

DESCRIPTION AND IMAGES OF “A” MATURITY FOR THE EVALUATION OF CARCASS BEEF



SKELETAL MATURITY

- **Determined by evaluating the size, shape, and ossification of the bones and cartilages along the split vertebral column of the carcass**
 - **The ossification changes that occur in the cartilages on the ends of the split thoracic vertebrae are especially useful in evaluating maturity and these vertebrae are referred to frequently in the standards**
- **The size and shape of the rib bones also are important considerations in evaluating differences in maturity**

A⁶⁰



SACRAL



LUMBAR



THORACIC

A 70



SACRAL



LUMBAR

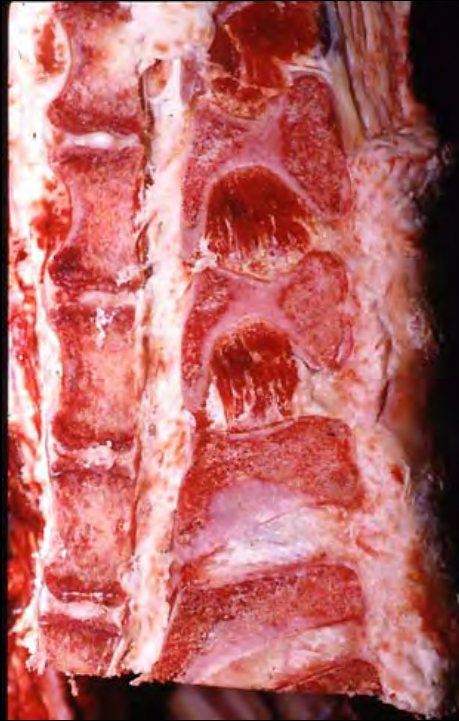


THORACIC

B²⁰



SACRAL



LUMBAR



THORACIC

C²⁰



SACRAL



LUMBAR



THORACIC

D⁰⁰



SACRAL



LUMBAR



THORACIC

LEAN MATURITY

- **The color and texture of the lean also undergo progressive changes with advancing maturity**
 - **In the very youngest of carcasses, the lean flesh will be very fine in texture and light grayish red in color**
 - **In progressively more mature carcasses, the texture of the lean becomes more coarse and the color of the lean will become darker red**

LEAN MATURITY



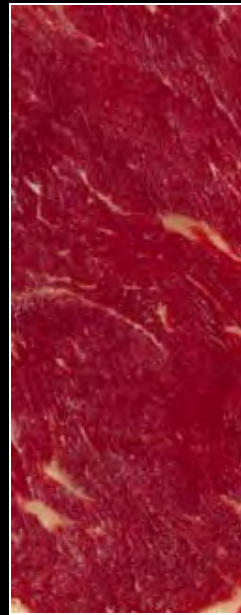
A²⁰



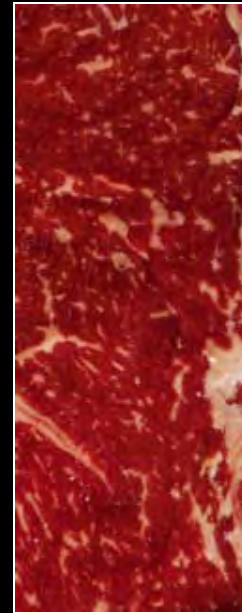
A⁵⁰



B⁰⁰



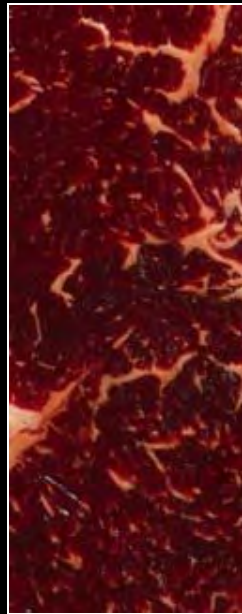
C⁰⁰



D⁰⁰



E⁰⁰



E¹⁰⁰

OVERALL MATURITY

- **The final carcass maturity score used in determining the USDA Quality Grade**