

BeefTalk 477: Do You Know Your IMPS numbers?

Meat is not chunks of product chopped at random.

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Understanding beef is critical to how we, as producers, obtain value in the industry. Are we getting back the value we have worked to produce through genetic and managerial inputs?

Are we simply selling calves and allowing that value to be dispersed to others? Are we getting our fair share of the value or are others taking advantage of us?

The answers are unknown. Considerable conjecture can be floated through most conversations as we seek to find what beef is truly worth.

Let's look at a forequarter of beef. I pulled out some data sheets and noted a steer simply called No. 2.

No. 2 calf was a short, blocky black steer that is typical of many fed steers across the country. The steer never won any blue ribbons or paraded around for many to see.

No. 2 was the product of an astute producer interested in converting grass to beef and meeting the demands of today's consumer. The steer weighed 1,375 pounds, with an estimated live weight minus 4 percent shrink of 1,320 pounds.

Shrink and pounds paid are another puzzling factor for producers, but it is real. From the moment the steer is sold, the only parts that count are what can be sold.

Shrink cannot be sold because no one is going to buy it. However, the 805 pounds of hot carcass weight No. 2 placed on the rail has value.

Let's start at the forequarter. In order to get a proper understanding, a good processor of beef needs to be contacted for the appropriate fabrication of the carcass into fresh beef products that correspond to the "institutional meat purchase specifications" (IMPS) numbers.

The forequarter of beef yielded 12.48 pounds of ribeye roll. The ribeye roll was IMPS item number 112A (beef rib, ribeye roll, lip-on). In other words, as described in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's IMPS documentation, a 112A is beef rib that is further processed from IMPS 108 (beef rib, oven-prepared and boneless) and IMPS 112 (beef rib and ribeye roll).

The proper description of IMPS 112 is a ribeye roll that includes the longissimus dorsi, spinalis dorsi, complexus and multifidus dorsi muscles. The "lip" (serratus dorsalis and longissimus costarum muscles and related intermuscular fat) on the short plate side is removed. All other muscles, bones, cartilages, backstrap and the exterior fat cover also are removed.

In the case of IMPS 112A (beef rib, ribeye roll and lip-on), the "lip" is left attached on the short plate side. There is the possibility that one gets lost reading the descriptions, so read it again and again.

Meat, in this case fresh beef, is not chunks of product chopped at random. It is very select, properly fabricated portions of specific muscle or groups of muscle that are priced according to demand. Some cuts have less demand and bring less money. Other cuts or specific muscles have considerable demand and bring more money.

The rest of No. 2's forequarter yielded IMPS 124 (shortribs/back ribs), IMPS 109B (cap/wedge meat), IMPS 114A (chuck clod), IMPS 116A (boneless chuck roll), IMPS 116B (chuck tender), IMPS 121C (outer skirtsteak), IMPS 121D (inner skirtsteak) and IMPS 120 (boneless brisket).

In addition, the arm deep pectoralis was packaged along with neck bones and 50/50 trim, 90/10 trim, fat and bone for a total of 15 saleable retail products.

Now that the specific products from the forequarter have been identified, pounds and value can be added to obtain the overall value of the forequarter of beef from steer No. 2. Let's go back to the Web site and start gathering the value of boxed beef.

The truth is the value is in the pieces, not in the whole. However, we must understand the pieces first, so a review of the IMPS certainly would be in order.

May you find all your ear tags.

Your comments are always welcome at <http://www.BeefTalk.com>.

For more information, contact the NDBCIA Office, 1041 State Ave., Dickinson, ND 58601, or go to <http://www.CHAPS2000.com> on the Internet.

Get to Know Your Ribeye Roll

Description of IMPS 112 —

Ribeye roll that includes the longissimus dorsi, spinalis dorsi, complexus, and multifidus dorsi muscles. The "lip" (serratus dorsalis and longissimus costarum muscles and related intermuscular fat) on the short plate side is removed. All other muscles, bones, cartilages, backstrap and the exterior fat cover also are removed.

