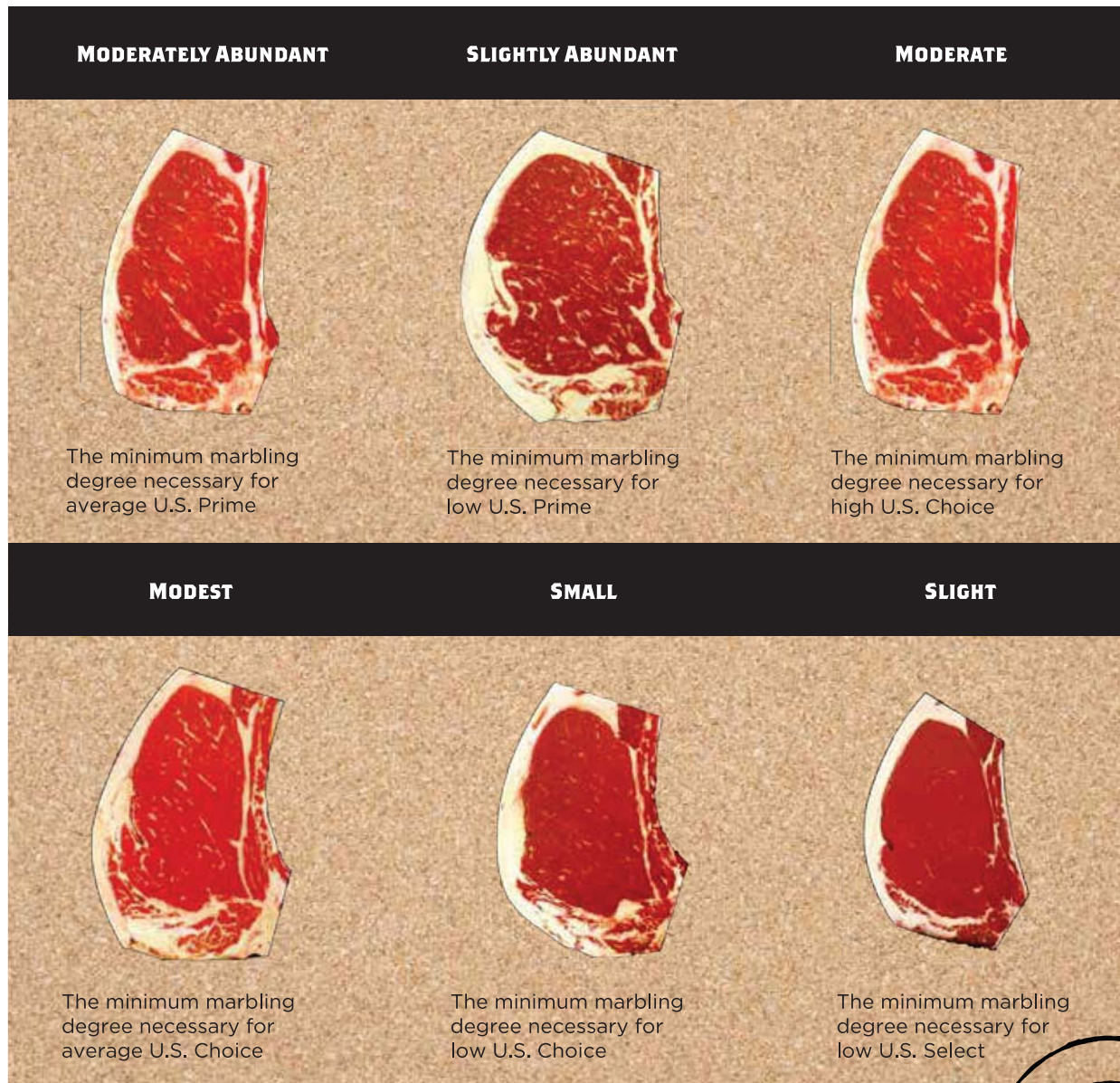


MARBLING

DESCRIPTIONS & ILLUSTRATIONS

Since marbling is such an important factor in grading beef quality, the following pictures illustrate the lower limits of six marbling degrees: Moderately Abundant, Slightly Abundant, Moderate, Modest Small, and Slight.

It should be noted that there are ten degrees of marbling referred to in the Official United States Standards for Grades of Carcass Beef. These color photographs have been developed to assist government, industry, and academia in the proper application of official grade standards.



The above illustrations are reduced reproductions of the Official USDA Marbling Photographs prepared for the U.S. Department of Agriculture by and available from the National Cattleman's Beef Association.



TODAY'S BEEF CHOICES

There are a variety of beef choices such as grain-finished, grass-finished, natural and certified organic as well as several different grades and aging options. So, no matter what you desire, there is a great beef choice for you. How's that for variety?

ALL BEEF IS:

Grass-Fed

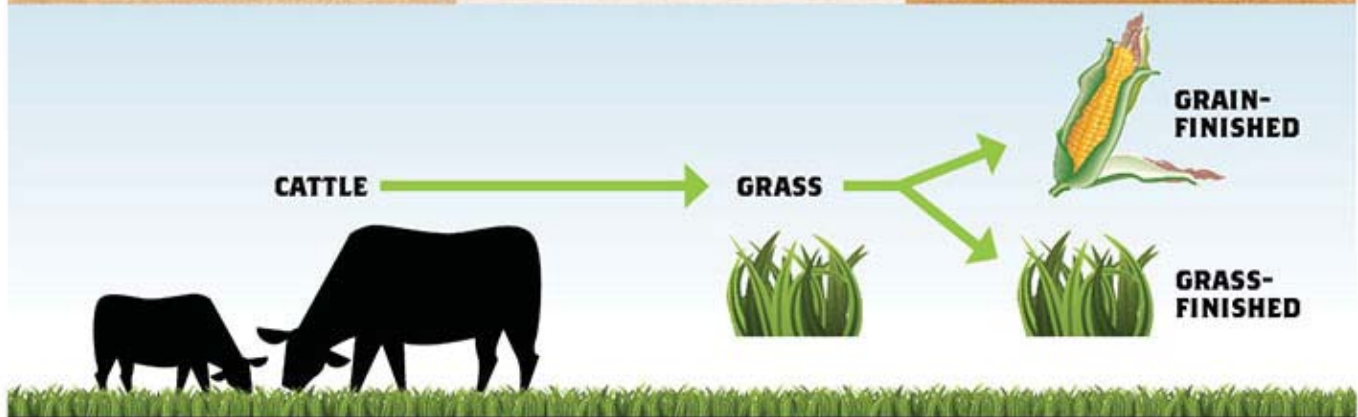
All cattle spend a majority of their lives eating grass on pastures

Natural

Most beef does not contain any additives and is not more than minimally processed

Nutritious

Beef is a powerful protein and an excellent or good source of 10 essential nutrients



BEEF CAN BE:

Grain-Finished

- Cattle spend most of their lives grazing on pasture, then spend 4 - 6 months in a feedyard
- Are free to eat an optimal, balanced diet of grasses, grains and other forages



Grass-Finished

- Cattle spend their entire lives grazing on pasture



Naturally Raised

- Cattle can be grain-finished or grass-finished—look at the label for details
- Must be certified by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service



Certified Organic

- Cattle can be grain-finished or grass-finished, as long as the feed is 100% organic
- Must be certified by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service
- Look for the official label



BEEF GRADES INCLUDE:



Prime has the most marbling. It usually is sold to high-end restaurants, although some specialty meat markets and supermarkets may carry it.



Choice cuts tend to have a little less marbling. Choice is the most widely available grade in the market.



Select has the least amount of marbling, making it leaner and a little less juicy and flavorful than the other two grades.

BEEF AGING CHOICES:

Wet Aging

- Aged up to 21 days
- Aged in airtight sealed bags under refrigeration (32°F to 34°F)
- Traditional beef flavor
- Most common method

Dry Aging

- Aged up to 28 days, depending on purveyor
- Aged uncovered in refrigerated room (32°F to 34°F) under controlled humidity and air flow
- Distinctive brown-roasted beefy flavor
- Less common method due to complexity and cost

