

National Beef Packing Co. In-House Dark Cutter Program

Updated May, 2003

National Beef request's USDA Meat Grading Branch Quality Grade, and Yield Grade all Dark Cutting Beef that qualify according to the USDA Meat Grading Standards.

If the percentage of darkness exceeds 80 percent the Quality Grade is removed by plant personnel, and the grade is recorded as a Standard Dark Cutter. These carcasses are segregated and fabricated as a number two product.

If the percentage of darkness is less than 80 percent the carcass remains as graded by the USDA. These carcasses are not segregated separately. They are sorted to their respective quality grade, yield grade, and weight range. These carcasses are marked on the forequarter with an ink mark to designate a Dark Cutter to the person running the Grade Scale. This flags individual carcasses so a Dark Cutter count may be tabulated. In the event that any of these carcasses are data collection cattle this will show why a carcass was not put into a Certified Program even if it had the correct amount of Quality.

The identification of these carcasses is also an aid in investigating why these carcasses are dark. These carcasses will not be discounted to the Producer; however no Dark Cutting Beef are eligible for a USDA Certified Program.