

To Whom It May Concern

From Chas. Gracey

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The attached rather lengthy article on Beef Carcass grading in Canada serves two important purposes. First it provides a rather complete review of the history of grading in Canada and is thus useful in an historical perspective. Reading that history should impress upon us that those who went before made changes, innovations and advancements that were deemed necessary and possible at the time. Importantly they addressed the serious problem of excess finish and fatness so noticeable in the 1960's. Two major changes were made one in 1972 and the most recent in 1992. The system was privatized in 1996 and in 2002, when the Cattle Identification Program was launched it became possible, for the first time to actually link a carcass grade to a specific animal.

The second and more important purpose of this review is to suggest that the industry now has the opportunity, and in my opinion the obligation to now introduce a series of improvements made possible by the advent of instrument grading and Individual Animal ID. It is long overdue that we should do so but the industry seems incapable of recognizing either the opportunity or the benefit of doing so. In this respect cattle production lags far behind advances already made in the poultry, pork and dairy industries in adopting simple programs and technologies that can improve the efficiency of production.

I hope with this review to stimulate not just discussion but action in making the beef grading system more attuned to present opportunities. In this review I refer to the grading system as "the Common Language of the industry". Grade information properly designed and used is one of the keys to future improvements. The grade itself belongs to no one ...or rather to everyone. I know from many speaking engagements over the past many years that producers themselves see these opportunities but there doesn't seem to be the necessary determination at the leadership level to move forward decisively.

Very recently we have learned that the USDA's Agricultural marketing Service recognizes that its grading system which is very similar to ours (almost identical) is in need of revision and change, including a review of beef instrument grading. Their concerns are similar to mine and I suggest that this should stimulate us to move forward as quickly as possible.

The attached is my contribution to the discussion.

Respectfully

Charlie Gracey